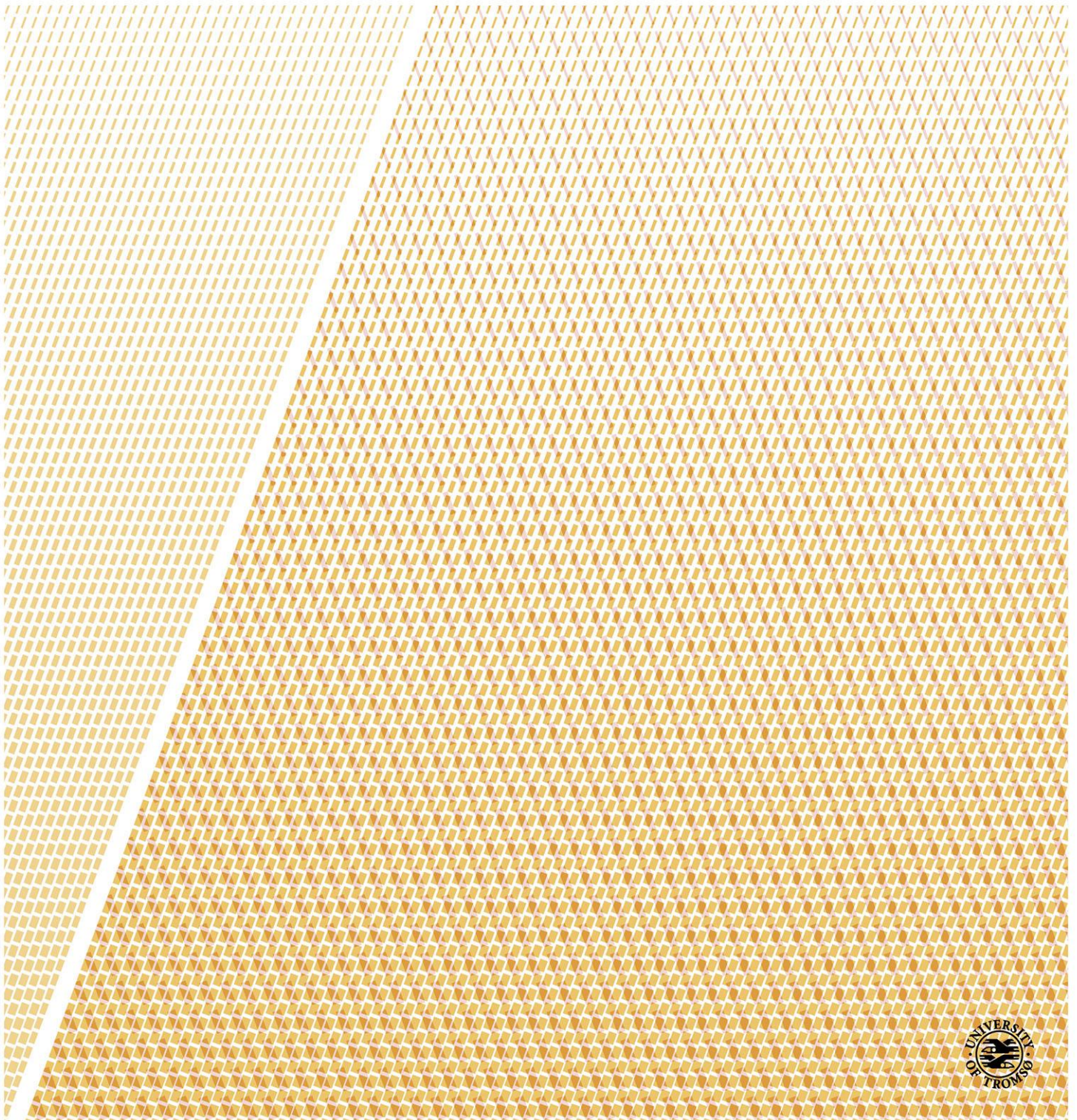


Ex-Combatant Reintegration in the Great Lakes Region

Processes & Mechanisms, Trajectories & Paradoxes

—
Randolph Wallace Rhea

A dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor – January 2016



Ex-Combatant Reintegration in the Great Lakes Region:

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*Submitted for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor
January 2016*



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... by now I'm fed up with packing my baggage, walking and running, carrying my arms and armour, marching in formation, standing guard, and fighting. Now that we've reached the sea, I want to put all this hard work behind me and sail the rest of the way. I'd like to arrive in Greece flat on my back, like Odysseus.

- Xenophon

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Abstract

Since the early 1990's, the Great Lakes Region (GLR) has been devastated by a wave of interconnected interstate, intrastate, and local conflicts involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers in dozens of armed groups. An important part of the international community's approach to peacebuilding in the region has involved the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups. Because of the transnational nature of many armed groups in the GLR, a regional approach to DDR has been adopted. The World Bank's Multi-Country Reintegration Program (MDRP) and Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) have been key institutions involved in facilitating national efforts for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants across the region.

While DDR has evolved considerably since the 1990's, the reintegration component remains among the cruxes. One reason for the enduring challenge of reintegration is that while technical approaches to the delivery of reintegration programming have become ever more refined, the nature of the social and economic reintegration *processes* that reintegration *programs* aim to affect in individual ex-combatants have remained largely unproblematized. The mixed track record of DDR programs in the GLR, and around the world, speaks to the idea that without a deep understanding of the endogenous social and economic *processes* of reintegration, reintegration *programs* might risk becoming detached from the outcomes they mean to affect.

Through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of reintegration programming in the GLR, the TDRP has collected vast amounts of social and economic survey data on ex-combatants and community members. Previously, this data has been used to evaluate the extent of reintegration programming impacts in specific country contexts. However, in 2013 the TDRP merged a series of survey datasets that include the experiences of nearly 10,000 ex-combatants and community members from across five GLR countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC) captured between 2010 and 2012. The merged TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset opens the door to the systematic comparative analysis of the social and economic reintegration processes that individual ex-combatants navigate across GLR.

In examining the social and economic processes through which individual ex-combatants across the GLR reintegrate, this doctoral thesis explores numerous issues. We investigate the deep set of social and economic disadvantages that ex-combatants carry with them as they attempt to reintegrate, and the ways in which disadvantages can influence the economic livelihood strategies that ex-combatants pursue as a part of reintegration. In turn, we reflect on the relationship of economic processes to a slower moving set of social processes that revolve around negotiating identity and building social networks. Further, we consider the profound role of gender in shaping individual ex-combatants' social and economic reintegration experiences.

Based on this set of insights about some of the underlying social and economic processes that ex-combatants across the GLR navigate during reintegration, we move to reflect more broadly about the direct implications for our understanding of the potential role of reintegration programming in shaping post-conflict societies, and how we understand the successes and failures of reintegration programming through M&E.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADFL	Alliance of Democratic Forces of the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
CNDP	National Congress for the Defense of the People
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, & Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DREAM	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, & Arms Management
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
GLR	Great Lakes Region
ICRS	Information, Counseling, & Referral System
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, & Reintegration Standards
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M23	March 23 rd Militia
MCTF	Multi-Country Trust Fund
MDRP	Multi-Country Reintegration Program
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NDDRC	National Disarmament, Demobilization, & Reintegration Commission
NRA	National Resistance Army
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RCD	Rally for Congolese Democracy
RCD-G	Rally for Congolese Democracy – Goma Faction
RoC	Republic of Congo
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Force
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TDRP	Transitional Demobilization & Reintegration Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UNDPKO	United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations
UNOMUR	United Nations Observer Mission in Uganda - Rwanda
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front

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1 Ex-Combatant Reintegration in the Great Lakes Region

1.1 Introduction

Since the early 1990s a series of interconnected interstate and intrastate conflicts have devastated the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of Africa. Estimates indicate that between 5.5 and 8.5 millions of lives have been lost and countless millions more have been displaced as they have fled insecurity and violence. Today the GLR is in the process of ongoing stabilization and recovery after the close of nearly two decades of widespread violence. One of the many challenges in peacebuilding in the region has been how to deal with the hundreds of thousands of soldiers that have taken part in violent conflicts across the region as a part of national armed forces, rebel groups, local militias, or criminal organizations, and which must now reintegrate into a peacetime way of life.

As the violent conflicts across the GLR have come to a close, ex-combatants have been imbued with a range of deep social and economic disadvantages. Having spent much of their adult, or even adolescent, lives in armed groups, ex-combatants may have no experience of formal education; no skills beyond those acquired as a soldier; no economic track record on which to draw; and no secure access to food, housing, income, or land. Given that the GLR includes among the poorest and least developed countries in the world, the disadvantages that ex-combatants face may represent a struggle for basic survival. Because many armed groups across the GLR have regularly abused civilian populations through violence, looting, forced recruitment, and the widespread use of sexual violence, ex-combatants may be perceived unwelcome perpetrators in the communities in which they attempt to reintegrate. As such, ex-combatants may face enormous social barriers to building trust and acceptance in familial and communal networks, to the extent that ex-combatants have such networks, and struggle with the interpersonal challenges of reshaping identity and adapting to peacetime social norms. Indeed, in many ways the “re” in reintegration is misleading. Many ex-combatants in the GLR are not returning to familiar peacetime way of life, but rather building it anew as they struggle to integrate into community settings that may be entirely alien to them.

The experiences of many faltered peace processes support the idea that if ex-combatants in the GLR cannot overcome the challenges of reintegrating into society, then armed groups may continue to represent their best, if not only, sources of survival, mobility, and empowerment – ultimately threatening peace in the region. Thus, the international community's approach to peacebuilding and development in the GLR has prioritized the needs of ex-combatants through a body of post-conflict security and development programming called Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). Disarmament involves the collection and destruction of weapons. Demobilization involves breaking command and control structures through formally discharging and dispersing ex-combatants. Reintegration programming, however, can take many forms, and is focused on longer-term support to ex-combatants that is meant to help compensate for their social and economic disadvantages as they navigate reintegration processes.

Since the early 1990s, reintegration programming as a part of DDR has been a boom industry of sorts. In the GLR alone easily over a half billion dollars have flowed from international organizations and donor countries into funding reintegration programming. Key international actors involved in facilitating reintegration programming are the United Nations and, especially in the GLR, the World Bank. However, despite two and half decades of investment in DDR, reintegration programming remains a highly contested concept. There is enduring disagreement about the appropriate and feasible objectives for reintegration programming, which manifests further as a lack of uniform standards for evaluating programming successes and failures. Institutional and scholarly literature on reintegration has tended to reflect on the technical and logistical challenges of programming implementation, while substantive knowledge about ex-combatants themselves, and the social and economic reintegration processes they navigate, has remained relatively scant. At times, reintegration programming has risked becoming disconnected from the impacts it means to affect.

Indeed, fundamental questions about what it means to reintegrate, at the ontological and epistemological levels, remain unaddressed. By what social and economic processes do ex-combatants themselves reintegrate? By what mechanisms are these processes governed? How we answer these types of questions about what it means to reintegrate can directly

shape what we look at, how we go about looking at it, and what we see when we study ex-combatant reintegration. This in itself would seem enough to justify a deep engagement with the fundamental mental nature of what it means to reintegrate. However, considering the inherent normative dimensions embedded in the study of ex-combatant reintegration, a moral imperative may exist. Because all research on ex-combatant reintegration may play some potential role in informing the act of executing DDR programming, in turn affecting the lives of countless individual ex-combatants – their families and communities, engaging with deep questions about what it means for individuals to reintegrate may be essential.

Exploring the fundamental nature of reintegration processes in the GLR, and the ways in which our conceptual and methodological approaches shape our understandings of those very processes, and in turn the space for intervening in them through reintegration programming, is the task undertaken in this doctoral thesis. In this way, we aspire to Skocpol's (2003) "doubly engaged social science". That is, while we are focused on explaining causal processes and mechanisms behind ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR, we are simultaneously enmeshed in debates about the optimal conceptual and methodological approaches for the empirical investigation of those specific processes and mechanisms, and their implications for the normative intervention in society that DDR represents.

Since 2010 the World Bank's Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) has played an important role in the most recent wave of reintegration programming in the GLR. The TDRP's main functions have been as a funding conduit, technical advisor to national DDR commissions, and as responsible for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of reintegration programming. Through its role in the M&E of reintegration programming, the TDRP has carried out numerous survey-based studies of ex-combatants' experiences of social and economic reintegration. The data from these surveys has served as the basis for impact assessments of national reintegration programs in individual countries across the GLR between 2010 and 2012. In 2013 the TDRP merged a selection of survey data on just under 10,000 ex-combatants and community members from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Republic of Congo (RoC) into a single dataset. The resulting TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset represents what is likely the single most expansive source of survey-based data on the reintegration experiences of ex-combatants in any

setting, both in terms of the number of individuals surveyed and the range of social and economic data captured. The merging of previous survey data was largely made possible by the fact that a fairly consistent set of survey tools were used across the five GLR countries. Thus, the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset also represents what is likely the first source of systematically comparable data on ex-combatants' reintegration experiences from across different country settings, opening the possibility for systematic comparative analysis.

In 2013 the TDRP commissioned a study (Rhea 2014) to build on previous impact evaluations from the five GLR countries through a comparative analysis utilizing the TDRP-GLR Reintegration dataset. The overall aim of the study was to help consolidate knowledge and understanding of reintegration processes across a broad range of contexts across the GLR. This doctoral thesis is a direct extension of that initial study, and seeks to continue to capitalize on the inherent opportunities for comparative analysis of social and economic processes that exist in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. This doctoral thesis builds on the previous study through anchoring itself in an eclectic selection of theoretical and methodological traditions from across the social sciences and goes on to explore a diverse range of issues related to how reintegration processes occur across the GLR, and the space that exists for reintegration programming to affect these processes. We explore the legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences that ex-combatants carry with them as they attempt to reintegrate, and the ways in which these legacies live on – influencing the distinct livelihood strategies that ex-combatants pursue as a part of economic reintegration processes. In turn, we explore the relationship of economic processes to a slower moving set of social processes - revolving around negotiating identity and building social networks. Further, we consider the profound role of gender in shaping reintegration processes across social and economic dimensions. For better or worse, DDR is an intervention in post-conflict societies. It is impossible to run DDR programs without some guiding sense of what allows them to have positive or negative effects on those societies. Thus, we reflect more broadly about the direct implications that this broad range of social and economic processes hold for the potential role of reintegration programming in shaping post-conflict societies - in turn how we understand the successes and failures of reintegration programming through M&E.

1.1.1 Thesis Structure

This doctoral thesis is organized in three main parts. Part I includes this introductory chapter (§1), as well as chapters that outline the conceptual (§2) and methodological (§3) approaches utilized. Part II includes the analysis chapter (§4) as well as the summary and conclusions (§5). Part III consists of a short introduction (§6) and two detailed data presentation annexes for ex-combatants (§7) and community members (§8). The analysis presented in Part II, which for readability is mostly free of numeric figures and tables, can be thought of as a meta-analysis of the detailed data presentation in Part III. Thus, parts I and II together can be read as a freestanding work, though a serious reading will benefit significantly from an engagement with the detailed data presentation in Part III.

This chapter, *Chapter 1*, includes a select introduction to the contemporary history of armed conflicts in the GLR – emphasizing their interconnected and transnational nature. In addition, we present a brief introduction to the evolution of DDR programs since the end of the cold war as embedded within the broader evolution of approaches to international peacebuilding and development. These two parts are used as the context to develop the point of departure for this doctoral thesis – an inquiry into the social and economic processes that individual ex-combatants navigate as they return to communities across the GLR.

Chapter 2 details the conceptual approach utilized in this doctoral thesis in three main sections. First, we unpack the concept of reintegration and frame it as a complex social and economic process. With this framing in place we go on to, secondly, conceptualize social reintegration processes within frameworks of social identity theory and social capital theory. Thirdly, we conceptualize the economic side of reintegration processes within the sustainable livelihoods framework. These three distinct theoretical traditions share a range of complementary ideas, which in synthesis form the overall conceptual approach in this doctoral thesis.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach utilized in this doctoral thesis in three main sections. First, in an effort to take the framing of reintegration as a complex process

seriously, we root our methodological approach in a complex-realist meta-theoretical framework. Secondly, with this framework in place we turn a critical eye to the primary data source in this doctoral thesis. We explain the origins of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset and explore the perspectives embedded within it. Thirdly, with this critical evaluation of our primary data source in place, we go on to reframe the dataset within a comparative case-study framework. Within this framework, we outline the specific methodological tool of process tracing as especially attuned to exploring the underlying processes & mechanisms of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR.

Chapter 4 outlines the core analysis and findings of this doctoral thesis, and is comprised of two main parts. The first part focuses on the processes and mechanisms through which individual ex-combatant across the GLR reintegrate. We explore the legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences, the distinct strategies ex-combatants take as a part of economic reintegration processes, the importance of social networks and identity for social reintegration processes and their interaction with economic reintegration processes, and the special gender dynamics in social and economic reintegration processes. Ultimately, we outline an integrated model of all these interrelated dimensions of reintegration processes. The second part of *Chapter 4* moves to situate our understanding of individual-level reintegration processes within a broader conceptualization of country-level reintegration processes in the GLR. We devote special attention to DRC as a unique case in the GLR that highlights a paradox for understanding reintegration processes at the country-level. To address these paradoxes we develop the concept of country-level reintegration trajectories. We elaborate a taxonomy of possible country-level trajectories and explore the implications for our understanding of reintegration programming successes and failures, as well as the related idea of the “scope of possible programming impacts”.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the context, conceptual and methodological approaches, and findings of this doctoral thesis. As a conclusion, the analytical contributions to reintegration research and implications for future reintegration research and programming are discussed.

Chapter 6 is a brief introduction to the technical components of the TDRP-GRL Reintegration data presentation in the annexes. The annexes themselves, *Chapters 7 and 8*, include detailed data on ex-combatants and community members from the five GLR countries on demographics; housing, land, livestock, and food security; economic issues; social capital; and DDR experiences. These three chapters (6-8), are taken almost directly an earlier report published by the World Bank's TDRP (Rhea 2014).

1.2 A Brief Introduction to Conflict in the Great Lakes Region

The GLR countries have experienced a complex set of multifaceted and interlocking wars in the post-colonial era. The scale of devastation to the region in terms of loss of life and displacement of people has been nothing short of cataclysmic. Though the region as a whole has seen considerable improvements in stability over the last decade, pockets of local conflict persist – most notably in Eastern DRC. Even in the large parts of the GLR where some form of peace has emerged, millions of individuals have lost their livelihoods, trapping them in poverty. Indeed, when combined with the retarding effects of war on development in the region more broadly, as many as 56 million people in the GLR remain in extreme poverty (UNDP 2014). Throughout the course of the conflicts in the GLR dozens of armed groups have participated organized violence. At various stages of peacebuilding in the GLR most of these armed groups have participated in some form of DDR programming - including those individual ex-combatants in the TDRP-GRL Reintegration Dataset on which this doctoral thesis is based.

To better understand the origins of armed groups in the GLR and to give historical context to the analysis in this doctoral thesis, this section offers an outline of the main conflicts since the 1990s. What is offered is a *select* review that attempts to highlight the broad cleavages in the GLR, and their sources. A *comprehensive* examination of the many interrelated wars in the GLR is a weighty task well beyond the bounds of this doctoral thesis. This section proceeds in two subsections. First (§1.2.1), we outline the colonial-era distortion and entrenchment of ethno-cultural power structures and their disastrous consequences of for the post-colonial era in the GLR. The epicenter of this narrative revolves around the Hutu-

Tutsi divide and its role in the Rwandan Revolution, Rwandan Civil War, Rwandan Genocide, as well as the First and Second Congo Wars. The warped colonial-era antagonisms between the Hutu and the Tutsi remain relevant for understanding ongoing violence in Eastern DRC today. In the second subsection (§1.2.2), we very briefly outline the emergence of the World Bank's MDRP and TDRP.

1.2.1 Distorted Power, Entrenched Cleavages, and Endless War

Throughout the 1800's, industrial development in European countries created demands for natural resources, e.g. raw minerals, far beyond their ability to produce at home. In order to fuel continual industrial development, and also enabled by industrialization itself, European powers became focused on consolidating their interests in the African continent, and elsewhere around the world, through conquest and colony at a level not previously possible. The era of the European colonization of Africa approached its zenith in the Berlin Conference of 1885, where European leaders met to agree on the premises of African colonization - in effect Balkanizing the continent. In the GLR, what is current day Burundi and Rwanda went to Germany, DRC to Belgium (first as a private territory of King Leopold II, which Belgium would take over in 1906), Uganda to Britain, and RoC to France. However, as a part of the treaty of Versailles at the end of WWI, Germany would cede its colonies in the GLR, and Burundi and Rwanda were transferred to Belgian rule. Millions of people divided among hundreds of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups were now forced together under imposed colonial power structures.

In the European discourse, colonialism was framed as a "necessary humanitarian intervention conceived to save, guide, and civilize the Africans" (Omeje 2013: 26). Mbembe (2001) argues that the "fiction of compassion and benevolence" legitimated the destruction of local political, social, cultural, religious, economic, and legal structures and replacement with the colonizers own "enlightened" values - thereby lifting Africans into modernity. In the most critical historical interpretations, the discourse of humanitarian intervention and enlightenment concealed that the sole agenda of colonialism was resource extraction and economic exploitation for the benefit of European colonial powers (Rodney 1972). Solid minerals and cash crops were especially important, and what little infrastructure colonizers

developed, e.g. railroads, was almost exclusively intended to facilitate the evacuation of these resources to Europe – a fact that plays a continuing role in the economic development of the region today. To get at resources colonial powers appropriated land and displaced untold numbers of people. Forced labor and migration was commonplace. Others found themselves displaced and landless, having no other option but to begin a desperate search for wage labor from colonial powers under newly imposed, and brutally enforced, market economies. In the GLR, an important example of this dynamic is the relocation of huge populations from Rwanda into Eastern DRC to work in the vast mines and plantations that fed European industrialization. Over several generations, Rwandans in Eastern DRC would eventually outnumber the local Congolese populations, but have continued to face contested access to land, resources, and power structures in the region today (Jourdan 2005).

Through the arbitrary drawing of borders, the large-scale displacement of people, and the privileging of certain groups over others in an effort to establish control over the region, the entire geo-demographic power landscape of the region was distorted (Kagame 2006). Even as the colonial era came to a close, European powers were unwilling to grant independence to their colonies without first entrenching power structures that could serve their continued interests in the region. Omeje (2013) argues that rather than transforming the power structures in the post-colonial era, the local elites that came to power have simply maintained the iniquitous colonial-era power structures, many of which have pre-colonial origins, and turned them to their own favor – effectively replacing the colonizers, and perpetuating the societal divisions that were distorted, amplified, and ingrained under colonialism. No place are these distorted divisions so evident as in the Hutu – Tutsi divide in Rwanda and Burundi, which would ultimately come to affect the entire region.

The populations of Rwanda and Burundi are roughly 80% Hutu, 15% Tutsi, and 2% Twa. The Hutu are Bantu speaking horticulturalists that are thought to originally have migrated to present day Rwanda and Burundi, where the Pygmoid hunter-gatherer Twa were already settled, around 3000 years ago from coastal areas of present day Cameroon. While today it is generally accepted that the Tutsi originated from the Nilotic-Luo speaking groups of present day South Sudan, due to their generally taller stature and more slender noses

colonialists originally thought the pastoralist Tutsi to be of Ethiopid or Hamid decent. This classification would have serious consequences. Prior to colonization the Hutu and Tutsi labels were somewhat permeable. In the feudal-era, elites labeled themselves as Tutsi, a term that literally described a wealthy person, and all those that they conquered as Hutu. Further, over time the Hutu and Tutsi peoples become so interrelated through marriage that the terms Hutu and Tutsi had become less indicative of ancestral ethnic identities, but of socio-economic classes that individuals could move between, even if they often fell across ancestral lines (Omeje 2013). De Forges (2004: 34) summarizes the sources of colonial (mis)understandings of these three groups well:

“The Belgians believed that Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa were three distinct, long-existent and internally coherent blocks of people, the local representatives of three major population groups, the Ethiopid, Bantu and Pygmoid. Unclear whether these were races, tribes, or language groups, the Europeans were nonetheless certain that the Tutsi were superior to the Hutu and the Hutu were superior to the Twa - just as they knew themselves to be superior to all three. Because Europeans thought that the Tutsi looked more like themselves than did other Rwandans, they found it reasonable to suppose them closer to Europeans in the evolutionary hierarchy and hence closer to them in ability. Believing the Tutsi to be more capable, they found it logical for the Tutsi to rule Hutu and Twa just as it was reasonable for Europeans to rule Africans.”

With this understanding, the Belgian colonial power institutionalized privileges for the Tutsi in terms of access to education, public service, positions in police and military forces, private business, and Christian missions. Ultimately, the Tutsi monarchy (prior to colonization numerous kingdoms spanned the region) was recognized by the Belgian colonial powers as a regent to its own authority, solidifying Tutsi minority's economic and political dominance over the majority Hutu who, with the Twa, were largely relegated to physical labor. With this, the Belgian colonial powers had transformed what was previously a somewhat flexible socio-economic status into an entrenched ethnic division with deep social and economic imbalances (Omeje 2013). As independence approached by the middle of the 20th century, a large and dissatisfied Hutu middle class had emerged. In 1959 the marginalized Hutu

majority rose up and the Rwanda Revolution began. Around 20,000 Tutsis were killed and another 200,000 fled across the borders into Uganda and Eastern DRC (Cohen 2007). The Tutsi monarchy was abolished and a Hutu government was elected at independence in 1962. In what would become a recurring motif in the GLR, power had come into the hands of a group (in this case the Hutu) that had been marginalized through power structures entrenched during the colonial era, but instead of dismantling the iniquitous power structures that had denigrated them in the past, once having attained power they instead reversed and intensified those very suppressive power structures against those that had previously lorded over them (in this case the Tutsi) (Omeje 2013).

Throughout the 1960s and 70s the Hutu's continued vendetta against the Tutsi in Rwanda fueled ongoing displacement as Tutsis fled the country into exile. While Rwanda had maintained a "veneer of stability" though the total exclusion of Tutsi, in Burundi a continuous chain of coups and counter-coups saw repeated reversals of power and suppression between the Hutu and Tutsi (Omeje 2013). In 1990 the Rwandan civil war began when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a militia of exiled Rwandan Tutsi in Uganda, invaded Rwanda with the goal overthrowing the Hutu government that refused to recognize their right to return after nearly 30 years of exile since the Rwandan revolution. With the help of French and Belgian troops the Hutu government of Rwanda managed to hold back the RPF. In 1993 a ceasefire was reached when the Arusha Accords, which allowed exiles to return and mandated a coalition government with power sharing between Hutu and Tutsi, were signed and the first UN peacekeeping missions to the region (UNOMUR and UNAMIR) were deployed.

UN peacekeeping missions tried to maintain the ceasefire while preparations were made for the Arusha Accords to come into effect. Meanwhile the Hutu government of Rwanda intensified its persecution of Tutsi and dissident Hutu within the country. Daley (2006) argues that this was driven by the Hutu elite's unwillingness to cede power in the face of the upcoming accords. The Hutu government began an expanding propaganda campaign as well as training youth militias, including the now infamous *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*, to terrorize Tutsi populations. In 1994 the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, both Hutu, were assassinated when unknown assailants shot down their plane. This is generally

acknowledged as the spark that ignited the Rwandan Genocide. An interim government was formed in Rwanda, but the Hutu-led military assumed *de facto* power. The full machinery of the Rwandan state was mobilized to plan and execute the genocide, and within a hundred days between 800,000 and 1,000,000 Tutsi and dissident Hutu were slaughtered (Cohen 2007). The genocide ended when the Tutsi RPF fought its way to Kigali and overthrew the Hutu government. Fearing reprisals, over a million Hutu refugees, including those Militias that executed the genocide, fled across the border into Eastern DRC. While Burundi avoided the “genocidal implosion” of Rwanda, it became embroiled in civil war for the next decade, with over a dozen armed groups in the mix (Omeje 2013: 41).

The Hutu exodus into Eastern DRC would lead to the First Congo War. The very Hutu militias that had perpetrated the Rwandan genocide now used refugee camps in Eastern DRC to wage a two-fronted war. First, Hutu militias carried out cross-border attacks on the RPF government of Rwanda. Second, the Hutu militias attacked Congolese Tutsis of Rwandan descent who had been living in Eastern DRC since they were moved there in the colonial era to work in mines and plantations. Congolese Tutsi of Rwanda descent were still not recognized as citizens of DRC and their presence was still highly contested, despite the fact that they had been there for a century and represented the majority of the population in the region. Thus, Hutu militias carried out local attacks with impunity from DRC’s government. As a response, in 1996 Rwanda and Uganda backed the Alliance of Democratic Forces of the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) militia as the Congolese face of a campaign to protect Congolese Tutsi of Rwandan descent by driving back Hutu militias and overthrowing their implicit support from DRC’s long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Uganda’s involvement in the campaign in DRC was a result of the deep allegiance between the RPF and the Ugandan Government. During the Ugandan Bush War, the Tutsi’s that had been exiled to Uganda during the Rwandan Revolution fought alongside the Ugandan NRA in their own, eventually successful, efforts to take control of Uganda. Tutsis exiled to Uganda, now experiences in combat, would become the RPF that returned to Rwanda to take power the end of the genocide.

The seven-month campaign in DRC ended in Mobutu’s ousting and replacement by the ADFL leader Laurent Kabila. In the process, around 800,000 people were killed and hundreds of

thousands were displaced. True to the trend in the region, as the new head of DRC Kabila did not dismantle the power structures that had supported Mobutu's 30 years of dictatorship, but rather turned them in his favor and accelerated the persecution of those seen as threats to his absolute rule (Van Reybrouck 2014). Kabila quickly fell out with Rwandan and Ugandan leaders, whose lingering presence he saw as undermining his authority, and ordered their militaries to leave the DRC immediately. The Congolese Tutsis of Rwandan descent in Eastern DRC, now left defenseless, were especially alarmed by the withdraw of Rwandan and Ugandan forces. In 1998 Rwanda and Uganda would support Congolese Tutsis of Rwandan descent, most notably the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) militia, to begin a war to overthrow their previous ally Kabila. The Second Congo War, also known as the African World War, had now begun. Over the next five years Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Sudan, Libya, and Chad would all become directly or indirectly involved in supporting the Kabila regime's fight against the Rwanda-Uganda coalition. The 1999 Lukasa Agreement slowed the large-scale mobilization of state military forces against each other and mandated the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission (MONUC) and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of all non-state armed groups. At this point the World Bank's MDRP would come to play a central role in DDR in the region. However, none of the non-state armed groups that were to be demobilized had partaken in the peace process, and without their consent large-scale violence between militias continued even though their state sponsors had mostly pulled away (Autesserre 2010). In 2003 the largest remaining non-state armed groups fighting in DRC, most notably the Rwandan backed RCD and the Ugandan backed MLC, signed the Sun City Agreement, ostensibly ending the war. Death toll estimates for the Second Congo War range as high as 5.4 million (Coghlan *et al* 2006).

While the war was "over", more focused local violence continued across Eastern DRC. In the mainstream discourse, this ongoing violence was a product of elites, from all sides of the Second Congo War, manipulating local proxy groups to maintain their continued interests in the region – most notably in the extremely profitable illegal resource extraction business. Eastern DRC is among the richest sources of gold, diamonds, cobalt, copper, and coltan in the world. Throughout the first and second Congo Wars illegal mining provided the financial means to keep armed groups going, and at times became an end in itself. Indeed, criminal motives have played some role for all sides involved in the Congo wars. This dynamic

continued in the post-war conflict landscape and was exacerbated by the growing presence of multinational mining corporations competing for access to the same mineral resources - sometimes buying concessions from non-state armed groups. It was thought that once the manipulative elites could be coopted into national power structures and the state could be strengthened enough to represent a credible authority in the “Hobbesian” east of the country, the remaining local armed groups would dissolve and be easily handled as a part of DDR or SSR programs (Autesserre 2009).

Autesserre (2010) argues, counter to the predominant narrative, that continuing violence in Eastern DRC revolves around complex local disputes over land access, mineral resources, traditional tribal authority, taxation, and social status. Local armed groups continue to fight to accomplish their own local agendas, which previously had been subsumed into the broader national and regional conflicts. Local armed groups are not mere puppets of distant elites, but rather actively ally themselves with elites who hold complementary agendas. Autesserre (2010) calls this the “joint production of violence”. An important part of the local conflicts that continue to drive violence in Eastern DRC revolves around continued antagonisms against Congolese Tutsis of Rwanda descent. The contested status of the Congolese Tutsi of Rwandan descent’s right to access resources and power in the region has enticed some communities to allow Rwandan Hutu militias (most notably the FDLR) to remain in the region (ibid). In turn, this has motivated Tutsi militia factions to remain in the region (most notably the RCD-G, a faction of the original RCD, from which the CNDP would faction off from, and in turn which M23 which would faction off from) as well as continued tampering from Rwanda and Uganda in the region. Ultimately, these continued local issues have occasionally threatened the macro-level peace between DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda. However, in 2010 the UN peacekeeping force MONUC was given an updated mandate to reflect the de-escalation of national-level tensions and renamed MONUSCO. Likewise, the World Bank’s MDRP was replaced with the smaller TDRP program. Despite the improved relationship between the GLR states, over a decade after the end of the Second Congo War devastating local violence continues in Eastern DRC (North and South Kivu, and Ituri provinces) along the border with Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi.

While Rwanda and Burundi have been largely stable, seeing minimal internal conflict since 2000, this not the case in other parts of the GLR. Uganda has fought its own war rooted in entrenched colonial-era power inequalities between the Acholi peoples of Northern Uganda and the Bantu of the South. In the late 1980's, parallel to the NRA Bush War, Acholi militias formed to challenge the colonially favored Bantu. The most notable armed group is the now infamous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), who have destabilized large parts of the GLR as they have moved throughout Uganda, Eastern DRC, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan. In the wake of the LRA conflict other armed groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) have emerged with their own unique agendas – to some extent as a response to the Ugandan government's own abusive tactics in the region and ultimate inability to protect them from the terror of the LRA (Borzello 2007). While the situation within Uganda is largely stable today, the spillover of armed groups into Eastern DRC has continued to play a role in the ongoing violence and instability in the region.

The Republic of Congo (RoC) is geographically separated from the overlapping conflicts along the borders of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC; and thus has a somewhat separate narrative. Nonetheless, similar motifs of colonial suppression and unequal access to power have shaped the contemporary conflict landscape in RoC. After gaining independence from France in 1960, RoC established a single-party scientific socialist regime that lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1992. In the new pluralist political landscape, ethnic leaders formed their own militias to vie for power. RoC experience two civil wars between 1993 and 1999, the second of which saw proxy backing from the two sides of the ongoing Angolan civil war to the south, both of whom were also simultaneously backing proxies in the Second Congo War in neighboring DRC. In the early 2000s contested presidential elections would see violence from the Ninja militia in the Pool district (including in the capital Brazzaville). Though direct clashes with the government ceased in 2003, the Ninjas continued to engage in criminal activities until eventually disarming and demobilizing in 2008.

The conflicts that have plagued the GLR since 1990 have killed millions and displaced millions more. The disastrous consequences for the region include: the destruction of infrastructure and resources, the retardation of economic development, the ruining of the environment, the spreading of disease, the militarization of society, the reshaping of cultures, the

disruption of families, and the inflicting of untold traumas including the pervasive use of child abduction and sexual violence. The scale of damage to the region is nothing short of cataclysmic. Even as the GLR continues to stabilize today, the catastrophic legacies of war will live on through generations to come.

1.2.2 A Regional Approach to Disarmament, Demobilization, & Reintegration

Due to the interrelated nature of the conflicts across the GLR, and the transnational nature of many of the armed groups involved, it was decided that international peacebuilding initiatives in the GLR should take a regional approach that could engage with the interconnected social, political, and economic issues that spanned the region. The World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) is an example of exactly this. Starting in 2000, backed by a 500 million dollar multi-country trust fund (MCTF), the MDRP supported demobilization and reintegration programming for around 250,000 combatants from dozens of armed groups across the Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC (as well as Angola and the Central African Republic). The MDRP came at exactly the era when DDR as a whole was beginning the transition towards second-generation approaches anchored in an expanding development agenda (discussed in §1.3.1).

In 2010, as a part of the general de-escalation of national conflicts in the GLR, the Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) succeeded the much larger MDRP. The TDRP has taken on a facilitating role in supporting nationally owned DDR commissions in demobilizing and reintegrating remaining armed groups as the region continues to stabilize. In this regard, the TDRP's main functions are as a funding conduit, a provider of technical expertise, and as responsible for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of demobilization and reintegration activities. Indeed, under the TDRP an infrastructure UN and World Bank actors, partner agencies and organizations, and local DDR commissions has emerged. In comparison to the MDRP, the TDRP is mandated until the end of 2015 and is backed by a relatively small 33.7 million dollar trust fund.

The MDRP and TDRP have ostensibly contributed much to the overall security in the GLR through the enormous task of dealing with soldiers in the aftermath of conflict. In addition,

the TDRP has built a strong knowledge base on the dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR through M&E of demobilization and reintegration programming. However, there remains much to be learned about the activity of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programming and, perhaps more importantly, the complex processes through which individual ex-combatants who are supported by that programming go through as they reintegrate into society. To develop this point we now turn to a discussion of the evolution of DDR programming within broader approaches to international peacebuilding and development.

1.3 DDR & International Peacebuilding

The act of disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating soldiers has existed, at one level or another, for as long as there has been war. In order to better understand the nature of contemporary DDR programs, it is important that we take a moment to briefly outline their evolution over the last 25 years. During this time, DDR programs have coevolved within the broader discourses of international peacebuilding and development. This section proceeds in two subsections. First (§1.3.1), we outline the broad strokes of the evolution DDR since the end of the Cold War. While in general DDR has seen an ever-expanding set of mandates within the shifting context of international peacebuilding and development, certain areas have remained largely unproblematized. In the second sub-section (§1.3.2), we argue that the underlying social and economic processes that the reintegration component of DDR programs purport to affect in individual ex-combatants almost always remain implicit and unoperationalized - we call this the program - process divide. We use the conceptual distinction between reintegration programs and processes as a point of departure for this doctoral thesis going forward.

1.3.1 The Evolution of DDR

Since the wind down of the Cold War at the end of the 1980's there have been no fewer than 60 separate DDR programs undertaken across Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East. In the vast majority of these cases, DDR programs have been carried out as

a part of internationally mandated peace operations responding to civil war or some other form of intrastate violence (Schelhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010). As such, the evolution of DDR programs over time has been continually embedded in the evolution of international community's broader approaches to managing conflict and building peace.

The early DDR operations in places like Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique were relatively minimalist, and were almost wholly focused around improving basic security in the post-conflict environment. These early DDR programs were often conceived as discrete operations carried out by military and security institutions within larger UN peacekeeping missions, and were typically characterized by a two-year deployment plan with the end goal of a democratic election (Muggah 2010). Throughout history military institutions have been responsible for the tasks of dealing with soldiers after war, not least because they have traditionally been the only institution with the capacity to do so. Thus, it is no surprise that the security-focused interests of military institutions were prioritized in this early era of DDR.

Indeed, early DDR programs were often conceptualized as logistical and technical exercises to improve and maintain security through breaking the command and control structures of armed groups so that they could not easily remobilize into violence (Jennings 2008).

Whether dealing with members of national armed forces or irregular armed groups (including rebel, militia, and criminal groups), early DDR operations were often conceived as a sort of one man, one gun linear process; collect gun, discharge combatant, give reinsertion package. This tactic has often been referred to as "pay and scatter". With this modest support, ex-combatants were expected to return home and assume a civilian life. Some ex-combatants who met special selection criteria could be given the opportunity to move into national armed forces or police. In this way DDR has always overlapped with broader security sector reform (SSR) initiatives. It was argued that the monetary savings in decreased military spending, known in the literature as the "peace dividend", would contribute to national economic development (Schelhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010)

The security focused goals of early DDR operations gave clearly delimited metrics for success – number of weapons collected, number of soldiers demobilized, number of reinsertion packages administered. Even if there was no direct evidence that these outputs contributed

to improved post-conflict security outcomes, the causal mechanisms seemed commonsensical – fewer guns and soldiers meant less potential for organized violence. Over time the technical expertise developed through hard won experiences of early era DDR programs would eventually inform the United Nations Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), a playbook that drew together the vast “lessons learned” literature into a sort of loose doctrine. However, the uneven track record of DDR programs in this early era suggested that there might be more to improving peace and security than addressing the presence of weapons.

In the latter half of the 1990s and early 2000s the interrelated relationship between violent conflict and economic development came to the fore of peacebuilding agendas. It was argued that while “persistent conditions of insecurity prevent sustainable development, no amount of diplomatic mediation or military coercion will win the peace if people, especially the youth, have no alternative livelihood to that of the army or militia groups.” (Gueli and Liebenberg 2007: 86). This growing appreciation of the mutually reinforcing relationship between economic development and the potential for peace was supported by a rapidly expanding body of scholarly literature; most notably the so called “greed and grievance” discourse (see e.g. Berdal & Malone 2000). The paradox that emerged for DDR programming was that if it did not explicitly engage in broader development agendas, it risked placing the success of security goals outside its own ability to affect. As early as UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali’s (1992) *An Agenda for Peace*, the United Nations began a large scale shift in its approach to dealing with post-conflict environment from the traditional and more minimal peacekeeping, the active brokering and maintenance of peace agreements, to a more inclusive agenda of peacebuilding which included a continually expanding set of development mandates (Paris & Sisk 2009). DDR programs became the spearhead of this shift, and thus a second era of DDR programming was born.

In the era of second generation DDR, the conflicts that international peace operations were responding to were becoming more complex – the Great Lakes Region a prime example. Instead of the traditional narrow focus on improving security through dealing with relatively clear-cut military command and control structures, second-generation DDR programs in the GLR were dealing with loose networks of militias with unique grievances. Decades of

protracted transnational violence in which one war rolled into another, the pervasive use of forced mobilization tactics, acknowledgement of the role women and children as participants in, or dependents of, armed groups, and huge flows of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) and refugees meant there was an ever-blurring line between ex-combatant and civilian. DDR programs were charged with taking on a much broader caseload and engaging in an expanding range of social, economic & political tasks.

While the concepts of disarmament and demobilization saw iterative refinement, they remained conceptually intact. It was reintegration, however, that was seen as second generation DDR's connection to the expanding agendas of international peacebuilding. Reintegration was no longer seen as merely the "immediate provision of assistance such as clothes, medical assistance, tools, shelter, money or food" (Buxton 2008: 5), but was now expected to contribute to economic development by providing the education, training, materials, and finance to ex-combatants and their dependents that could help them towards alternative livelihoods – i.e. not based around armed violence or other illicit activities. In addition, reintegration programs were expected to play a role in addressing wartime trauma and the overall social dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration by supporting community projects and social institutions that would create space for the reconciliation and trust building between ex-combatants and communities - the "ultimately cathartic confrontations between perpetrators and victims" (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010:19). Beyond this, DDR programs were even expected to contribute to broader democratization efforts by strengthening civic institutions that could help create space for political participation. With its ever-expanding caseload and set of mandates, there was a growing trend to deliver reintegration programming at a community level - in theory spreading the dividends of DDR programming across a greater segment of society.

An important organizational shift that reflects the expansion of UN-led DDR initiatives is that rather than being wholly administered by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO), as disarmament and demobilization still are, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) takes primary responsibility for reintegration programming today. This division of labor was in part driven by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) exclusion of military related activities from the definition for

what could count as Official Development Assistance (ODA). In practice this meant that while disarmament and demobilization would be funded by the assessed budget of the UN and delivered by UNDPKO, reintegration would instead be funded by donor contributions. Now that reintegration was classified as a development activity not only UNDP, but also all sorts of other organizations with development agendas could become involved in reintegration activities. This shift in funding structures opened the floodgates for rapid expansion of players involved in reintegration – not least of all the World Bank.

However, this expansion of reintegration was not without problems. International organizations, NGOs, and local stakeholders could be found operating in the same post-conflict theatre with different strategic goals, and in some cases are directly competing with each other to affect distinct outcomes. For example, during DDR in Angola there were 57 NGOs implementing 177 different projects as part of reintegration programming with very little in the way of strategic oversight (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010). Indeed, Muggah (2009: 6) critically notes that through its haphazard expansion DDR had become “a kind of hamper into which many priorities – some of them not necessarily complementary- were added”. The most recent DDR operations in places like Afghanistan (Bhatia *et al* 2009), Western Africa (Keen 2005; Jennings 2008a, 2008b), and The Great Lakes Region (Autesserre 2010) have yet to produce broad results that had been hoped. Today the emerging consensus in scholarly literature is that second generation DDR has expanded to encompass such a large set of, often unclear, policy priorities that its effectiveness at achieving any one of them is watered down. The original fervor that had seen so many development organizations rushing to take part in reintegration programming has been replaced by a growing skepticism from program donors, and even implementing agencies themselves. Indeed, many development organizations have walked away from the enterprise of reintegration programming altogether (Muggah & O’Donnell 2015). However, the task of dealing with soldiers in the aftermath of war remains. Regardless of whether or not DDR programs continue to see the sort of enthusiastic engagement from the international community that they have in the past, they are likely to continue to play an important role in the evolving nature of peacebuilding.

Despite continual refinement in the technical implementation of DDR programming (represented most directly by the 2014 update to the UN's IDDRS), there are fundamental questions that remain unresolved. The underlying social and economic processes that reintegration programs purport to affect in individual ex-combatants almost always remain implicit and unoperationalized. The endogenous *processes* of reintegration, as distinct from the body of reintegration *programming* that means to affect them, represent a set of missing pieces. We now turn our attention to developing the idea of the programming - process divide and its importance as a point of departure in this doctoral thesis.

1.3.2 The Programming - Process Divide

There is a conceptual distinction to be made between two overlapping parts of reintegration. First, there is reintegration as part of DDR policy and programming. This type of reintegration is the *programming activity* of aiding combatants' return to society in their transition from combatant to civilian. Second, there is reintegration as a *process*. This type of reintegration is the set of social and economic processes by which individual ex-combatants return to communities, build economic livelihoods, and perhaps most importantly, rebuild social connections with their families and in the community - reshaping their identity, in their own eyes and in the eyes of society. These are the endogenous processes that ex-combatants themselves navigate, with or without assistance from reintegration programming. Indeed, for as long as there has been war ex-combatants have reintegrated back into society, long before the advent of formal programs to support them in these processes.

The analytical distinction between reintegration as a program and reintegration as a process is not new, though the point is rarely given any explicit consideration. McMullin (2013: 40) frames reintegration processes as "the lived experience of reintegration". Torjesen (2013) reaffirms this distinction between programming and processes by pointing out that due to the voluntary nature of most reintegration programming there are usually some ex-combatants who opt out of reintegration *programming*, but nonetheless return to the home communities to navigate reintegration *processes*. Taking the distinction further, Özerdem & Podder (2011: 5) point out that:

“For sceptics reintegration is essentially a social process, unrelated to DDR programs, which have little to contribute towards the return process and in most instances the family, and the home community of ex-combatants bear the onus of responsibility for reintegration success at an individual level.”

We think of the relationship between programming and processes as more subtle than this. From the perspective of reintegration programming, programming is the subject that acts upon the object of ex-combatants. Inversely, from a reintegration processes perspective ex-combatants themselves are the subjects with agency to act upon objects in their world (McMullin 2013). The point of highlighting this subject-object dichotomy is not to assert that reintegration is caused solely by ex-combatants’ own agency, or to discount the role of reintegration programming, but to open the analytical space for investigating ex-combatants as subjects with agency. In practice, programming and processes are inherently bound - exerting force upon each other. Ex-combatants are acted upon through programming, but they also act upon their world through social and economic processes. The range of agency that ex-combatants are able to exert maybe be shaped or constrained through reintegration programming. In this way reintegration programming and reintegration processes are deeply intertwined.

Literature on reintegration *programming* is abundant and tends to focus on the complex challenges of implementing reintegration programs. Indeed, much of the literature on reintegration originates from organizations with a stake in DDR policy and programming (e.g. UNDP or TDRP), and has thus has inevitably adopted their priorities around programing and policy. Consequently, there has been an overwhelming focus in reintegration literature on the technical and logistical components of program planning and management. This body of literature often draws from a single case to produce what has often been characterized as “lessons learned” or “best practices” literature. Collectively this body of work has been synthesized together into a broad base of programming knowledge, culminating most notably in the IDDRS. While these types of studies have a very real value to reintegration practitioners in terms of programming guidance, they often leave the underlying processes that programs are meant to affect fundamentally undefined with the vague assertion that

“context matters”. Practitioners and scholars alike often speak about the two types of reintegration interchangeably. Most often, when practitioners and scholars talk about reintegration processes they are still actually talking about reintegration programming - i.e. the processes through which reintegration programs are implemented. Indeed, the lack of a clear vocabulary in which to talk about reintegration processes as distinct from programming contributes to the conflation of these two fields. Knowledge about lived reintegration experiences of ex-combatants as subjects with their own agency is often supplanted by the discursive framing of ex-combatants as objects to be affected by reintegration programming (McMullin 2013).

However, understanding the relationship between reintegration programs and reintegration processes is no easy task and the answers to many fundamental questions surrounding reintegration processes remain unclear. What are the social and economic dimensions of reintegration processes? By what mechanisms are these social and economic processes governed? What do reintegration processes look like empirically? Can we measure reintegration processes? To what extent can programming actually affect these processes? Are reintegration processes fundamentally unique to a given context, or is there an underlying structure to them that may exist across multiple contexts? How do individual-level reintegration processes relate to country-level reintegration outcomes? The answers to such questions are of fundamental importance to reintegration policy and programming, and implicitly guide our investigation, opening analytical space, throughout this doctoral thesis. Without a clear understanding of reintegration processes, the prospect of understanding the scope of possible programming impacts and in turn creating meaningful “metrics of success” for reintegration programming will remain a challenging endeavor (Bowd & Özerdem 2013). Indeed, without clear goalposts, including an understanding of the field on which they exist, reintegration policy and programming can risk becoming decontextualized from the very processes they are meant to affect. We call this problematic the programming - process divide.

Recent academic studies on reintegration have begun to move away from the traditional program focused case-study characteristic of earlier reintegration scholarship, to focus instead on individual ex-combatants’ reintegration experiences through large-scale survey

techniques (see e.g. Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008; Kaplan & Nussio 2012; or Porto *et al* 2007). While these studies may still be fundamentally focused on understanding the effectiveness of reintegration programming, such shifts in the unit of analysis open the door to an explicit exploration of individual ex-combatants' reintegration experiences not solely for the purpose of understanding the extent program impacts, but for understanding the very processes through which those impacts can occur. However, such survey-based approaches are still not widely applied, as the ability to capture survey data in volatile and non-permissive post-conflict environments can often necessitate the capacity of large international organizations, most likely those directly involved in the planning, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation of reintegration programming.

The data from the TDRP-GLR reintegration dataset utilized in this thesis represents the cutting edge of available quantitative data on ex-combatant reintegration processes, both in terms of scale and depth. While the TDRP's previous individual country-level analyses of reintegration impacts in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC have revealed much about the dynamics of reintegration in each of these specific country contexts, they have yet to be utilized in a comparative approach (beyond the initial study on which this doctoral thesis is based – Rhea 2014). Indeed, comparison across the GLR countries is methodologically an important step in building knowledge about reintegration processes - as comparison can serve a vital role in hypothesis confirmation, modification or falsification. It is only when we begin to compare outside the first case that the impact of elements that may have been held constant, and thus invisible, become plain to see (Rhea 2011). Indeed, scholars on reintegration, and DDR as a whole, have emphasized that “serious comparison across countries of relevant aspects of conflicts and the programs designed to address them will provide invaluable insight into the complex interaction between DDR programs and social processes beyond the insights a single case can provide” (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010: 42).

A focus on reintegration *processes*, distinct from the *programming activity*, is the frame from which this doctoral thesis departs. In this vein, we endeavor to identify some of the complex and interrelated set of social and economic processes, and the mechanisms that govern them, through which reintegration occurs in the GLR. It is through a careful descriptive and

comparative exploration of the experiences of nearly 10,000 individual ex-combatants and community members from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC represented in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset that we approach reintegration processes. While a direct evaluation of the impacts of reintegration programming in the GLR on these distinct processes is outside the bounds of this doctoral thesis, we engage in hard reasoning about the implications that the reintegration processes in the GLR hold for understanding the scope of *possible* programming impacts – the opportunities and limits.

2 Conceptual Approach

2.1 Introduction: Framing the Conceptual Approach

This chapter will outline the overall conceptual approach used in this doctoral thesis, and consists of three main sections. Before delving into the meat of the conceptual approach, the first section (§2.1) frames reintegration processes as complex phenomena as a backdrop to the conceptual discussion, and then goes on to more deeply unpack the concept of reintegration. The second section (§2.2) explicates the conceptual approach to social reintegration utilized in this doctoral thesis as existing at the nexus of two distinct, yet deeply intertwined concepts: social identity and social capital. The third section (§2.3) focuses on outlining the sustainable livelihoods conceptual framework as a field for understanding economic reintegration.

2.1.1 Reintegration as a Complex Phenomenon

A serious engagement with complexity is fundamental to our conceptual, methodological, and analytical approaches in this doctoral thesis. However, complexity as a meta-theoretical concept that shapes our understanding of theory and methods is not widely applied in the social sciences. Thus, this doctoral thesis will require a considerable investment on the part of the reader to fully appreciate the attempts to engage seriously with the complexity of ex-combatant reintegration processes. Here we introduce complexity in very preliminary terms to two ends; first, to provide a backdrop to the conceptual approach in this chapter; and second, as a primer to the more lengthy development concept of complexity in the methods chapter (§3.2.3) of this doctoral thesis.

When we talk about complexity, or complexity science, we are actually referring to broad collection of influences, ideas, and principles from across the natural sciences (chaos theory, cybernetics, complex adaptive systems) and social sciences (postmodernism), including the broad field of systems thinking, which is found throughout all sciences (Ramalingam *et al* 2008). With these diverse roots, it is perhaps not surprising that, like the term culture, complexity has many definitions each with strengths and weaknesses specific to their fields

of origin. Reading the diverse range of ideas about what complexity is as a mosaic, a consistent area of foundational agreement is that complex phenomena can be characterized as DEEP; that they are not easily **d**escribed, **e**volved, **e**ngineered, or **p**redicted (Page 2011). Ex-combatant reintegration processes fall easily within these characteristics.

Describing the reintegration processes remains a central challenge within the field of DDR. Numerous fundamental questions remain. Describing reintegration processes is difficult because it demands an engagement with an extremely large range of information about a number of intricately interconnected social, political, and economic processes that occur simultaneously, but not necessarily synchronously. At times we describe pieces of reintegration processes, but we rarely approach the complex whole. This lack of fundamental understanding about the broad features of reintegration processes means that they are exceedingly difficult to predict and, in turn, instrumentally affect. As countless pieces of “lessons learned” literature on DDR and reintegration programming evidence (see e.g. Muggah 2008), our view is partial and reintegration processes seldom occur as we envision. Likewise, we are rarely able to evolve or engineer these processes via reintegration programming in the way that is aspired. Indeed, numerous authors on reintegration characterize it as complex (see e.g. Muggah 2010, Theidon 2009, Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010), though seldom, if ever, with any operationalized understanding of the characteristics of complexity, the sources of complexity, and the implications of complexity for the scientific investigation of ex-combatant reintegration processes.

What characteristics further typify the systems that produce complex phenomena? We find Page’s (2011: 6) definition of complex systems especially useful in thinking about this question:

“Complex systems are collections of diverse, connected, interdependent entities whose behavior is determined by rules, which may adapt, but need not. The interactions of these entities produce phenomena that are more than the parts. These phenomena are called *emergent*.”

Page goes on to argue that the underlying source of the complexity of systems is a product of the diversity of the entities that make up that system – in our case the diversity of ex-combatants and community members. Page goes further to elaborate three kinds of diversity: diversity within a type of entity, diversity between types of entities, and diversity in the composition of systems of entities. For us this translates as diversity in the amount of an attribute or characteristic within different types of ex-combatants and community members (e.g. social capital); diversity between different kinds of ex-combatants and community members based on those attributes or characteristics (e.g. demographic subgroups); and diversity in the broader composition of the systems of ex-combatants and community members made up of those different types across the GLR countries (country-level reintegration trajectories). Together, these three kinds of diversity create the structure in which complex, and thus emergent, phenomena of reintegration evolves.

We can linger on the point of emergence. Emergence is the process by which larger scale regularities arise through the interaction of smaller scale entities that themselves do not display such regularities. One of the typical features of emergent processes is that they are non-linear – they are not the linear aggregate of all their component parts, but are a product of the dynamic *interaction* of its component parts and the broader contexts they exist within. In the social world non-linearity is exacerbated further by the cognizance of social agents. As Ramalingam (2008:44) puts it, “the ability of adaptive agents to perceive the system around them and act on these perceptions means that their view of the world dynamically influences, and is influenced by, events and changes within the system.” Indeed, as evidence presented in §7 of this doctoral thesis suggests, ex-combatants are deeply aware of the context in which they act – including the challenges and opportunities embedded within these contexts. This awareness of the reintegration context shapes individual ex-combatants’ actions and, in turn, reflexively shapes that very context in which they act.

We can briefly conceptualize reintegration, and our overall argument in this doctoral thesis, within the terms of complexity. The individual level social and economic processes ex-combatants and community members navigate may be governed by underlying causal mechanisms (*rules*), but the activation of these causal mechanisms is contingent (*may adapt, but need not*) upon contextual factors. Based on the conceptual approach in this chapter, in

§4.2 we will argue that human-capital and natural-capital based livelihood strategies are important mechanisms through which sustainable livelihood outcomes in the processes of economic reintegration take place. In addition, we will argue that marriage is a key mechanism through which social identity negotiation and social capital creation take place in the processes of social reintegration. Each individual ex-combatant's social and economic state is the dynamic (*emergent*) product of all its component parts.

In aggregate, the system of all ex-combatants and community members in a country produces what Page (2011:25) calls "higher order structures and functionalities". For us, these higher order structures and functionalities are the different types of country-level reintegration trajectories. Country-level reintegration trajectories are the product of the respective trajectories of the system of ex-combatants and their interaction with the system of the communities they return to (*diverse, connected, interdependent entities*). The interaction of ex-combatants and communities in a given context produces an overall (*emergent*) country-level reintegration trajectory. We argue in §4.3 that the country-level trajectory of communities plays a structuring role on the possible trajectory of ex-combatants (*rules, which may adapt, but need not*). At this point these arguments should sound very abstract. However, through the development of complexity in the meta-theoretical discussion in the methods chapter (§3.2.2), and subsequent operationalization and application in the analysis chapter (§4), these arguments will become much more concrete.

What we seek to understand in this doctoral thesis is the nature of the diverse and complex processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR countries and the rules that govern them. In the methods chapter we outline our approach in this endeavor as anchored in complex realist approach to science that conceptualizes a search for the "rules" of reintegration as the exploration of the causal mechanisms that underlie reintegration processes. Before we come to that, our task in this chapter is selecting those theories and concepts that we think are most useful, and synthesizing them into an overarching conceptual framework. There are numerous theoretical and conceptual ideas from across the social sciences that can prove invaluable for our query of the processes of ex-combatant reintegration. Which theories and concepts we select will have consequences for our

analysis. Thus, we take a moment to unpack the concept of reintegration more deeply before going on to outline our overall conceptual approach as anchored in social identity, social capital, and sustainable livelihoods theory.

2.1.2 Unpacking Reintegration: Strands from Across the Social Sciences

Reintegration is *the* central term in this doctoral thesis, and thus it is essential that unpack the meaning of reintegration for ex-combatants in post-conflict settings. Many definitions of reintegration focus on the idea of civilianization. In these definitions reintegration is the process of adopting civilian social and economic status. For example, the UN (2015: §4.3) 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 timeframe, 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.”

Civilianization as a basis for reintegration is somewhat problematic. Some ex-combatants may retain access to weapons and continue to rely on them as a source of protection, power, status, or income even once they are no longer a part of an armed group. Are these ex-combatants (i.e. civilians) reintegrated? Likewise, some civilians who have never been part of armed groups may have access to weapons for similar reasons - are they combatants? What about those ex-combatants that reintegrate into the peacetime landscape as a part SSR - finding new lives as a part of national armed forces or police? Surely, these ex-combatants are not civilians. Are the children that are abducted, or women who are forced into sexual slavery, in armed groups ever really combatants, or are they civilian victims? The lines between combatant and civilian are blurry during and after conflict. We should not let the words “combatant” and “civilian” seduce us into believing that neither has elements of the other. In this light, civilianization as the basis for defining reintegration processes seems insufficient.

Indeed, the term reintegration itself can be somewhat misleading. The “re-“ suggests a return to a peacetime life. However, as evidence from the GLR attests, many ex-combatants may have spent their entire adult, or even adolescent, lives within armed groups, and may have no meaningful experience of peacetime life. These ex-combatants may hold only the social and economic skills they acquired as members of an armed group and, as such, may be severely unprepared for life outside of those armed groups. Ex-combatants may not be *re*-integrating, but integrating into a new and unfamiliar social, political, and economic landscape. Even if ex-combatants are *re*-integrating based on previous peacetime experience, it is unlikely that the social, political, and economic landscapes that they once knew have not changed during conflict. Further, even if ex-combatants are returning to a familiar and unchanged peacetime environment, many “peaceful” settings are rife with forms of “structural violence” (Galtung 1996). Indeed, as McMullin (2013: 17) articulates clearly: “In many pre-conflict societies, ‘non-integration’ is the norm, due to political marginalization, poverty, and repressive social systems designed to keep certain segments of the population powerless – especially the youth population... “. The same remains true in post-conflict societies. Ex-combatants may return to communities and attain civilian status, but post-conflict social, political, and economic landscapes may keep them marginalized – non- integrated.

To retain analytical value reintegration must mean more than the mere assimilation of ex-combatants into, possibly unequal or exclusionary, post-conflict landscapes. Rather reintegration must be understood as the processes of ex-combatants’ broader social, political, and economic incorporation into an inclusive society. Where such a socially, politically, and economically inclusive society does not exist, ex-combatant reintegration must be understood as embedded in a broader transformation of post-conflict societies. The special of the case of DRC, presented in §4.3, in which ex-combatants return to settings continuing local insecurity, violence, social fragmentation, and economic marginalization, speaks clearly this point. Essentially ex-combatants in DRC assimilate into a setting of non-integration.

If reintegration is a set of social, political, and economic processes, then we must ask ourselves if these are processes that only ex-combatants navigate, or if are there

components that exists across different contexts than ex-combatant reintegration? What can we learn by looking across the social sciences at other groups that undergo similar transitions? What can we learn? What concepts and theory can we adopt to aid our exploration? If the process of reintegration involves reshaping identity, building trust and acceptance in the community, and establishing a modicum of economic stability, then there may be other groups, such as returning IDPs and refugees, not to mention the community as a whole, that face similar processes in the post-conflict environment.

Indeed, the label of ex-combatant is a discursive frame that the peacebuilding community uses to distinguish ex-combatants for the security threat that they are thought to pose in the post-conflict environment. In this light, it is interesting to note that the analytical distinction between “ex-combatants” in the global south and “veterans” in the global north is often thin. Both ex-combatants and veterans are soldiers returning from combat who face the challenge of reshaping their identity and reentering society. However, the discourses surrounding the security threats they pose, their role in development, and the processes by which they reintegrate into society are separated by vast chasms in the global south and the global north. Indeed, McMullin (2013) gives an extensive account of the role of veterans in state development in USA and England – contrasting this against the discourse on contemporary ex-combatant reintegration. This reading is complimented by the likes of Campbell (2003) and Hannoum (2013). The point here is that while there are very real contextual differences between “ex-combatant reintegration” into post-conflict settings of extreme poverty and social marginalization in the global south, and “veteran reintegration” into settings unaffected by conflict with high levels of social and economic development in the global north, the underlying process that ex-combatants go through, and the causal mechanisms that govern them, may share some similarities.

Interestingly, a group that faces remarkably similar context of reintegration as the vast majority of ex-combatants in the GLR (reintegration into poverty, insecurity, social marginalization, and stigma) as well as a similar discourse of securitization, accompanied by a massive project to aid their reintegration into society, is that of ex-prisoners – especially in North America. Ex-prisoner reintegration in the field of criminology has long addressed the processes by which individuals carry the legacies of their crimes and time in prison as they

attempt to find new identities, return to family structures, find economic independence, build ties in the community and contribute to society. Indeed, in reading contemporary literature on ex-prisoner reintegration one could be forgiven for mistakenly thinking they were reading a work about ex-combatant reintegration (See for example Visser & Travis 2003). Discourse on ex-prisoner reintegration has much to offer the study of ex-combatant reintegration – which would stand to benefit from utilizing a long history of established sociological concepts in understanding reintegration.

To this end, the remainder of this chapter will draw on established concepts in the social sciences revolving around social identity, social capital, and sustainable livelihoods that we believe can offer valuable insights into the process of reintegration that ex-combatants across the GLR face. This chapter proceeds with outlining and synthesizing these distinct yet overlapping bodies of thought from across the social sciences.

2.2 Social Reintegration: The Nexus of Social Identity & Social Capital

In this section we conceptualize social reintegration through the theoretical lenses of social identity (§2.2.1) and social capital (§2.2.2). Essentially, we conceptualize that through the process of shaping, or reshaping, their social identities and gaining a level of acceptance in communities, ex-combatants can expand their connections in the community and leverage this social capital towards tangible social and economic outcomes – including, not least, the establishment of a sustainable livelihood. Thus elements, in turn, contribute to the further cementing of new identities and acceptance in the community. In this sense, social identity negotiation and social capital creation are mutually reinforcing processes that we argue to be at the heart of understanding social reintegration.

2.2.1 Social Identity

In this subsection we present the concept of social identity as a stepping-stone to the broader concept of social capital and in turn the processes of social reintegration. This subsection proceeds in two parts. First (§2.2.1.1), drawing from works from across the social

sciences, social identity is conceptualized as a dynamic and constantly evolving process – in contrast to a static attribute. Second (§2.2.1.2), with this conceptualization in place specific issues of social identity formation and community membership in reintegration, especially stigma and gender, are explored.

2.2.1.1 Conceptualizing Social Identity: A Process, Not a Thing

Social identity is a concept central to our understanding the human experience in the social sciences. Through the concept of social identity we understand ourselves as individuals and as members of collectives; we form expectations about how others will treat us, and in turn how we will treat others. As such, social identity is a crucial marker that shapes the individual and the social world. Jenkins (2014: 6) argues that identification is a “multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities” – in other words a map of what’s what and who’s who. In this sense, identification is not an inherent or predetermined *thing*, but rather it is a *process* of constructing the map of the social world around us, and our place within it (see e.g. Barth 1969, 2000; or Tajfel 1981). Our places, and the places of others, in the map are changeable, negotiable, and dynamic.

Thus we can think of social identity as a meta-concept that that is equally useful for exploring individuals, collectives, and, perhaps most importantly, their interaction (Martin & Dennis 2010). In this way the process of social identity takes on a dialectic character – occurring in the interaction between individuals and the social worlds they navigate. With this conceptualization in mind, Jenkins (2014) argues that social identity is never reaches a fixed or settled position, but rather is continually being shaped and reshaped in a dynamic negotiation with social world around us. Indeed, the word social is redundant – all identities are social identities.

In the context of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR, the interactive process of social identity formation can matter profoundly. For example, whether ex-combatants are perceived by others and themselves as victorious heroes, shamed losers, or even the perpetrators of horrific violence against the very communities to which they return shapes

the process of the construction of their identity - their place in the “maps” of themselves and others. The process of social identity formation for ex-combatants within the communities they return to is important because it can deeply influence how ex-combatants are treated, their access to material and immaterial resources, and in turn their prospects for reintegration into communities.

So if social identity formation is a process of negotiation in the space between individuals and their social surroundings, then what do the workings of this negotiation look like? There is broad agreement across social identity literature that at the foundation of identity formation is a process of comparison of people or things to establish *similarity* and *difference*. Where there has been less agreement is on whether it is the attribution of *either* similarity *or* difference that is primary in the process of social identity formation. The overwhelming majority of literature on social identities emphasizes the role of difference (see e.g. Taylor & Spencer 2004, du Gay *et al* 2000, Woodward 1997). However, Jenkins (2002) (2014), among others (e.g. Anthias 1998, Weeks 1990), is extremely critical of this point. Using classic accounts of social change from the across the social sciences, Jenkins (2014: 25) argues that:

“... collective mobilization in the pursuit of shared objectives is a characteristic theme of history and social change. It may not be the only important process at work, but it is to be found wherever one looks, and, unavoidably, collective politics involves collective imaginings of similarity as well as of difference.”

It seems that just as we must think of identity as a processes occurring in the dialectic space between individuals and collectives, so must we think of the workings of this process as existing in the dialectic space between similarity and difference.

Jenkins (2001) (2002) (2014) cements the idea of social identity processes occurring between individuals and collectives, rather than at exclusively the individual level (as psychologists tend to prefer) or the collective level (as sociologists and social anthropologists tend to prefer) by conceptualizing social identity existing as the composite of three orders: the individual order, the interaction order, and the institution order. The individual order is

made of individuals' understanding of themselves – what goes on in their head. Mead (1934) suggests that at the individual order identity is comprised of both the 'I' (the individual's self-definition as a subject) and the 'me' (the internalized attitudes of others around us about ourselves as an object). Together these two ends of the dialectic are synthesized into the individual order of identity. Ex-combatant's perceptions of trust, inclusion, self-worth, and empowerment in the community are all important dimensions of the individual order of identity.

If the individual order of identity could be called our self-image (that which we perceive inwards), then the interaction order could be called our public-image (that which we project outwards to others). Goffman (1969) has dealt extensively with this idea in what he calls the "presentation of the self". Likewise, in the interaction order Jenkins (2014: 44) points out that "*identity is never unilateral.*" Indeed, social identity is not just asserted from the individual, but must also be received and accepted (or denied) by the collectives around us. The ways in which communities in the GLR perceive ex-combatants in terms of trust, inclusion, and stigma are important dimensions to the interaction order of identity.

Lastly, at the institutional order we reach the side of the individual-collective dialectic in which collectives shape individual identities from outside the individual. This line of thought also finds its roots in Goffman (1968a) (1968b) who described the way in which individual and collective identities are produced and reproduced by social and political institutions in society. Armed groups themselves can be thought of as "total-institutions" (Goffman 1968a) that, through their total envelopment of all aspects of life, shape the social identities of their members. Likewise, one could suggest that DDR programming itself is a sort of institution that can shape ex-combatants identities. Indeed, the very label ex-combatant comes from the peacebuilding community's discourse of DDR and projects many implicit assumptions about who ex-combatants are, their motivations, and the threats they pose. Further, the ex-combatant identity label can take on various negative associations in communities of return. We will return to this point in §2.2.1.2 below.

Another essential dimension to introduce to the analysis presented throughout this doctoral thesis is that of gender. We are not concerned with the physical or biological dimensions of

gender, i.e. sex, but with the “... social construction of what is defined to be masculine or feminine within any particular culture, [which] includes our reflections on symbols, theories, practices, institutions, and individuals.” (Aolain *et al* 2011: 3). Indeed, to neglect the role of gender in social identity would be remiss. For, as Jenkins (2014: 84) notes:

“The meanings of gender differences are locally variable, but that there *is* differentiation is not. [...] In terms of its universality and its consequences for the organization and practice of everyday life, gender is the most significant fault line of identification in the human world.”

As such, remaining conscious of the way that masculinity and femininity organizes individuals’ social, political, and economic (not to mention emotional and intellectual) lives will help to examine the patterned consequences these social identity constructs have for ex-combatants as they face reintegration.

We believe that understanding ex-combatants perception of their own identity within the community, combined with the community’s perception of ex-combatants is essential to understanding their ability to reintegrate into communities – to build social capital that they can leverage towards tangible social and economic outcomes. With this conceptualization of social identity as a process in place we can go forward to outline some of the specific features of social identity negotiation that especially pertinent for exploring ex-combatant reintegration – namely the nature of community membership and the potential negative role of stigma in reintegration.

2.2.1.2 Negotiating Identities & Community Membership in Reintegration

At its outset, the prospect of reintegration represents a sort of identity crisis for ex-combatants. Through participation in DDR most ex-combatants break their ties to armed groups and in doing so may lose their social status, their sense of belonging, their support network, and in turn their economic security. In short, they may lose their identity. For ex-combatants, choosing to give up their arms and return to communities can often be equated to losing what semblance of purpose, prestige, and control they have in their lives, with little

guarantee that it can be reformed outside of armed groups. To understand the processes by which ex-combatants can renegotiate their social identities, and the possible barriers to doing so, we must reflect on the nature of social groups – i.e. the community.

Social groups, or collectives, are essential conceptual building block in the social sciences. Indeed, it seems that without tackling the idea of collectivities it is difficult to think sociologically about anything (Jenkins 2014) - but how do social groups come about? It seems that just as understanding social identity requires an engagement in a dialectic of similarity and difference, so too does understanding collective identity in groups. Barth (1969) (2000) argues that while, like identity, we must think of social group formation and membership as an ongoing dialectic process, it may be that the identification of differences between individuals and collectivities may be at the heart of social group formation. Jenkins (2014: 104) conveys this sentiment well:

“To define the criteria of membership of any set of objects is, at the same time, also to create a boundary, everything beyond which does not belong. It is no different in the human world: one of the things that we have in common is our difference from others. In the face of their difference our similarity often comes into focus.”

Out of difference so emerges similarity – groups. The stratum of social group that we are primarily interested in this doctoral thesis is the community. Since Tönnies (1887) and Durkheim (1883), the concept of community has been an inescapable in the social sciences. Jenkins (2014: 137) defines communities as groups of people with “...a sense of themselves and their fellows as ‘belonging’ *in* a particular locality or setting of relationships and interaction, and *with* – if not *to* – each other”. Indeed, within this basic conception Geertz (1973) and Cohen (1985) argue that communities cannot be said to exist at the ontological level, but rather are collectively constructed through symbols such as shared culture, ethnicity, religion and the beliefs, actions, and rituals they entail. From this view what matters is not that every individual member in a community understand things the same way as every other member, or different from those in other communities for that matter, but that their shared symbols allow them to believe that they do. If communities are socially

constructed then this means that their boundaries may be, as with identity, negotiable, flexible, or even situational.

The benefits of communities are immediate. Communities give a sense of similarity among their members that allows their underlying heterogeneity to prosper, and can thereby create a setting of predictability and trust that opens the space for collective action (discussed further in §2.2.2. on social capital). With this in mind, we can begin to see the importance of identity and community membership for ex-combatants in the GLR. Without being able to reshape their identity and gain community acceptance (membership) ex-combatants' access the essential social and economic support networks that communities in the GLR represent (having forgone those that existed in armed groups) can be severely degraded. In this way, we can say that identity and community membership are important for not only ex-combatants potential reintegration, but also their overall life chances. With this in mind, understanding the barriers to social identity reformation – i.e. the ways in which ex-combatant identities can become “spoiled” and possibly lead to rejection from communities - is essential.

While the process of negotiating identities and community membership in many settings is often automatic, in fluxing post-conflict settings these exchanges can be more a matter of “imposition and resistance, claim and counter claim, rather than a consensual process of mutuality and negotiation” (Jenkins 2014: 97). It is in this space of contested identities where concept of stigma can become salient. For Goffman (1968a) stigma emerges when there is a discrepancy between individuals’ “virtual identity” (the identity they present to others) and their “actual identity” (the externally perceived identity attached to attributes that they actually possess, regardless of how they present themselves) – this is similar to the idea of the individual and interaction orders of identity. When individuals’ actual identity includes undesirable characteristics, they may hide this by presenting themselves as “virtually normal”. For example, ex-combatants may try to adopt post-conflict identities around being a household provider. However, their actual ability to shed their identity in the eyes of the community as a violent and untrustworthy individual, and to be become perceived as family provider may be limited. Stigma is the shame attached to the discord

between these actual and virtual identities in ex-combatants' own eyes, and in the eyes of the community.

In thinking about stigma a paradox emerges for DDR programming. DDR puts ex-combatants out in the open by labeling them as such – exposing their potentially undesirable “actual identities” and limiting their ability to manage the presentation of the self in their “virtual identities”. At the same time, DDR programming must attempt to transform the societal meaning of the very labels it is ascribing. The danger is that the label of ex-combatant can become a “master status” which may act as a barrier to ex-combatants ability to negotiate identities, and ultimately to reintegrate into communities. In the worst cases, this marginalization may feed into the remobilization of ex-combatants, who have few choices for survival, into armed groups. This paradox in reintegration programming presents a dilemma for individual ex-combatants. Stigma and shame can be so powerful that they drive some ex-combatants to avoid identification through DDR programming at all, therefore foregoing the vital material assistance that reintegration programming often represents. This is especially true for female ex-combatants, for whom anecdotal evidence suggests forgo participation in formal DDR programming more often than males in order to avoid the consequences of the stigma attached to the ex-combatant label.

Both Gilligan (2000) and Keen (2008) outline the key emotional role of shame in interpersonal violence. Bowd (2008) and Nadler *et al* (2008) posit that reconciling emotional wounds in the post-conflict landscape is an essential part of peacebuilding, not least of all in the context of ex-combatant reintegration. Further, Porto *et al* (2007: 152), drawing from Lederach (1997) assert: “the notion of reconciliation as an encounter where space for acknowledging the past and envisioning the future are necessary ingredients for reframing the present”. Indeed, reintegration is an encounter, at times even a confrontation, and embedded in this encounter is the process of negotiating identities and community membership.

Understanding the gendered dimensions of the experience of violent conflict highlights the challenges of negotiating social identities in the post-conflict environment. While there are differential experiences of violent conflict for both men and women, it is worth beginning

with the unique experiences of women. Aolain (2011: 5) surmises many of the unique and detrimental experiences of violent conflict well:

“Conflicts affect both men and women, but women face additional issues during and after wars that men do not, including, of course, pervasive sexual violence, forced impregnation, reproductive violence, sexually transmitted diseases, and forced abortion. Women and their children experience internal displacement and dominate the refugee populations across conflicts. Women are also differentially affected because of their role as the primary caretakers of the household and family, in this regard traditional gender dichotomies may be further entrenched and exacerbated during times of extreme violence.”

Indeed, the in the context of violent conflict gendered identities appear in flux. As Aolain points out in the passage cited above, traditional gender roles may become exaggerated during violent conflict. This may be especially true for those women who do not participate in armed fighting directly, but are made subservient to armed groups as camp cooks, messengers, scouts, and “bush wives”. On the other end of the spectrum, there are those women who become active fighters and in doing so challenge traditional norms of femininity. In violent conflict women may find empowerment, mobility, and control over their lives at levels unknown to them within the confines of traditional peacetime gender roles. As such, the prospect of returning to traditional gender roles in the post-conflict landscape may be understandably unattractive. This gendered identity crisis can combine with stigmatization, for having stepped outside of prescribed societal notions of femininity, to create enormous barriers to reintegration for female ex-combatants – barriers that males do not face in the same way. Indeed, Kelly *et al* (2011) outline the disastrous effects of stigma for female ex-combatants in DRC, noting that: “Stigmatization is not just a passive phenomenon; it may also be enacted through frank discrimination; isolation; restricted access to economic opportunity and social support; physical abuse and insults; and alterations in decision-making capacity and power within the household unit.”

While the vast majority of scholarly work on gender in reintegration has focused on the challenges that female ex-combatants face negotiating feminine identities, a gender lens

also adds invaluable depth understanding masculinity in the post-conflict landscape. Indeed, socialization in violent norms within armed groups (see e.g. Vermeij 2011) can contribute to forms of “hyper-masculinity” in which “...the strictures against femininity and homosexuality are especially intense and in which physical strength and aggressiveness are paramount.” (Harris 2000: 793). In the context of DRC, Elbert and Schaur (2013) outline how socialization in violence and hyper-masculine identities can drive “appetitive aggression” in which combatants begin to enjoy committing acts of extreme violence.

While violent masculine identities may serve combatants during violent conflict, indeed such masculine identities may be important for survival within the ranks of violent armed groups, they present a mismatch to the post-conflict landscape. Slegh *et al* (2014: 8) illustrate this point well in their examination of masculinity for ex-combatants in Rwanda:

“As a combatant, it was important for these men to be tough, powerful and in control, while findings show that their perspective on civilian life focuses on wanting to be “good family men”. During this transition, the findings show a gap between ex-combatants’ current perceptions of what it means to be a real man in civilian society and their current opportunities to be such a man. A “real man” is viewed as someone who should provide for the family, live together with his wife and children in a house and own property. However, ex-combatants lost their former status as military men who had guns and power, and they do not yet have an idea of how they can obtain the status of a respected man in their new life.”

The challenges that male ex-combatants face in fulfilling traditional gender norms of masculinity can be further exacerbated by the evolving norms of femininity. Many men may return from conflict to find that, in their absence, women have adopted traditionally masculine roles such as ‘breadwinner’ or ‘protector’ – implicitly challenging men’s role in the home and community. Indeed, women may experience the return of men as a threat to their new roles and freedoms. If the process of reintegration in itself represents an identity crisis for ex-combatants, then an important part of this crisis revolves around gender identities. However, as the discussion here illustrates, masculine and feminine identities do not evolve

in isolation. In violent conflict and in the post-conflict landscape, masculinity and femininity are deeply intertwined and evolve *vis-a-vis* each other. Remaining attentive to the ways in which masculine and feminine notions of identity flux and collude is an essential facet to understanding the broader processes of ex-combatant reintegration (Aolain 2011).

The process of negotiating social identities and community membership is an essential step for ex-combatants as they navigate the process of social reintegration. However, if we want to go further to understand the mechanisms through which social identity formation and community membership can lead to tangible social and economic outcomes for ex-combatants across the GLR there is another piece to the puzzle. For us, the concepts of social identity and community membership must be understood as inlaid within the broader concept of social capital.

2.2.2 Social Capital

In this subsection we build on the previous discussion of social identity to present a conceptualization of social capital as at the core of ex-combatant social reintegration processes. The subsection proceeds in two parts. First (§2.2.2.1), drawing from the foundational works of key authors, a synthesized conceptualization of social capital as comprised of three primary dimensions – bridging, bonding, and linking social capital – is presented. Second (§2.2.2.2), this conceptualization is used to explore the role of social capital in the outbreak and sustaining of violent conflict, and in turn the challenges that exist for individual ex-combatants as they navigate the processes of social reintegration.

2.2.2.1 Conceptualizing Social Capital

The central thesis of the concept of social capital is that - like money, property, or infrastructure - social relationships have value. The value of social relationships is derived from the basis they provide for trust, cooperation, and a broader sense of social cohesion across strata in society. With this social cohesion individuals and groups are able to work together to achieve outcomes that they could not have, or could have only with great difficulty, achieved on their own.

To illustrate the idea of social capital we can immediately think of ex-combatants returning to communities in the GLR. Without social connections (a social network) in the community, many ex-combatants may struggle towards both social and economic reintegration. Because of the extreme challenges characteristic in the GLR, state institutions have very limited capacity to deliver social services. Thus, the social and economic support individuals receive, ex-combatant or otherwise, is almost exclusively accessed through familial and communal networks. Ex-combatants returning to communities without the support of an immediate family network may be more exposed to material deficit such as food, housing, and income insecurity – exacerbating their already impoverished position. Further, without accessing broader community networks by building relationships through the slow processes of confrontation, atonement, and reconciliation ex-combatants can face further barriers to building trust and acceptance in the community – which can in turn have real effects in terms of their social and economic reintegration, e.g. the prospect of marriage and the establishment of a sustainable economic livelihood.

Clearly relationships matter very much for ex-combatants attempting to reintegrate into communities after prolonged periods of violent conflict. In this way we can see clearly that the concept of social capital is deeply rooted in our previous discussion of social identity and community membership. Just knowing people is not enough if they do not feel obliged to help you (Field 2008). This is why social identity and community membership are important overlapping concepts embedded within social capital. Some have even argued (e.g. Delanty 2003) that, without being operationalized within the framework of social capital, the concept of community is far too imprecise for serious empirical investigations (though many social anthropologists may disagree!). For us social identity and community membership and social capital are symbiotic, merely facets of the broader processes of social reintegration.

As early as de Tocqueville (1832), Tönnies (1887), and Durkheim (1893) social theorists have been interested in the value of social relationships. Indeed, Putnam (2000) suggests that the idea of social capital was invented at least six times in the 20th century alone. In early works though, the concept of social capital was rarely more than a metaphor. However, there is broad consensus (see e.g. Field 2008) that the idea of social capital came into prominence,

moving from metaphor to operationalized concept, starting in the 1980's through the works of Bourdieu (1980), Coleman (1994), and Putnam (2000). Especially since Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone* the concept of social capital has seen continued adoption across academic spheres as well as in policy applications – not least of all by the World Bank and OECD (see e.g. Grootaert & Bastelaer 2002). Understanding the emergence of social capital through the works of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam is an important stepping-stone to explicating the conceptualization of social capital utilized in this doctoral thesis, and thus our discussion begins there.

Today Bourdieu is perhaps most associated with the development of the concept of “habitus” – sets of values and ways of thinking dynamically formed through the interaction of individual agency and the structuring forces of society. Indeed, the concept of habitus would be the impetus to Bourdieu's eventual elaboration of social capital. Within their habitus, groups were able to use cultural symbols as “cultural capital” to both signal and constitute their position in society. It is important to understand that Bourdieu was primarily interested in explaining social hierarchy, especially social class, and other forms of entrenched inequality. As such, cultural capital was the grease in the wheels of the machine of social reproduction that maintained disparities in access to economic capital. However, there was still a piece missing. Bourdieu (1980: 2) notes that:

“... different individuals obtain a very unequal return on a more or less equivalent capital (economic or cultural) according to the extent to which they are able to mobilise by proxy the capital of a group (family, old pupils of elite schools, select club, nobility, etc.).”

Bourdieu was acknowledging that individual's position in social hierarchy is maintained not only by their levels of cultural and economic capital, but also by the extent that they were able to mobilize the capitals of others around them. In other words, social relationships have value. Bourdieu (1980)(1984) used the example of professionals such as doctors or lawyers using their social networks to actualize economic (e.g. referring clients) or cultural (honorability or respectability) capital in ways that those individuals with the same

credentials but lacking a rich social network would not be able to achieve. As such, Bourdieu defined social capital as:

“Social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”

(Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 119)

Bourdieu’s conceptualization, while foundational, is not without points of weaknesses. First, remember that Bourdieu was trying to explain class hierarchy and entrenched inequality – for him this meant offering an alternative to Marxist explanations these phenomena. However, much like Marx conceptualized capital as exclusive to the elite, so too did Bourdieu conceptualize social capital as a property that only elites use to secure their societal position. This is problematic, as there is good reason to think that social capital plays a vital role in the lives of even the most impoverished peoples. As Coleman (1994) argues, relationships matter not just for elites, but for everyone. A second important point of critique is that Bourdieu saw social capital as an inherently positive force. Yes, it could maintain inequality by denying access to cultural and economic capital to those who lack it, but its presence was always positive for those who possessed it. This is not always the case and the social capital has a “dark side” too, but we will come to this point later. Nonetheless, Bourdieu has played a key role in the progress of social capital from pure metaphor to analytical concept (Field 2008).

While Bourdieu was interested in explaining social class, Coleman (1990) first came to the concept of social capital through his research on education and career achievement. For Coleman everyone had social capital, regardless of their class or status. For Coleman this social capital was an important explanatory factor understanding variation in levels of career achievement within groups of equivalently educated individuals. In this context, similar to Bourdieu, Coleman (1994: 300) defined social capital as:

“... the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child

or young person. These resources differ for different persons and can constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents...”

Within this conceptualization Coleman would acknowledge social capital formation as not only an important part of gaining future work credentials, but also of overall cognitive development and social identity formation (Field 2008). Coleman’s understanding of social capital informed, and evolved with, his broader effort to merge sociology and economics in a more general explanation of social order (see Coleman 1994). As such, Coleman subscribed to a rational choice lens for understanding many social interactions. For Coleman, social capital was a way to understand why people cooperate even when their interests might be best served by competition (i.e. the collective action problem). Essentially, Coleman thought social capital could explain cooperation via the expectation of reciprocation (*quid pro quo*). In this way, Coleman’s conceptualized social capital was as broad force working that guided cooperation and competition in a manner similar to idea of the “invisible hand” of the classic market economy (Field 2008).

Despite key differences, Coleman’s work shares many parallels with Bourdieu, and thus faces similar lines of criticism. Though Coleman took a step forward by exploring social capital as a force existing in the lives of all individuals, beyond the province of elite class reproduction, he still saw social capital, like Bourdieu, through perhaps naively optimistic eyes. Social capital allowed cooperation for mutual gain and had little, if any, “dark side”. Also like Bourdieu, Coleman was inattentive to the role of affect, the idea that not all social network relationships are equal – there are relationships of like, love, loathing, etc. (Field 2008). Affect can determine the value and function of relationships. Despite these points of critique, Coleman’s work is still an important step in understanding the evolution of social capital, especially as it would emerge in the work of Putnam.

While Bourdieu and Coleman were coming at social capital from the view of sociology, Putnam came from political science. While Putnam’s early conceptualization of social capital, used to explain civic engagement in Italy (1993), can largely be seen as an extension of Coleman’s own ideas, it was when he shifted focus to explaining the decline of civic engagement in the United States since the 1960’s that Putnam’s work proved especially

innovative. In his book *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam outlines the decline of civic participation in the USA in terms of voter turnout, public meetings attendance, various forms of committee and political service volunteering, as well as overall feelings of trust in the government. Putnam goes on to argue that a parallel decline can be seen in broader forms of civic engagement such as membership or participation in organizations such as religious groups, labor unions, educational associations, leisure groups such as Boy Scouts or organized league sports, fraternity organizations such as the Elks Club or Freemasons, and etc. Putnam argues that the decline of broader civic participation meant that individuals had less contact with others across society and are thus less likely to engage in the sort of civic discussion that might occur in those settings – and in turn less likely to engage in civic matters. Individuals have smaller networks and thus less social capital. In Putnam’s analysis, the value of social capital is not just to individuals or groups, but resides in the way this value aggregates into collective action that drives political functions at the national level. Putnam offers a number of social (e.g. women’s broader integration into the workforce) and technological (e.g. the individualization of leisure via television) shifts to explain the long-term erosion of social capital in the United States.

The evocative image provoked from the title of Putnam’s book, and previous paper, *Bowling alone* (1995) (2000) of an individual bowling in solitaire gave force to Putnam’s points. However, Putnam’s metaphor was slightly more complex than this image suggests (Field 2008). Putnam’s point was not that Americans played in isolation, but that they were ever less likely to play in an organized league that would expose them to broader segments of society, create space for civic discussion and action, and broaden their social capital. Instead, individuals were more likely to play with closer groups of family and friends. In asserting this point Putnam made perhaps his greatest contribution to thought on social capital; the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam built these subtypes as a deeper elaboration of Granovetter’s (1973) ideas about strong (bonding) and weak (bridging) ties. Bonding (exclusive) social capital is that that exists in networks of close relationships with individuals in similar situations such as family members, close friends, or neighbors and can bolster social identity and group loyalty. Bridging social capital (inclusive) is that which exists in networks of looser relationships such as acquaintances or work colleagues and can generate broader identities and reciprocity. In other words, “Bonding

social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40” (Putnam 2000: 23).

For Putnam the decline in civic engagement in the United States was due to social and technological shifts that affected a decline in networks of bridging social capital and an emerging primacy of bonding social capital. This shift in balance between the two forms of social capital was problematic in Putnam’s eyes. Essentially, without the ameliorating effects of bridging social capital, which can bring together individuals from diverse groups, “bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism...” (Putnam 2000: 23) which can undermine broader societal cooperation in the form of civic engagement.

While Putnam offers a powerful account of the role of social in civic engagement, backed by meticulous empirical data, his work is not without criticism. Like Bourdieu and Coleman, Putnam still understands social capital as fundamentally good and pays little explicit heed to the ways in which social capital can be instrumentalized for malicious outcomes. Some authors (see e.g. Misztal 2000) have criticized Putnam as “romanticizing the community”. Also like Bourdieu and Coleman, Putnam offers a generally ahistorical account of social capital in which “the volume of social capital may grow or diminish with time... but not that its components and outcomes may alter...” (Field 2008: 45). However, unlike Bourdieu and Coleman, Putnam offers an essentially bottom up conceptualization of social capital that leaves little space for the top down role of institutional and state agency in shaping social capital - if you will, Bourdieu’s “structuring structures” (to be discussed in §3.2.3). Yes, social capital may affect the functioning of the state, but the state may reflexively shape social capital at the lower levels of society.

Two other points of criticism on social capital in the works of all three authors are worth noting. First, none of the three foundational authors offers an elaboration of social capital that can take into account the role that context plays in the value of social capital. Not all social capital is equal. Putnam (2000: 21) points out the problem by using physical capital as an analogy:

“An eggbeater and an aircraft carrier both appear as physical capital in our national accounts, but the eggbeater is not much use for national defense, and the carrier would not be much help with your morning omelet. Similarly, social capital – that is, social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity – comes in many different shapes and sizes with many different uses.”

Indeed, in the works of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam social capital lacks the conceptual specificity to outline the precise mechanisms that govern social capital and the conditions under which these mechanisms operate, and thus straddles the void between metaphor and concept (Field 2008). Second, it is also worth noting that none of the three key authors of social capital presented gives a meaningful account of the role of gender in the social capital. Nonetheless, while Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam’s works all have their respective strengths and weaknesses, they are the foundation from which all works on social capital in the last 15 years have proceeded, and thus inform our operationalization of social capital going forward.

While Putnam contributed greatly to the literature on social capital by popularizing the ideas of bridging and bonding social capital, he gave little explicit attention to logical conclusion of there being multiple dimensions to social capital – namely, that different combinations of bridging and bonding capital could lead to different outcomes for society. Michael Woolcock was perhaps the first to deal with this issue in a systematic manner. Woolcock & Narayan (2000) agree with Putnam’s idea that bridging social capital is important for the civic functioning of the state. Indeed, they ultimately argue that low levels of bridging social capital in settings outside the west can be linked to forms social and economic inequality at a national level, and even as a contributing factor to the outbreak of violent conflicts. We will return to this point in the next section (§2.2.2.2), however for now we can question how Woolcock & Narayan account for the fact that there are settings where bridging social capital appears low or in decline, e.g. the United States if we accept Putnam’s (2000) analysis, but where the associated conflicts are not present.

To account for this issue Woolcock (2001) suggests that a third type of social capital, “linking” social capital, conditions the effects of bridging and bonding social capital levels on

potential conflicts. Linking social capital is the formal and informal connections between individuals and communities to the higher-level structures and institutions of the state and market. These higher-level structures could be, for example, powerful elites or institutional and bureaucratic structures. Halpern (2005: 24) puts it well when he explains that linking social capital is all about "...how closely tied, or embedded, the state is to or in the society over which it presides". Linking social capital is the force that aggregates the potential for collective action found in bridging and bonding social capital to the national level. The implicit argument (present since Putnam 1993) is that aggregate logic of social capital is the foundation on which strong democracies are built. So for Woolcock (2001), the outcome produced by low levels of bridging social capital between communities in a society is conditioned by the overall density of connections between communities and higher-level structures and institutions in the state or market. Bowd (2008) summarizes Woolcock's overall point well, and in doing so captures the interplay between the state and communities as simultaneously shaping each other:

"... the state is the ultimate provider of public goods and the final arbiter and enforcer of the rule of law, as well as being the actor most able to facilitate enduring alliances across the boundaries of class, ethnicity, race, gender, politics, and religion. However, communities and firms also have an important role to play in creating the conditions that produce, recognize, and reward good governance."

So now we have bridging, bonding, and linking as the three dimensions of social capital. Halpern (2005) argues that there are three components to social capital in each dimension: the actual social networks that constitute the various dimensions of social capital; the norms, values, and expectations that exist for members of those networks; and the sanctions in those networks for norm breaking behavior. The last two pieces, norms and sanctions, is where the previously outlined concept of social identity becomes especially salient. The dynamics of negotiating social identity and group membership (networks in the language of social capital) seat well within our expanding framework of social capital.

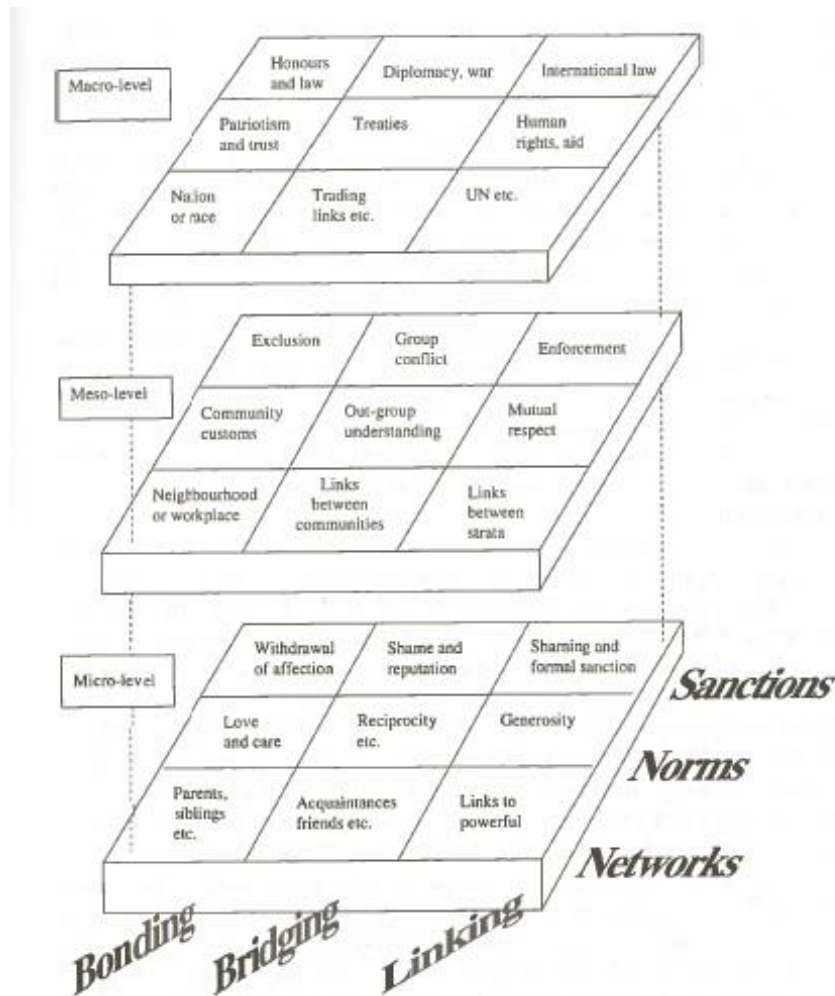


Figure 2.1 – Social Capital Conceptual Map. Reproduced from Halpren (2005).

Halpren (2005) argues further that in taking into account both the bottom-up and top-down nature of social capital as a function networks between various strata of society, from the individual to the state, we can map the concept of social capital at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Halpren's (2005: 27) conceptual map of social capital (reproduced in *Figure 2.1*) collects the analytical contributions of the key authors before him and provides us with the conceptual space to elaborate a more specific exploration of the role of social capital in ex-combatant reintegration in the following subsection.

2.2.2.2 The Transformation Social Capital in Violent Conflict and Reintegration

The conceptual framework of social capital has much to offer for understanding the outbreak of violent conflict, the transformation of social capital in violent conflict, and thus the challenges that lay ahead once hostilities cease and peacebuilding begins. As mentioned

above, Woolcock & Narayan (2000) argue that levels of bridging social capital, conditioned by levels of linking social capital, can play a role in explaining the outbreak of conflict. As is visible in *Figure 2.2*, dysfunctional states (low linking social capital) create the context in which varying levels of bridging social capital lead to different outcomes. Reflecting loosely on the GLR, we can say that the five states examined in this doctoral thesis all likely fall somewhere on the bottom half of the continuum between well-functioning states and dysfunctional states (this may even be generous). In terms of bridging social capital across the GLR, loose reflection would suggest that there is considerable variation. However, the sharp socio-cultural and ethno-religious divides in the region likely play a role in maintaining bonding social capital, while possibly limiting the expansion of bridging social capital. Especially in rural regions, geography combined with dilapidated infrastructure and seasonal rains can mean that travel is near impossible for many in the GLR. In effect, the kind of movement of people that facilitates the expansion of bridging networks through simple exposure can be extremely limited. Within Woolcock & Narayan’s framework, we can loosely think of the balance of social capital in the GLR countries as likely playing some role in their flux between periods of conflict and coping over the last decades.

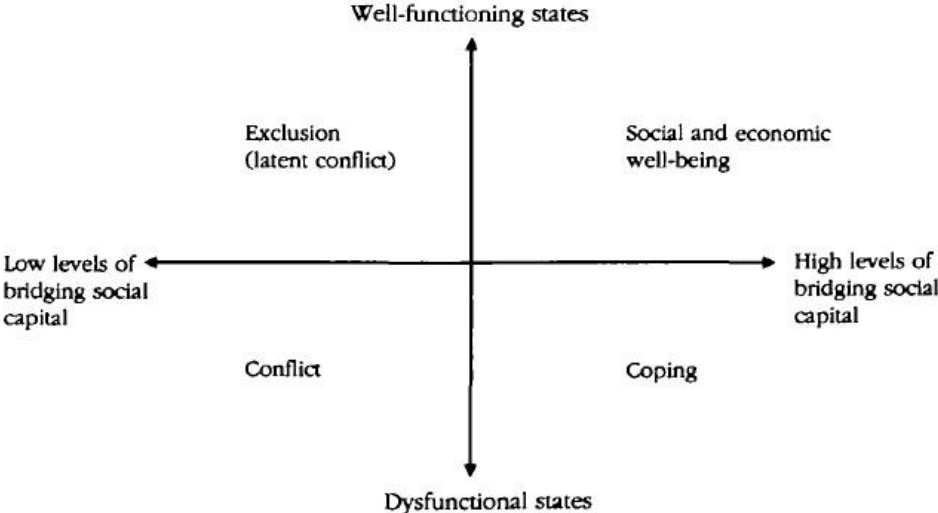


Figure 2.2 – Relationship between levels bridging social capital and state functionality for conflict. Reproduced from Woolcock & Narayan (2000).

While Woolcock & Narayan's (2000) framework on conflict and social capital is useful, it is not without weaknesses. The first notable point is that the horizontal axis in framework implicitly conceptualizes intrastate conflict a product of state functionality. However, as we have seen in §1.2.1, the conflicts in the GLR include numerous transnational and local dynamics. That is, state power structures are not the only ones that have been important in the GLR. Also notable is the lack of explicit attention to the role of bonding social capital. The implicit idea - present in the works of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam – is that strong bonding social capital can create “in-groups”, and thus by definition also create relative “out-groups”. Recall from our previous discussion of social identity that: “To define the criteria of membership of any set of objects is, at the same time, also to create a boundary...” (Jenkins 2014: 104). Woolcock & Narayan (2000) assume that when there are weak connections across different networks (low bridging social capital) that these isolated networks are strong in-group networks (high bonding social capital). These implicit ideas need further clarification. What role could bonding social capital play in the outbreak of violent conflict?

Colletta & Cullen (2000) address exactly these issues by making explicit the role of bonding social capital that remains only implicit in the Woolcock & Narayan (2000) framework. Colletta and Cullen break bridging, bonding, and linking social capital into the two categories of horizontal (bridging and bonding) and vertical (linking) social capital. As is visible in *Figure 2.3*, bridging and bonding social capital are seen as existing on opposite ends of the continuum of horizontal (ties across society) social capital. Conflict occurs when horizontal social capital is balanced towards the predominance of strong bonding networks in society. This is balance between bonding and bridging conditioned, similar as to in the Woolcock & Narayan framework, by the balance of vertical social capital. However, unlike the Woolcock & Narayan framework which sees this vertical dimension as merely state functionality, the Colletta & Cullen framework conceptualize it as a continuum between macro level connections to the state and markets at one end, and micro level connections to communities and individuals at the other. Colletta & Cullen (2000)(2002) argue that when the horizontal and vertical dimensions of social capital are in “synergy” (what Woolcock & Narayan 2000 call “complementarity”) they contribute greatly to the overall cohesiveness of society. This condition of social cohesion is central to Colletta & Cullen's framework.

“Social cohesion is the key intervening variable between social capital and violent conflict. The greater the degree to which vertical linking and horizontal bridging social capital integrate, the more likely it is that the society will be cohesive and will thus possess the inclusive mechanisms necessary for mediating or managing conflict before it turns violent. The weaker the social cohesion, the weaker will be the reinforcing channels of socialization (value formation) and social control (compliance mechanisms). Weak social cohesion increases the risk of social disorganization, fragmentation, and exclusion and the potential for violent conflict.”

In the passage cited above, Colletta & Cullen (2000: 13) elegantly assemble the various strands of social capital, and by implication social identity, and their interrelated role in violent conflict. Further, their mention of “value formation” and “compliance mechanisms” maps especially well onto our earlier presentation of Halpren’s (2005) idea of networks (social groups in the language of social identity theory) being comprised of norms and sanctions.

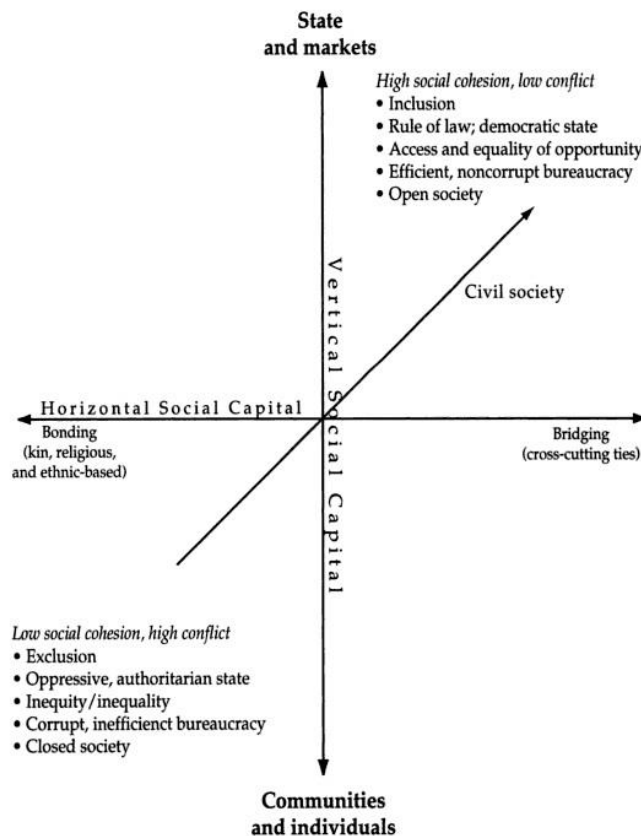


Figure 2.3 - Horizontal and Vertical Social Capital. Reproduced from Colletta & Cullen (2002).

If social capital plays a role in shaping the potential for violent conflict, then it is most certainly transformed during violent conflict. While traditional interstate conflict may in fact draw on national unity and turn contribute social cohesion, this is unlikely to be the case in the forms of, primarily, intrastate conflict pervasive through much of the GLR in the 1990's and early 2000's. Colletta & Cullen (2002: 279) paint the picture starkly:

“...intrastate conflict divides the population, undermines interpersonal and communal group trust, and destroys norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for the common good, decimating social capital stocks – and, thus, exacerbating communal strife. This damage to a nation’s social fabric impedes the ability of states and communities to recover after hostilities cease. Even if other forms of capital are replenished, economic and social development will be hampered unless social capital stocks are restored.”

As the analysis presented in §4.2.3 suggests, the GLR countries have seen a profound erosion of social capital due their prolonged, and in the case of DRC ongoing, exposure to violent conflict. In the post-conflict landscape the task of rebuilding social capital - reweaving the social fabric of society by building bridging and bonding relationships based on shared norms, and establishing the modicum of trust and social cohesion necessary for post-conflict recovery to progress is a monumental task. From the peacebuilder's perspective, the size of the task of facilitating the rebuilding of social capital is matched by the difficulty of affecting such an intangible resource. Though post-conflict peacebuilding measures such as reconciliation programs (e.g. truth commissions, see e.g. Bowd 2008) and transitional justice measures (e.g. amnesty commissions, see e.g. Rose 2008) can provide a setting where the process of confrontation and atonement can begin, they cannot serve as a substitute for slow societal dialogue of "acknowledging the past and envisioning the future [... as] necessary ingredients for reframing the present" (Porto *et al* 2007: 152, see also Lederach 1997). Put plainly, groups cannot be made to interact with and trust one another. Further, in some cases (e.g. Sierra Leone) a reconciliation process may not be back by popular support from communities, who instead prefer a "forgive and forget" approach (see Shaw 2005).

Thus far our discussion of social capital in violent conflict and peacebuilding has focused on various forms of social capital at the meso-level and their connection to the macro-level (see *Figure 2.1* above), but what does all this mean for individual ex-combatants? Indeed, while outlining some features of the meso-macro levels of social capital provides essential context, in this doctoral thesis we are primarily engaged with exploring social capital at the micro-level of individuals. It is here, in shifting focus to the micro-level, that we can begin to see that our previous discussion of social identity in §2.2.1 seats into the concept of social capital in a complementary manner.

We can think of Individuals as existing in a landscape of social networks. The individual relationships represented in these networks can take different forms. Those sets of relationships that form tight networks of mutual norms (be they social, cultural, ethnic, religious, or etc.) can be thought of as communities. In terms of social capital, the resources that these communities represent to their members is bonding social capital. When

individual ex-combatants engage in the process of negotiating identity and community membership, they are in part negotiating access to a network of bonding social capital. This bonding social capital facilitates an environment of trust in which forms of collective social action can take place. For example, in the GLR state provision of social support is negligible and instead the primary source of basic social support is delivered to individuals through the collective action of familial and communal networks. Gaining access to these networks of bonding social capital may prove vital to ex-combatants immediate prospects in the broader processes of reintegration. However, as de Souza Briggs (1998) notes, bonding social capital is important for “getting by”, but truly “getting ahead” requires bridging social capital. Indeed, as ex-combatants move through the processes of social and economic reintegration their ability to use bonding social capital, and the trust that it represents, as a springboard for expanding their networks to include relationships that represent bridging social capital may dictate their ability to flourish.

The consequence of faltering in the process of negotiating identity and community membership may be social isolation and the associated deficiency in social capital. As Field (2008: 48) notes: “... it is well established in the social sciences that socially isolated people face severe risks to their well-being”. The negative effects of social isolation for individuals’ well-being can include low sense of self-worth and low sense of empowerment that undermine their ability to participate in society. Inversely, stable and dense networks facilitate individuals’ general sense of self-worth and belief in their ability to affect change in their lives (Campbell 2000). The consequences of social isolation are not only psychosocial, but extend to the economic realm. Those without social acceptance within the community (bonding social capital) or broader social connections that transcend their immediate family or community networks (bridging social capital) may face considerable barriers to leveraging their skills and resources towards tangible economic improvements. This is especially true in the context of the GLR countries, where the economy is almost entirely informal. As discussed in the analysis presented in §4.2, social isolation can amplify the weaknesses of ex-combatants who are already economically disadvantaged. For example, those ex-combatants in the GLR with weak social capital may have trouble accessing socially allocated labor opportunities or, in the case of small business, a loyal customer base.

It seems that social identity and social capital are inextricably, and at times paradoxically, interrelated. Ex-combatants need to navigate the process of negotiating social identity and community membership in order to gain access to social capital. Simultaneously, without any bonding connections in the community ex-combatants' ability to engage in the process of negotiating social identity and community membership may remain limited. Though far from the only influencing factor, social isolation and the lack of social capital it represents, especially when combined with stigma, can feed into deviant behavior (Halpern 2001). In terms of reintegration in the GLR, the most worrisome form of deviance is remobilization into armed groups. Indeed, armed groups themselves can effectively serve as a replacement for the community - forming tight and cohesive networks based on strict norms and harsh sanctions. This abundance of bonding social capital within the setting of armed groups allows decisive collective action, albeit for often perverse or destructive aims. Indeed, Leff (2008: 13) notes that: "During armed conflict, social capital is often hijacked and used to form allegiances in the warring parties. In other words, combatants join a new social unit that rewards them with social status and means to earn a living."

Many irregular armed groups in the GLR, especially those that rely on forced recruitment, rely on powerful processes of identity formation to foster group loyalty strong enough to facilitate the execution of otherwise socially immoral acts of violence. In societies with weak bridging and linking social capital, armed groups may represent a sense of empowerment and mobility where there otherwise is little (see e.g. Baas 2012, Bøås & Dunn 2007, Uvin, 2007, or Utas 2005). In this sense, social identity and social capital help us to understand some of the factors that may contribute to the mobilization of individual combatants in the lead up to conflict, but also highlights the challenges they can face in wake violent of conflict – now possibly estranged from very communities into which they must reintegrate. In this light, we can see that social identity and social capital help illuminate at least some dimensions of the cycles of violence in the GLR in which ex-combatants continually remobilize into new or different armed groups - perpetually stalling the transition to peace.

Returning to our previous analogy of social identities as a map that "...enable individuals to both locate themselves in the social order and navigate effectively with that social order" (Kramer 2006: 29). Social capital then is the vehicle that individuals use to expedite their

path through the social landscape. To some extent, individual ex-combatants may be able to achieve tangible social and economic outcomes on their own. However, they will undoubtedly do so more quickly and with fewer barriers when supported by the collective action of a strong social network.

The processes of social reintegration at the individual level are thought to aggregate upwards to the meso and macro levels (refer to *Figure 2.1*) to constitute, in part, the broader societal shift towards peace. However, social reintegration processes do not occur in a vacuum. As outlined in §2.1.1., we conceptualize reintegration processes as fundamentally complex – the product of an intricately interconnected and simultaneously occurring set of social, economic, and political processes. As Field (2008: 151) notes: “Of course, social capital can only marshal resources where they already exist. It is not a substitute for credit, infrastructure, education and skills – but it can increase their yield by reinforcing statutory with voluntary effort, and sanctioning malfeasance”. In maintaining our analogy - even with a map and a vehicle individuals will still need fuel to propel them forward. In reality separating out the social from the economic or the political may prove futile – they are all distinct parts of an inseparable whole – however here there is analytical clarity to be gained through examining each piece in relative isolation. With this in mind, we turn from this focused conceptualization of social reintegration to one of economic reintegration.

2.3 Economic Reintegration: Sustainable Livelihoods

This section conceptualizes economic reintegration through the sustainable livelihoods framework. Economic reintegration is the process through which ex-combatants close education and skills gaps and, in turn, establish an income generating activity that can be sustained through the inherent challenges of the post-conflict environment. The benefits of a sustainable livelihood are not only economic, but rather there are numerous collateral outcomes – in that economic reintegration can directly impact, and be impacted by, the social reintegration processes of social identity reformation and social capital accumulation outlined in the previous sections. Here we proceed in two subsections. In the first subsection (§2.3.1), the sustainable livelihoods conceptual framework is presented. In the

second subsection (§2.3.2), specific issues of ex-combatant reintegration within the conceptual framework are considered.

2.3.1 Conceptualizing Sustainable Livelihoods

Sustainable livelihoods is an analytical and normative framework that attempts to transcend traditional conceptualizations of poverty, e.g. as revolving around low income or as a result of low market demand, and instead takes into account the broader range of local factors, such as the overall vulnerability context or social exclusion dynamics, that shape individuals' ability to secure their basic needs in a sustainable manner. The sustainable livelihoods framework began to emerge in the early 1990's, however its conceptual roots can be traced back in part to Evans-Pritchard's (1940) examination of the Sudanese Nuer's ways of "making a living" in a setting almost completely disconnected from a modern economy. Conceptually Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944) and *The Livelihood of Man* (1977) also provide important foundational strands. Polanyi argued that before the advent of the market economy, the individual and collective rational of exchange was based on reciprocity and redistribution. As the market economy began to emerge there was a social and cultural transformation in which the rational of exchange moved towards individual utility maximization. In this way, Polanyi argued that in this way economic activity has to be understood as socially, culturally, and historically embedded. This point remains relevant as we explore ex-combatant livelihoods in the GLR.

Today Chambers & Conway (1992) are commonly cited as the impetus to the modern conceptualization of sustainable livelihoods. Chambers & Conway (1992) argue that three traditional ways of thinking about poverty were insufficient. First, "production thinking" in which underproduction leads to poverty conditions is insufficient. From this view, features of poverty such as malnutrition, or even famine, would be seen as issues of underproduction of resources. However, works such as those of Sen (1981) show that, specifically in the example of famine, the source of food shortages in famine rarely a matter of supply, but is rather based on numerous social and political factors such as entitlements to access food resources. More recently, Keen (1994) has outlined the ways in which the distribution of and access too food resources were manipulated towards political aims during the Sudanese

famine of the 1980's - in essence the famine was not a product of a lack of available food resources, constructed through the direction (and misdirection) of food resources.

Understanding the resource production is important, but it provides far too narrow a lens for understanding poverty.

Second, "employment thinking" in which lack of employment is seen as the overarching source of poverty is insufficient. While employment thinking may play a greater role in developed market economies, the idea of every individual having a "job" is deeply mismatched with under developed rural market realities predominant across many poverty settings, not least of all the GLR. In these rural settings formal employment may not exist and individuals often ensure economic stability through adopting a diverse range of informal or semi-formal activities - in the sense that are largely disconnected from broader market structures and institutions. Lastly, "poverty-line thinking" in which low incomes are the source of poverty is also insufficient. There are many dimensions to deprivation and wellbeing, as perceived by poor rural people, which are not captured by income measures – social and emotional not the least. Further, two important characteristics that Chambers & Conway identify in all three of these lines of thinking is their industrialized country imprint and their reductionism for ease of measurement. Ultimately, Chambers & Conway (1992: 3) argue that production, employment, and poverty-line thinking "do not fit or capture the complex and diverse realities of most rural life".

As an alternative to traditional modes of thinking about poverty and poverty alleviation Chambers & Conway (1992) suggest that three factors needed to be taken into account (presented in *Figure 2.4*). Individuals' capabilities (i.e. knowledge and skills), their equity (i.e. their tangible and intangible resources), and the sustainability of the resulting livelihood (as a conglomerate of activities) in the face of stresses and shocks. Chambers and Conway emphasize the dynamism of a livelihoods approach by pointing out that capabilities and equity not only shape one another, but that they are simultaneously the means and ends of a livelihood.

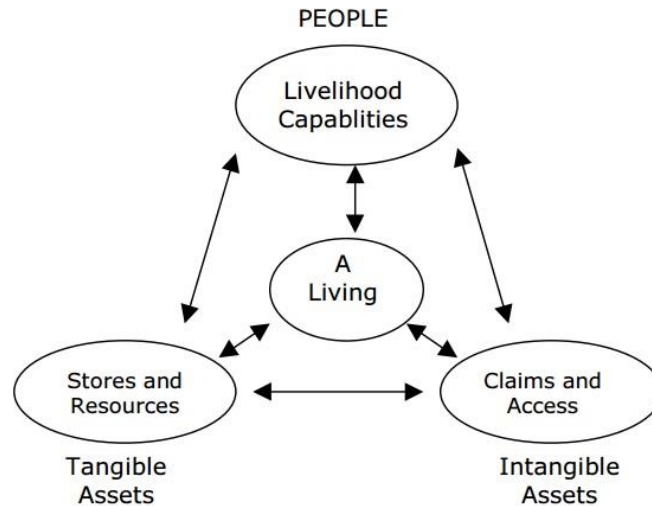


Figure 2.4 – Components of a Livelihood. Reproduced Chambers & Conway (1992)

What is not visible in *Figure 2.4* above is the dimension of sustainability, i.e. the ability of an individual’s livelihood to cope with stresses and shocks. “Stresses are pressures which are typically continuous and cumulative, predictable and distressing, such as seasonal shortages, rising populations or declining resources, while shocks are impacts which are typically sudden, unpredictable, and traumatic, such as fire, floods and epidemics” (Chambers & Conway 1992:10). We would add violent conflict to that list. Though environmental sustainability is also a part of the Chambers and Conway framework, today this dimension is largely absent in sustainable livelihoods frameworks.

Chambers and Conway’s (1992) ideas on sustainable livelihoods would begin to gain traction at the end of the 1990s, when it would become a boundary term that attracted different disciplinary and professional perspectives (Scoones 2009). The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) is most responsible for the proliferation of the sustainable livelihoods frameworks. Farrington *et al* (1999), commissioned by DFID, designed what is today the most widely applied and recognized form of the sustainable livelihoods framework. At this point sustainable livelihoods moved from a position as a conceptual and analytical framework to that of a full-blown normative policy framework. However, this is not to say that there were no conceptual contributions in the emerging normative framework. One of greatest contributions from the Farrington *et al* (1999) was its deeper

conceptualization of the kinds of resources that individuals living in poverty hold. While Chambers & Conway (1992) only divide individuals’ resources (in their words “equity”) into two categories, tangible and intangible resources, with capabilities as a third and separate category, Farrington *et al* (1999) suggest five categories of resources (in their words “capitals”) which integrate capabilities as a form of resource. The five categories of capital are: 1) human capital – resources in terms of labor, skills, and knowledge; 2) natural capital – resources in terms of natural resources such as land, water, forest, or minerals; 3) physical capital – resources in terms of tools, housing, livestock, food stocks, and etc.; 4) financial capital – resources in terms of money or access to loan or other forms of credit; and lastly 5) social capital – resources in terms of social connections that can help individuals to leverage their other forms of capital. These five forms of capital today are commonly formed into an “asset pentagon” (visible in *Figure 2.5*) to give a holistic profile of the range of resources available to individuals living in particular vulnerability contexts and the possible livelihood strategies that individuals can take.

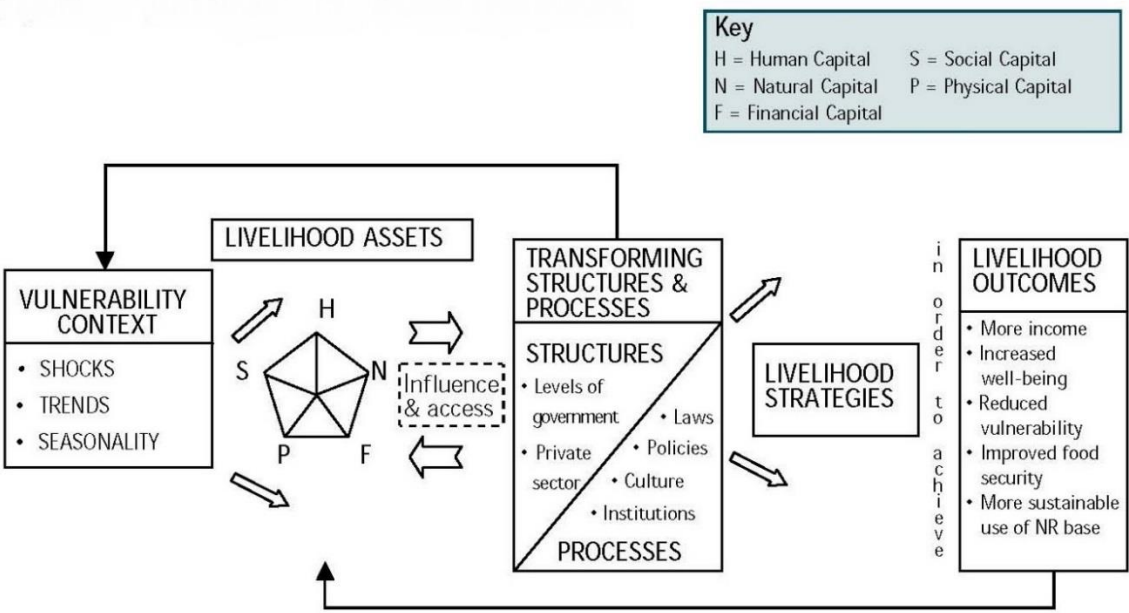


Figure 2.5 – DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Based on Farrington et al (1999). Reproduced from DFID (1999).

The second important contribution from Farrington *et al* (1999) is their conceptualization of the role of structural dimensions to poverty and livelihoods. That is, the ways in which the broader characteristics of the government and private sector play a structuring role in

shaping access to resources, and in turn the livelihood strategies of the poor, through law, policy, institutions, and culture. As de Haan (2006: 3) elaborates: "... capitals and livelihood strategies are not floating freely but are embedded in structure like rainfall is bounded by climate, fields placed in property systems and wages governed by supply and demand for labour...". Indeed, in acknowledging the dynamic interaction of resource access and the structural dimensions to poverty the Farrington *et al* (1999) framework highlights the connection between the micro and macro levels of poverty and economic development – a point developed further in the World Bank's own weighty study by Narayan *et al* (2000).

However, the sustainable livelihoods framework as presented by Farrington *et al* (1999) is not without substantial points of critique. De Haan (2000) (2006) (2012) has been a consistent critical voice in the sustainable livelihoods scholarship since its consolidation at the start of the 2000s. For de Haan the biggest piece missing from the sustainable livelihoods framework is an explicit conceptualization of the role of individual livelihood strategies not only as a product of the interaction of different forms of capital and structures that shape them, but as incorporating individuals own agency – agency which not only shapes individuals' actions forward, but which also reflexively affects back on resource access and structures. For de Haan the dynamic interaction of agency, structure, and the five forms of capital resources are simultaneously a product of, and yet also reflexively constituting, the experience of poverty and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods. De Haan (2012: 348) paraphrases Bebbington (1999), who is himself citing Giddens (1979), and posits that:

"A person's assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living: they also give meaning to that person's world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act. Assets should not be understood only as 'things' that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation. They are also the basis of an agent's power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources."

De Haal's (2000) expanded sustainable livelihoods framework compliments our previously developed conceptualizations of social identity and, especially, social capital. Indeed, the

logic of social capital is built into the asset pentagon of the sustainable livelihoods framework. However, this leads to one of the overarching critiques of the sustainable livelihoods framework from the social sciences – that discussing livelihoods through an economic lens obscures the holistic nature of livelihoods outside of their relationship to material wellbeing. The sustainable livelihoods framework does allow us to think about the ways in which individuals’ can utilize diverse forms of tangible and intangible resources to actualize material outcomes – for example leveraging social capital to maximize human and natural capital gains. However, there is broad agreement across the social sciences that livelihoods are about much more than opportunities, investments, and gains. Wallman (1984 quoted in Appendini 2001: 25) illustrates this point clearly in pointing out that:

“...a livelihood is never just a matter of finding or making shelter, transacting money, getting food to put on the family table or to exchange on the market place. It is equally a matter of ownership and circulation of information, the management of skills and relationships and the affirmation of personal significance... and group identity. The tasks of meeting obligations, of security, identity and status, and organizing time are as crucial to livelihood as bread and shelter.”

Indeed, to truly utilize the sustainable livelihoods framework in this doctoral thesis, we believe that it must be understood as dynamically connected to our previously developed conceptualizations of social identity and social capital. All three concepts are overlapping facets of one social and economic reality that individuals simultaneously navigate and construct. This is no less true for ex-combatants in the GLR, who face not only a unique set of economic disadvantages but also an interrelated set of social disadvantages that constitute the context in which they must transform through the processes of reintegration. With this in mind, we now turn to an exploration of sustainable livelihoods and specific issues of reintegration.

2.3.2 Sustainable Livelihoods in the Context of Reintegration

The GLR countries are among the least developed in the world, both in terms of economic and human development indicators. Indeed, DRC is regularly in the running for the lowest ranking on the annual Human Development Index. The features of these low levels of development represent the “vulnerability context” in which the vast majority of individuals across the GLR must attempt to make living. However, periods of violent conflict exacerbate and amplify these already challenging conditions.

Violent conflict destroys resources and infrastructure, retards local economic exchange, spoils environmental resources, and erodes the trust that underpins much individual economic exchange through militarizing society. By diverting resources away from constructive social and economic activities, violent conflict can often be a sort of development in reverse (Levi & Thompson 2010). When the violence does cease, individuals may face a decimated economic landscape from which they must attempt to piece together a sustainable livelihood. For ex-combatants the extra challenges and barriers that exist in seeking sustainable economic livelihoods can be enormous. Indeed, Finn *et al* (2014: 6) articulates the nature of the post-conflict landscape well:

“The post-conflict context in which DDR programs operate are characterize by weak political, social and economic structures, competition over power, insecurity, reduced productive capacities and livelihoods, destroyed infrastructure and other community services, collapsed markets, high inflation, un- and under- employment, and weakened social fabric with little social cohesion remaining. Prolonged civil conflict promotes its own economic imperatives with economies distorted and misaligned with their earlier or even later economic outlook.”

For ex-combatants in the GLR, having participated in conflict represents a series of missed opportunities for developing the economic track record that can serve as the foundation for a sustainable economic livelihood. We can expand on this point by adopting the sustainable livelihood framework’s five forms of capital as a lens for viewing the specific range of

economic disadvantages that ex-combatants may face. In terms of *human capital* - i.e. labor, skills, and knowledge – ex-combatants may face a deficit in the skills and knowledge necessary for economic prosperity in the peacetime environment. Especially those ex-combatants that mobilize at a young age may have missed opportunities for completing formal education and developing relevant economic skills such as a trade. This series of missed opportunities extends into the realm of *natural capital* where missed opportunities for establishing access to land, which is especially important in rural settings where agriculture plays a vital role in livelihood strategies, leave ex-combatants especially disadvantaged. Likewise, the forms of *physical capital* - such as housing, tools, and food stocks - that facilitate daily economic activity may be absent. To the extent that forms of *financial capital* exists, especially in terms of formal and informal access to credit, in post-conflict settings, ex-combatants may face barriers to access it due to their weakened *social capital* in the community. Indeed, weak *social capital*, in terms of familial (bonding) and broader (bridging) social networks, can play a central role in amplifying the range of disadvantages that ex-combatants face. Stigma and contested social identity can block ex-combatants from building social connections and engaging in social processes in the community that could otherwise help support their efforts towards building other forms of capital and achieving a sustainable livelihood.

If ex-combatants have missed opportunities for developing various forms of capital need for establishing a sustainable livelihood during peacetime, they have spent that time developing forms of capital that facilitate violent conflict as a livelihood – skills in the use of violence (human capital), control over natural resources used to fund armed groups (natural capital), the possession of weapons (physical capital), broader access to financial capital resources, and connection to a cohesive armed group (social capital). Indeed, ex-combatants' best economic opportunities at the start of peace may be exactly those, which they must leave behind. In cases where ex-combatants are unsuccessful in reintegrating into the community and building a semblance of economic stability, grievances may emerge and remobilization into armed groups may become the most viable strategy for economic survival.

The stakes are high for ex-combatants, and attaining a sustainable economic livelihood can seem like an impossible task. Thus, the imperative of aiding ex-combatants through

economic reintegration programming as a part of the broader peacebuilding effort can be better understood. Immediate assistance during the early phases of reintegration programming in the form of food supplies, housing, and even cash transfers are meant to meet the immediate needs of ex-combatants (natural, physical, and financial capital). Primary and secondary education and especially vocational training are used to address human capital deficits. Labor cooperatives can help build social capital and prioritization in microcredit schemes can increase ex-combatants access financial capital. These forms of assistance themselves are not sufficient to guarantee ex-combatants a sustainable economic livelihood. The structural conditions of the broader development environment, e.g. the predominance of the informal economy and the possible presence of contested local power structures, will have much to say for the extent that ex-combatants are able to assert their agency to leverage this modest economic assistance towards a sustainable livelihood. Indeed, ex-combatants' return can represent the abrupt release of excess labor into a setting where civilians already compete for extremely scarce livelihood opportunities – possibly sparking resentment in the community.

Finn *et al* (2014) argues that the benefits of a sustainable economic livelihood are not only economic, but include a number of “collateral outcomes” such as the potential to shape a new identity by building social skills, self-confidence, independence, and overall social capital. In this way we can, yet again, highlight the deeply intertwined nature of social and economic reintegration. In fact, it may be that in the especially deprived post-conflict environments of the GRL the social dimensions (social identity transformation & social capital accumulation) to economic reintegration are paramount for the achievement of a sustainable livelihood. Even if ex-combatants are able to build knowledge, skills, and attain some modest physical (e.g. tools) and financial capital, without building trust and acceptance in the community (social capital) the barriers to accessing land (natural capital), most notably through marriage, for small-scale agricultural production will be considerable. Despite this intertwining with social factors, the imperative remains that ex-combatants must achieve a sustainable livelihood that can cope with the stresses and shocks of the post-conflict environment, allowing them to attain a level of housing, food, and income security.

Just as in the social domain, there are important gender dimensions to sustainable livelihoods. Lower education levels (human capital), social isolation and inability to marry due to stigma (social capital), in turn legal boundaries to the ownership of land (physical capital) all represent serious barriers for female ex-combatants in establishing sustainable economic livelihoods. As Aolain (2011: 260) notes: “Frequently, [...] women are the least often employed or employable because of their legally enforced second-class status in many conflict zones. Across most post-conflict transitions, women are the first to be fired and the last to be hired...”. Indeed, for female ex-combatants the pursuit of economic stability is deeply embedded in the broader societal renegotiation of traditional gender norms in the post-conflict landscape.

2.4 Summary of Conceptual Approach

This chapter has outlined the conceptual approach taken in this doctoral thesis in three main parts. First, the concept of complexity was briefly introduced as backdrop to our conceptual approach to ex-combatant reintegration (further developed in §3.1.2). In light of this, we argue that to conceptualize ex-combatant reintegration processes we would be well served to draw from the vast range of well-established concepts from across the social sciences.

Second, in light of these imperatives we move on to conceptualize social reintegration as revolving around the negotiation of social identities and the building of social capital that can be used towards tangible and intangible outcomes. Third, we conceptualize economic reintegration within a sustainable livelihoods framework which takes seriously the contexts of vulnerability in which economic reintegration takes place, the interrelated nature of social and economic resources (including social identity and social capital), the role the structural factors that can shape economic reintegration processes, and the vital role of ex-combatants own agency as constrained by yet simultaneously shaping all these factors.

We argue that reintegration must be conceptualized as more than assimilation to civilian status, more than assimilation into settings of weak social capital and disempowerment, more than an assimilation into basic poverty. We conceptualize reintegration in the GLR as a

complex phenomenon based on a deeply interrelated set of social and economic processes through which ex-combatants integrate into an inclusive society. This argument serves as our point of departure in the next chapter outlining the methodological approach utilized in this doctoral thesis.

3 Methodological Approach

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the overall methodological approach used in this doctoral thesis and consists of three main sections. The first section (§3.2) outlines the broader meta-theoretical underpinnings to the methodological approach as rooted in complex realism. The second section (§3.3) focuses on building an understanding of the production and positionality of the primary data source utilized in this doctoral thesis - the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. The third, and final, section (§3.4) outlines the strategy for reframing the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset within a comparative case study approach, aiming to explore the causal mechanisms underlying the broader processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR. The application of the specific method of process tracing from quantitative data is explored at length.

3.2 Meta-Theoretical Underpinnings

The landscape of the philosophy of science is characterized by a plurality of perspectives, with few, if any, absolutes. In this landscape, it is therefore essential that we formulate the basic ontological and epistemological foundations underpinning this doctoral thesis. Without making such foundational ideas explicit, much of the analytical congruency between theory, methods, and analysis would remain somewhat hidden or, worse yet, invite incoherency.

This section on the meta-theoretical foundations of this doctoral thesis proceeds in three subsections. In the first subsection (§3.2.1), the broad divides between classical empiricism, at one extreme, and idealism, at the other, are developed as a field for framing core issues in the in the philosophy of the social sciences – namely the ontological status of scientific observations. In the second subsection (§3.2.2), critical realism is introduced as a philosophical framework that attempts to reconcile core debates in the philosophy of social sciences, while simultaneously carving out space for a mechanisms focused methodological approach outlined later in §3.4 of this chapter. The third subsection (§3.2.3) nuances critical realism further by taking into account the specific features of reintegration as a complex

phenomenon, previously discussed in §2.1.1, by introducing the emerging philosophy of complex realism. It is argued that complex realism goes beyond critical realism to give us a specific framework through which to recast certain elements of the methodological approach, and will play an important role in the analysis and interpretation in the analysis chapter (§4) of this doctoral thesis.

3.2.1 Poles Apart: From Empiricism to Idealism

How is the world and how can we know about it? These vast questions constitute the core areas of inquiry in the philosophy of science. How these questions are answered hold enormous consequences for the feasibility of social science as an activity and directly shape our perspectives on what “good” social science is. A brief survey of essential divides in the philosophy of the social sciences surrounding the question of “how is the world and how can we know about it?” is useful here to establish the context in which to understand the later discussion of critical realism. Indeed, Collier (1994: 70) points out “No philosophy exists in a vacuum; there are always particular opposing philosophies which coexist [...] and every philosophy engages, implicitly or explicitly, in controversy with its opponents.” Therefore, to set the stage for a critical realist understanding of science we will first move forward with a brief sketch of the ontological and epistemological perspectives of classical empiricism at one pole, and idealism at the other.

Much thought in the modern western history of the philosophy of sciences has been concerned with how to establish objective scientific knowledge about the world. As far back as, and indeed long before, Descartes’ famous “*cogito ergo sum*” philosophers have grappled with this immense issue. In his deep skepticism of the senses, Descartes concluded the only thing he could know objectively was that he existed. Later, British empiricists like Locke, Berkeley, and Hume would take a more moderate position and emphasize the central role of observation and measurement as the central means for acquiring objective scientific knowledge. The idea of classic empiricism is that with sufficient objective measurements of observable phenomena we will be able to deductively reason to produce valid scientific concepts and theory that can then be tested for congruence with further observations.

Though the classical empiricist model of objective scientific knowledge has proved immensely influential over the last centuries, indeed it is the basis of the scientific method and positivism more broadly, it is not without problems. If classical empiricism posits that the treatment of observations through deductive logic will yield objective knowledge, theory, and concepts about the world, then how do we account for different deductive understandings from the same set of observations? Bhaskar (2008: 31) illustrates this dilemma well by referencing a classic shift in scientific understanding: “For Kepler to see the rim of the earth drop away, while Tycho Brahe watches the sun rise, we must suppose that there is something that they both see (in different ways).” Acknowledging that we as observers “see” in different ways is the crux here.

How do we see in different ways? The knowledge that we already hold shapes how we observe and interpret. It is only through the lens of a Copernican theory of the solar system that Brahe could observe the sun rising - what we hold as common sense today. Observations are seldom objective in any definitive sense. To be understandable at all observations are always embedded in earlier ideas or knowledge. Classical empiricism does not conceptualize the role of the observer as a social being and as an interpreter of observations within a constructed world of knowledge and ideas.

It is through this sort of criticism that “naïve” empiricism has faced a serious problem in the pursuit of objective knowledge. Danermark *et al* (2002: 17) explain thus:

“If reality cannot be understood by anything but constantly varying forms of pre-understandings, if our different ways of seeing irretrievably determine *what* it is we see, what then remains of the scientific project? How do we choose between competing explanations and decide which one is ‘the best’ or ‘the truest’?”

It is in this context what we can perhaps best understand the emergence of idealist perspectives on the philosophy of science. While classical empiricism tried to create a framework for scientific knowledge production that sought objectivity through excluding the perspectives of the observer, idealism is a philosophy that is the polar opposite – focused almost wholly on the subjective nature of scientific knowledge from an observer. In its most

distilled forms (e.g. Rorty 1980), idealism posits that our experience of reality itself is purely mental or socially constructed. In this world of infinite relativity the search for any objective or true knowledge about the real world outside of our minds becomes not only impossible, but also meaningless.

However, while it is essential that we acknowledge the role of the observer in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, one need not be doomed to the sort of “naïve” idealism that asserts that we cannot objectively know about the real world outside of our minds; and perhaps even that no objective world exists outside our minds. Marx and Engels (cited in Collier 1994: 88) poke fun at this notion of a purely socially constructed reality:

“Once upon a time, a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water.”

Indeed, there is an objective reality independent of our subjective experience of that reality, and that it is possible to know things about this reality. In the example above, absence of socially constructed knowledge about gravity would not stop one from the fate of drowning because there is an objective reality. This tension between the aim of producing knowledge about the objective world, on the one hand, and acknowledging the inter-subjective nature of all such knowledge (as highlighted in the Kepler vs. Brahe example), on the other, has been absolutely central in the philosophy of science and is the point of departure for understanding the emergence of critical realism.

3.2.2 Critical Realism

The core tension between the scientific project’s ambition of producing objective knowledge and the simultaneously inter-subjective nature of all such knowledge has persisted into contemporary times. In the 1960’s and 1970’s thinkers such as Popper (2004a [1959] & 2004b [1963]) and Kuhn (1970) grappled with how to understand the dual nature of

scientific knowledge and, more broadly, science as an activity. It was in this period that critical realism as a coherent philosophy of science began to emerge in the foundational texts of Roy Bhaskar (2008 [1975] & 2015 [1979]).

The term realism has many meanings across scientific disciplines and can be a point of confusion, so it is worth clarifying here. In this philosophy of science the term realism refers to the ontological position that a *real* world of consistent laws and structures exists outside of our constructed perception of it. In this sense, many forms of classical empiricism described above could be classified as realist positions. Where critical realism differs compared to other forms of realism, is in a *critical* evaluation of traditional ontological views of what exactly that *real* objective reality is like.

Bhaskar's (2008: 43) point of departure was that from his view "classical philosophy asked merely what science would have to be like for the knowledge it yielded to be justified" while his critical realism "asks explicitly what the world must be like for science to be possible". Bhaskar was critical to the way other realist positions, like classical empiricism, conceptualized the real world. Bhaskar argued that by emphasizing the observable regularities the real world produced, approaches to science like classical empiricism had reduced the real world into what it is possible to observe about it, when in fact Bhaskar believed there was quite a bit more to the world than what is observable.

Bhaskar (2008) argued, for example, that when Newton saw the apple fall from the tree and formulated the theory of gravitation what Newton observed was not gravity itself, which is arguably unobservable, but rather the observable regularity that gravity produces. Through an intricate argument, Bhaskar posited that there must be an additional domain to reality – there must be a *real* domain (where the real unobservable causal structures and mechanisms of the world exist) and there must be an *actual* domain (where the actual observable regularities produced by the real dimension exist). This division between the *real* and the *actual* domains of reality is among the key features distinguishing critical realism from other forms of realism.

What about the other side of the coin? What about the seemingly unavoidable idea that knowledge of the real world is socially constructed, and thus the world as we can observe it is inherently inter-subjective? To address this issue Bhaskar suggested a third domain of reality, the *empirical* domain. Returning to the example of Kepler and Brahe from earlier: from a critical realist perspective both scientists were interested in discovering the *real* structures and mechanisms of the solar system; and both scientists viewed the same *actual* observable regularity that the structures and mechanisms of the solar system produce. Where they differ was in their socially constructed *empirical* understanding of that the *actual* observable regularity – in turn their understanding of the *real* unobservable structures and mechanisms of the world. In summarizing these distinctions Bhaskar (2008) argued that for science as an activity to be coherent we would have to distinguish between the intransitive (unchanging: the real and the actual) and the transitive (changing: the empirical) dimensions of science.

Disciplines within the field of humanities, which are often primarily concerned with the critical or speculative interpretation of meaning, are almost completely focused on transitive dimensions of science. The natural sciences traditionally occupy the opposite end of the spectrum – almost completely focused on the intransitive dimensions of science, without much serious consideration of the empirical domain of constructed interpretation. Inferential social science, Comte's "queen of sciences", holds the challenging and unenviable necessity of engaging in a serious pursuit of the intransitive dimensions of science while explicitly situated within the transitive. In this doctoral thesis, we are concerned with exploring the *real* causal processes and mechanisms that drive ex-combatant reintegration. To do this we focus on the *actual* observable regularities of these processes and mechanisms should produce. In analyzing the *actual* in an effort to glean the *real* we must, though, remain ever conscious of the inter-subjective, or constructed, nature of our *empirical* knowledge.

The critical realist ontological division between the *real* and the *actual* has some important implication for how causality is understood, and in turn what methods may be suited to explore causality as such, which will serve as an important contextual backdrop for understanding the methodological approach utilized in this doctoral thesis (outlined in §3.4).

What is most important to emphasize here is the space that the division between the *real* and the *actual* opens for the explicit exploration of causal mechanisms, structures, and observable outcomes.

The term causal mechanism is a metaphor for the generative causal force that produces observable outcomes. For critical realists causal mechanisms exist in the domain of the *real* and are the unobservable causal forces (e.g. gravity) that produce observable outcomes in the domain of the *actual* (e.g. Newton's apple falling from the tree). For critical realists: "... it is the business of science to establish the connections between the empirical, the actual and the real; to observe and identify the effect of underlying generative mechanisms" (Danermark *et al* 2002: 43). We will return to the term mechanisms throughout this chapter to add further nuance and analytical clarity (see especially §3.4.1). For now, we will move forward to contextualize causal mechanisms in a broader critical realist framework.

For critical realists the term *structures* refer to the nature of an object of science. Based on its structures an object has certain *powers*. Structures and powers exist in the real domain, though they have observable effects in the actual domain. Danermark *et al* (2002) offer an example – based on its chemical makeup (*real* structures) water can quench a fire (*real* power) regardless of whether or not it is used to do so (*actual* observable instance). However, structures and powers themselves do not cause outcomes, but rather condition the range of possible effects of their application.

For critical realists, when the properties (structures and powers) of an object combine with contextual factors (e.g. someone throwing the water on the fire), they activate a *causal mechanism* to produce an *observable outcome*. Further, just as the activation of causal mechanisms is a combination of the structures/powers of an object and conditioning contextual factors, the outcome of a mechanism, when it is indeed triggered, is itself conditioned by contextual elements (e.g. the fire being sufficiently small to be quenched). That is, even when context allows the powers of an object to activate a mechanism, the outcome is also contingent or context dependent. In this way we can say that objects have *tendencies* – they tend to act (or cause) in a certain way. Danermark *et al* (2002:56) make this point succinctly:

“Taken together this – that objects have powers whether exercised or not, mechanisms exist whether triggered or not and the effects of the mechanisms are contingent – means we can say that a certain object *tends* to act or behave in a certain way. Whether it will actually act or behave in this way, however, is a completely different matter.”

We argue in §4.2 of the analysis chapter of this doctoral thesis that in reintegration factors such as age, gender, and disability take on role of structures that condition the way ex-combatants *tend* to interact with the causal mechanisms that underlie the processes of reintegration. While we will leave the concept of *tendencies* for now, we’ll return to it to add further nuance and analytical clarity in the discussion of trajectories in the following subsection on complex realism (§3.2.3).

If at its heart science is all about getting at the causal mechanisms that exist in the unobservable domain of the real, as critical realists assert, which is separate from the observable effects they produce in the observable domain of the actual, then there are immediate epistemological/methodological implications for the social sciences. Essentially, methods based on notions of classical empiricism, especially correlational statistics, implicitly assume that if there is no correlation between observable regularities, there is no causal connection (Mahoney 2001). Further, such methods assume the more frequent this regularity is, the stronger the evidence for causation. Sayer (2000: 14) contrasts the critical realist perspective:

“... causation is *not* understood on the model of regular successions of events, and hence explanation need not depend on finding them, or searching for putative social laws. The conventional impulse to prove causation by gathering data on regularities, repeated occurrences, is therefore misguided; at best these might suggest where to look for candidates for causal mechanisms. What causes something to happen has nothing to do with the number of times we have observed it happening. Explanation depends instead on identifying causal mechanisms and how they work...”

Adopting a critical realist perspective entails an adjustment of ontological, epistemological, and in turn methodological commitments - these adjustments result in a shift in the overall mode of knowledge production in science. George & Bennet (2005) argue that the mode of knowledge production in a classical empiricist model of science can be called a deductive nomological model (that from observation we should be able to deduce general laws through a loop of observation, deduction, hypothesis, test, repeat). However, the critical realist mode of knowledge production evolves what can be called a middle range theory, demi-theory, or mechanisms focused model of science. In this model of science, we produce knowledge through a tighter, and non-linear, iterative loop of inductive and deductive reasoning. From observation we iteratively reason through inductive and deductive methods about the possible causal mechanisms at work in our causal inquiry, the logical observable implications of such mechanisms, and in turn the feasibility of such mechanisms existing, and the conditions in which they would operate. The products of this process are not the universal laws that classical empiricism seeks, but smaller context specific blocks of theory (mechanisms). Bhaskar (2008: 39) gives an instructive analogy in saying that from the perspective of critical realism:

“Much scientific research has in fact the same logical character as detection. In a piece of criminal detection, the detective knows that a crime has been committed and some facts about it but he does not know, or at least cannot yet prove, the identity of the criminal.”

Much to the like, if there is a real world of structures and mechanisms that cause processes of ex-combatant reintegration, then our understanding of those forces is an unfolding detective process. The theoretical perspectives offered in the conceptual approach chapter (§2) of this doctoral thesis are but clues to the possible mechanisms involved in ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR (a constructed empirical domain), and the detailed data presentation the annexes (§6-7) is but a search for the observable implications of such possible mechanisms (actual domain). Thus, the elaboration of some of the mechanisms and processes (real domain) of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR in the analysis chapter (§4) is a product of an iterative dialogue between these two spheres.

Before moving on to a more explicit discussion of the of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset as an *empirical domain* construction (§3.3), and the approach used in this doctoral thesis for reframing it within a case study framework (creating space for an iterative dialogue between the *actual* and the *empirical*, about the *real*) (§3.4), we must consider some of the meta-theoretical consequences of approaching ex-combatant reintegration as a complex phenomenon (see §2.1.1).

3.2.3 Complex Realism

As outlined in §2.1.1, reintegration can be thought of as a complex phenomenon that above all else is characterized by emergence – i.e. that reintegration occurs as an interactive effect of large number of interrelated causes, and cannot be reduced to the sum of their individual effects. Taking the complexity of reintegration seriously requires us to nuance certain meta-theoretical ideas within the critical realist paradigm. In doing so we will outline the fledgling philosophy of science called complex realism. Complex realism takes critical realism as a starting point but adds the ontological position that the real world is constructed of complex systems. Taking this ontological stand raises many questions for the form of scientific inquiry within the complex realist paradigm - these include: what is a case? What are variables? What are causes and effects? Complex realism’s answers to these questions have considerable methodological consequences for the comparative case-study research strategy outlined in §3.3 of this chapter, and in turn interpretive consequences for the analysis chapter (§4).

Concerning cases, we can start with George & Bennet’s (2005: 17) broad definition of “...a case as an instance of a class of events.” Likewise, Gerring (2007: 211) gives a definition of a case as “A spatially and temporally delimited phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some period of time...” Within these definitions, though, there is nuance to be made. For complex realists cases are much more than this, they *are* the complex systems (See e.g. Reed & Harvey (1992); Cilliers (2001); Byrne & Uprichard (2012)). With this in mind, an extension of the definition of case is useful. Ragin (1987, 2000, 2008) suggests that indeed cases are an instance of a class of event or phenomena, but that what makes them that class

or kind of case is that they are constituted by a specific configuration, or specific range of configurations, of characteristics. It is the configurational nature of a case that makes it analogous to a complex system. Complex realists build on this to assert that the characteristics that constitute a case/system are interconnected and interdependent; they simultaneously constitute the case, yet are themselves a product of that case/system. All the elements that constitute a case can themselves be complex systems and, likewise, can overlap with or be nested within other systems. This idea of nestedness will become clearer as we move along, but for now the main point is that for complex realists the *real* world of causal structures and mechanisms is one inherently endowed with the features of complexity.

This reframing of the case as a complex system creates some treacherous ontological terrain. While it might not be immediately apparent, from a critical realist perspective the broad definitions of a case from Gerring (2007) or George & Bennet (2005) which define cases as observable instances of events subtly cast the case as existing in the ontological domain of the *empirical*. The observable regularities that are used to constitute one case could be used to constitute other different cases. In this sense there is nothing *real* about the case. Thus, the case appears to be an *empirical domain* construct. The position of complex realists suggests, alternatively, that there is indeed something *real* about a case, but that it is simultaneously an *empirical* construction. Cilliers (2001: 141) grapples with this point:

“Boundaries [of systems / cases] are simultaneously a function of the activity of the system itself [*real domain*], and a product of the strategy of description involved [*actual domain*]. In other words, we frame the system by describing it in a certain way (for a certain purpose) but we are constrained in where the frame can be drawn. The boundary of the system is therefore neither a function of our description [*actual domain*], nor is it a purely natural thing [*real domain*].”
(Brackets added)

Addressing this ontological quagmire is perhaps best approached through an explanation of complex realist’s understanding of variables. If we take cases to be complex systems, then

how do we understand variables? From the complex realist perspective the traditional use of variables as being either a cause, effect, intervening, or etc. unknowingly compresses the domains of the *actual* and *empirical* into one. There is a division to be made between the *empirical domain* construct of a variable, what complex realists call a parameter, and the *actual domain* observable regularity that we measure within that parameter, what complex realists call ‘system traces’. We cannot apply all parameters to all cases (e.g. where there is no trace to observe), thus our *empirical domain* parameters, as Cilliers points out in the text quoted above, are bounded by the *actual domain* system traces (and the *real domain* that they imply).

Thus, *actual domain* system traces cannot be seen as only a cause or effect, those are *empirical domain* distinctions. Actual domain system traces are simultaneously causing and caused. The parameters (*empirical domain*) we explore become constructed descriptors constituting the case/system. In a sense, complex realists attempt to strip some of the constructed interpretations of variables as cause or effect in the *empirical domain* and shift emphasis to describing the *actual domain* of observable system traces. From this perspective, causal inquiry takes on a distinct shape. Causal explanations become about describing the “space” and “state” of a system/case, as constituted by system parameters and traces respectively, and attempting to account for the trajectory (change or continuity) of that system/case over time – including hypothesizing the causal mechanisms that underlie those trajectories (Byrne & Uprichard 2012).

The concept of trajectories is key in understanding the complex realist mode of scientific inquiry and plays a central role in the analysis presented in §4 of this doctoral thesis. The idea of trajectory is an embodiment of the complex realist reframing of the meaning of cause and effect. In a traditional critical realist perspective, we might say that cause x , through a mechanism, produced the effect of y . In a complex realist perspective where system traces describe the state of a case/system, effects become the trajectory of that entire system over time. Byrne (2011: 32) makes this point succinctly: “In this way of thinking measurement is a way of describing the position of a system in its possible state space at any time point and repeated measurement is an account of the trajectory of the system”. Trajectories are analogous to Bhaskar’s (2008) notion of causal “tendencies”

(§3.2.2) and to Popper's (1990) idea of "propensities". Trajectories emerge from the ways in which systems tend to, or have the propensity to, act.

Before moving on it is important to take a moment to clarify the concepts of system state and system space, and the distinctions between them, for they carry deep epistemological implications. Because these terms have their origins in pure mathematics, they can be challenging to translate to the social sciences. System space is the space in which all possible states of a system are represented. Another way to phrase this is as the 'range of the possible'. If we have three parameters that we are using to constitute a case/system, then the system space is a three dimensional space. This is easy to visualize. The system *state* is the area within the system *space* where observable system traces actually occur – clustering around metaphorical "attractors". This all gets exponentially more difficult to visualize as the number of parameters we explore grows. When we are dealing with a hundred parameters, we are dealing with a hundred dimensional space. The concepts system space and state have implications for the complex realist account of variation. In almost all of the natural and social sciences variation is understood as the effect of causal forces. For complex realists variation is inherent to cases/systems. Variation is bounded within the system space and occurs around certain attractors in this space. Where these attractors are in the system space and the observable variation in the system traces that occurs around them *is* the system state. The relationship between system space and system state can be thought of as analogous to that between a truth table (system space) in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)(Ragin 2000, 2008), and the total of the cells in the truth table filled with actual empirical instances (system state).

If variation does not serve as an account for the effects of causal forces, but rather inherent to any system state, then what are effects? This leads us back to trajectories. For complex realists, effects are the trajectory of the system state over time. This could be a trajectory of continuity in the system state, where the system traces vary around a consistent attractor(s) within the system space. It is important to nuance that in the complex realist perspective, continuity in system state is not equivalent to a static state. In trajectories of continuity system states vary to a degree, but this variation is bounded and the system remains in fundamentally the same state even though it may "jiggle" some (similar to the idea of

bounded change in the concept of path dependence). The dynamics of continuity are an important area of inquiry; however, what we are often most interested by in the social sciences is explaining change. For complex realists, change in a system state is characterized by the movement of system traces from one area, around on attractor, of the system space to another. In the language of complexity this is called a phase shift - a change in the fundamental type or kind of system state (similar to the idea of dramatic change in the concept of punctuated equilibria / critical junctures). One way to phrase these two modes of change succinctly is as the difference between morphosis (the continuity in the form of a state) and metamorphosis (the change in type state itself) (Byrne & Callaghan 2014).

Two points related to system space and system states need brief mentioning. First, systems, especially systems of social phenomena, rarely exist in isolation, but rather interact with other systems overlapping in their system space. We can say that systems can be nested within each other, but we cannot take along the assumption of a hierarchical line of causation that this often carries (Byrne & Callaghan 2014). Systems can overlap or be nested within one another (Harvey 2001: 165 calls them “loosely nested” or “interpenetrating”), but their effects on each other are a dynamic and multidirectional causation. Second, it is important to add that there can be multiple attractors in a system space. This has two important results. First, we can account for an even larger amount of variation within a system by identifying multiple attractors which system traces occur around (this is essentially what taxonomical methods like cluster analysis do). Second, accepting multiple attractors in a system space creates room for explaining both equifinality (same outcome from different causes) & multifinality (different outcomes from same causes) in the trajectories of a system state change (phase shift). Traces can move from multiple attractors to one (equifinality), or from one attractor to multiple alternative attractors (multifinality).

The discussion so far has been very abstract, so perhaps we can clarify by grounding these concepts in the inquiry at hand. In this doctoral thesis we want to account for two types of causal pathways (two sides of a coin). First, we want to account for those causal pathways those through which ex-combatants stay in one part of the system space (around one attractor) though time, and community members stay in another (i.e. trajectory of continuity – non-reintegration). Second, and more centrally, we want to account for those causal

pathways through which ex-combatants and community members shift from their respective parts of the system space (respective attractors) to occupy the same part of the system space (shared attractor). That is, we want to account for what causes a trajectory of change in type – a metamorphosis in which ex-combatants and community members become the same thing. However, as we will see in §4.3 of the analysis chapter, merely occupying the same part of the system space appears insufficient to denote reintegration, it also needs to be the right part of the system space. Another way to say this is that conceptualizing reintegration as civilianization, as in §2.1.2, or operationalizing civilianization as parity across social and economic indicators, as in §3.3.2.1, can prove paradoxical.

There are two parts to our ambitious analytical task. First, in §4.2 of the analysis chapter we need to account for the causal pathways (mechanisms) that produce the individual trajectories of ex-combatants and community members as two separate kinds of cases (class of events or phenomena). Essentially, we treat ex-combatants and community members, respectively, in each country case as their own complex system (e.g. the case/system of ex-combatants in DRC and the separate case/system of community members in DRC, nested within the broader country system. In this way the systems of ex-combatants and community members as groups are sub-systems that together constitute, and are nested within, the super-system of the country case. The ex-combatant and community member sub-systems have their own state, traces, and trajectories. However, while the ex-combatant and community member group sub-systems have some unique parameters (see §6), the vast majority of their system space is overlapping - constituted by the same parameters as each other and as the country case super-system. In this way the sub-systems are nested in the super-system – they exist in the same system space, the same range of the possible (mostly), and have a dynamic causal relationship (as opposed to hierarchical or linear) at a sub-system to sub-system level as well as a sub-system to super-system (and *vice versa*). This is the task that we take on in §4.2 of the analysis chapter.

If we have an understanding of the causal processes and mechanisms which drive the trajectories of ex-combatant and community member sub-systems respectively, then we can take on the second task, in §4.3 of the analysis chapter, of understanding what sorts of meta processes and mechanisms (sometimes phrased as second order mechanisms) drive ex-

combatant and community member sub-systems in trajectories towards the same system space (around the same attractor) in the country level super-system. In this way, the respective trajectories of ex-combatant and community member sub-systems become parameters themselves for the system state of the country level super-system. It is through the comparison of the respective trajectories of ex-combatant and community member sub-systems, within and across super-systems of the five GLR countries, that we iteratively trace the narrative of reintegration and attempt to identify key causal mechanisms in social and economic dimensions of reintegration at the individual and country levels. As outlined in §3.4, we use a comparative case study approach utilizing process tracing as a key method to pursue these ends.

We have not yet addressed one essential topic directly – namely, what is a cause in the complex realist paradigm? For complex realists causation is understood as dynamic and combinational, i.e. there is no one determinate variable but rather causation is a result of the complex interaction of many parameters in a system / case. However, not all parameters are equal. Certain parameters or, more likely, the interaction of certain groups of parameters may collectively act as ‘control parameters’ that determine the system state and trajectory. Byrne & Callaghan (2014: 190) explain control parameters as:

“... the causal set which is less than the whole assemblage constituting any given complex social system, but which includes elements, which may themselves be complex, which in interaction with each other determine the state of the system. Note that changes in the state of the system, phase shift effects, may be, and generally are, not the products of changes in the value (however measured) of any control parameter but of interacting changes in the components of the control parameter set.”

Another way to phrase this is that control parameters are the key parameters in the system space that define the fundamental shape of the system state and its possible trajectory over time. If there are control parameters that dynamically interact to define the fundamental state of the system (the type or kind), then these control parameters are themselves made up of configurations of dynamically interacting sub-parameters (which may not be exclusive

to a single control parameter). The configurational nature of control parameters as causes makes them describable within the language of necessary and sufficient conditions (see e.g. Ragin 1987, 2000, 2008). We can think of control parameters as necessary but insufficient conditions for the system state. No single control parameter, but rather their combinational interaction, is what defines the system state. The control parameters are themselves made of sets of sub-parameters that are necessary but not sufficient for the existence of the overarching control parameter.

If control parameters are key in shaping the system state, then they are also key to understanding the emergent trajectory of that system state over time. The way we can think of control parameters as analogous to Bourdieu's (1990, 1993, 1998) concept of "structuring structures" – that is, those structures that generate and organize the system state (in Bourdieu's work the social world) and its "disposition" (i.e. trajectory) over time. Again, this fits very neatly with Bhaskar's (2008) idea of conditioning causal factors that shape the "tendencies" of an object (in our case a system) and, perhaps even more so, with Popper's (1990: 18) idea of "propensities" as "... weighted possibilities which are more than mere possibilities, but tendencies of propensities to become real" rings clear here too. For complex realists accounting for the trajectories of systems, both continuity and change, involves identifying control parameters (including the sub-parameters that comprise them) and the mechanisms through which they interact to produce a system state and the emergent trajectory of that system state over time.

Again, it can be useful to clarify these concepts through grounding them in the doctoral thesis at hand. Byrne & Callaghan (2014) argue that in the social world demography is always a part, but never the whole, of the set of control parameters in a system. Indeed, in this research the each individual ex-combatant's demographic characteristics (e.g. age, sex, disability status; literacy, education, & vocational skills; and civil status) are control parameters, or "structuring structures", that conditions their position in the overall individual-level system. Other control parameters used to explore trajectories of ex-combatant reintegration include mobilization and wartime experiences; housing, land, livestock, & food security; DDR experiences; economic issues; and social capital. Each of

these control parameters is comprised by the interaction of various parameters – which themselves can be thought of as sub-control parameters.

For example, in this doctoral thesis an ex-combatants' trace within the control parameter of social capital is conceptualized as the product of the complex interaction of the extent of their social networks and levels of sociability, feelings of trust and solidarity in the community, feelings of social cohesion and inclusion in the community, as well as perceptions of empowerment and the possibility for social change. Each of these sub-control parameters themselves are the dynamic product of a range of parameters (which may not be exclusive to a given sub-control parameter). Control parameters, sub-control parameters, and parameters all dynamically interact through causal mechanisms to produce the system state of an individual ex-combatant, which is in turn their trace in the system state of all ex-combatants in a country case.

How then to identify control parameters and, more importantly, the causal mechanisms through which they interact to produce system states and trajectories? This leads us to comparison. It is through comparison of the trajectories – not of any one parameter but of the entire narrative of their relationships to each other - of the system states of the five GLR countries, trajectories of both continuity and change, which we will attempt to glean the underlying causal mechanisms that interact to produce individual and country level reintegration processes. Comparison has had a long and central role in the social sciences. Mill's (1843) methods of agreement and difference are early examples of formal thought on how to approach comparison. However, today the vast majority of the social, and natural, science conceive comparison within the bounds of correlational statistics. Indeed, measures of central tendency (i.e. sameness) and variation (i.e. differentness) are essentially comparing the degrees of presence or absence of variables across a population. Today the works of Ragin (1987, 2000, 2008) continue to develop formalized methods of comparison in the form of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). Regardless of the specific method, comparison is the key analytical pathway. Maclver (1942: 27) makes the astute point that: "... the search for causes is directed to the differences between things... underneath all our questioning lies the implicit acceptance of the axiom that no difference exists without a cause".

It would be tempting to assume that because our primary data source is in the form of large quantitative datasets with millions of data points, the natural approach to comparing the five GLR countries should be based in statistical inference. However, the linear additive epistemology of such statistical approaches, rooted in empiricism / positivism, is at direct odds with the complex realist ontology we have outlined out here. Since the state and trajectory of a system is seen as more than merely the sum of the system parameters, but as an emergent product of the whole of the dynamic interactions of its parts, in contrast to the product of one or a few determinate variables. No variable oriented statistical approach can approximate the inner workings of such a system as a whole. What is required is the enormous investment intellectual of labor, as Freedman (2010) put it, “shoe leather”. It is through the iterative toil of comparing the trajectories of ex-combatants, sub-groups within ex-combatants, community members, sub-groups within community members, and all these within and across the five GLR countries that we can begin to reason about the broader narratives of reintegration - the processes that occur and the multiple orders of mechanisms that underlie them. Though the primary mode of inquiry is retroductive (describing and analyzing ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR to reconstruct the basic conditions for them to be what they are), it is not exclusively so - there are elements of deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning (reinterpreting ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR within alternative conceptual frameworks to understand them in new ways) throughout that steer a broader retroductive effort (using retroductive knowledge about how ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR came to be as they are, to understand that might happen in the future and possibilities for intervention through informed purposive action – i.e. reintegration programming).

To these ends, in §3.4 we outline the research strategy used in this doctoral thesis as a comparative case study approach that utilizes process tracing as a central tool of inference (e.g. George & Bennet 2005, Gerring 2007, Rohlfing 2012, Bennet & Checkel 2015) – though with certain elements reframed within the critical and complex realist paradigms described here. However, before moving on to describe the research strategy it is essential to first consider the nature of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. To put it plainly – in the critical and complex realist paradigms data is never neutral, it is always constructed. The act of

measurement (data construction) is “... a process of interpretation, no less than the processes of interpretation which underpin qualitative research practice” (Byrne 2011: 31). In the terms of critical realism, we must understand the empirical paradigm through which the GLR data was produced in order to understand the possible implications for our abductive reframing of that data within the complex realist paradigm.

3.3 The Origins of the TDRP GLR Reintegration Dataset

Based on the meta-theoretical discussion outlined in §3.1, this section moves forward with the premise that due to the critical realist distinction between the *real* causal structures and mechanisms of the social universe, the *actual* observable regularities that these structures and mechanisms produce, and our socially constructed *empirical* understandings of these observations, then the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset, itself a constructed *empirical domain* representation of reality, utilized in this research may carry with it certain inbuilt positionalities.

The TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset exist somewhere between the domains of the *actual* and the *empirical*. Though the data is a view of *actual* observable events (traces of the system state), the data’s form, scope, and mode of collection (constructed parameters) represent the implicit effects of a socially constructed *empirical domain* of science. Therefore, the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset cannot be thought of as inherently neutral or unbiased. This section aims to explicate the inbuilt positionalities in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset and the possible consequences they may carry for the methodological approach of reframing of dataset in a comparative case study framework in §3.4 of this chapter, as well as the analysis in §4 of this doctoral thesis.

This section of the methodological approach chapter proceeds in two subsections. In the first subsection (§3.3.1), to understand the *empirical* paradigm in through which the GLR reintegration datasets were produced, the field of monitoring and evaluation is introduced as a form of applied social science within a broader political shift towards evidence based policy. Specific consequences of complexity in social policy problems are also considered. In

the second subsection (§3.3.2), the specific approach utilized by the TDRP to build the GLR reintegration dataset through the monitoring and evaluation of reintegration programming are outlined in an effort to reveal the overall epistemological *positionalities* of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset.

3.3.1 Applied Social Science, Evidence Based Policy, and Monitoring & Evaluation

What is applied social science? The distinction between the Attic Greek terms of *episteme* and *techne* is perhaps an illustrative place to begin. *Episteme*, the root of the word epistemology, refers to abstract theoretical knowledge. That is, knowledge that is transfactual – separated from a specific context. Much of what we endeavor to produce in the social sciences falls into that category of *episteme*. *Techne*, the root of the word technology, on the other hand refers to context specific knowledge that is to be applied without abstract reasoning. In highlighting this distinction Byrne (2011) gives the example of the distinction between the mason and the architect. The mason holds deep contextual knowledge about materials and structures, but without a grounding in abstract ideas or calculations about the properties of such materials – *techne*. The architect, in contrast, may not be able to work stone, but holds profound abstract knowledge of engineering. Together these two forms of knowledge come together under *praxis*, which Freire (1972: 28) succinctly defined as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it”. Praxis is the essence of applied social science.

With these three terms in mind we can reflect on the nature of DDR programming as an act of *praxis*, an application of abstract and technical knowledge of the world in order to change it. One could argue, and indeed we have in §1.3, that in the field of DDR, and specifically in reintegration programming, there is an abundance of knowledge in the form of *techne*, but at the same time a relative dearth of knowledge in the form of *episteme*. We know quite a lot about how to implement reintegration programming (*techne*), but how much do we really know about the abstract, and complex, phenomena of reintegration that we are trying to affect (*episteme*)? To explore this argument we will examine that nature of our primary source of knowledge, both *techne* and *episteme*, about reintegration – that is, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of reintegration programming. Loosely speaking, we can

say that monitoring is primarily concerned with the production of *techne*, and thus is mostly focused on the monitoring the implementation stage of a reintegration program. The evaluation side M&E includes more specific space for establishing *episteme*, and is primarily focused on the impact (i.e. effects) of reintegration programming. The evaluation side of M&E is our primary area of interest in following discussion. Together, the emerging *techne* and *episteme* should form the basis of *praxis* in reintegration programming.

In order to understand the nature, and prevalence, of M&E it is useful to contextualize it in the broader political shift in the last half century towards evidence-based policy. Evidence based policy is “... the rational development of policies on the basis of evidence...” (Byrne 2011: 5). Byrne (2011), Pawson (2006), and Solesbury (2001), while all writing primarily in the context of public policy in the UK, argue that evidence based policy has seen increased prevalence due to a broader pragmatic or anti-ideological turn in modern politics. This shift is certainly present in reintegration programming carried out in the UN and World Bank systems (UN 2015). Both the UNDP and the World Bank are almost completely dependent on donor contributions to fund their reintegration activities. With the emerging understanding among donor countries, especially since the early 1990’s, that not all aid is good aid (see e.g. Moyo 2009 or Tvedt 1998), M&E has become an essential tool through which international organizations like the UNDP and World Bank can establish a level of accountability internally, and to their donors externally. At the same time M&E is a powerful tool that can legitimate and justify reintegration policy and activities on the basis of ‘scientific’ evidence.

If reintegration programming is to proceed on the basis of evidence, then perhaps the natural question to follow, at least from the perspective of a social scientist, is: which evidence and from what perspectives? In light of the meta-theoretical paradigm outlined in §3.2, we are staunch in our support of Bhaskar’s (2008: 21) idea that “the social sciences deal with a pre-interpreted reality, a reality already brought under concepts by social actors, that is, a reality *already brought under the same kind of material in terms of which it is to be grasped*”. Empirical evidence is a socially constructed understanding of an underlying reality. The empirical paradigm though which we view this reality, and indeed the methods that are understood as appropriate for viewing this reality, will temper where we look for evidence

and what we see when we observe it. In this way the meta-theoretical and empirical (in the critical realist sense) underpinnings of reintegration programming impact evaluations can have profound implication on the knowledge (*episteme*) produced – in turn, at least theoretically, a profound impact on the act of reintegration programming (*praxis*). Will we see the edge of the earth fall away, or will we see the sun rise?

The answer to the question of which evidence and what perspectives will underlie M&E may, somewhat paradoxically, end up depending on the political landscape. Evidence can shape reintegration policy, but the constructed nature of evidence from M&E means that reintegration policy can also play a pivotal role in shaping the construction of that evidence. Byrne (2011: 5) calls this policy based evidence (in contrast to evidence based policy); “... the *selective* use of research findings to assert that policies have worked, continue to work, and will work in the future.” In its most problematic forms policy based evidence can involve the construction data and selection of evidence to legitimate a certain action or position – to create a self-serving discourse of evidence. This is more subtle than a plain manipulation of scientific findings, it is the total of a set of decision around the concepts and methods through which to investigate a phenomena. One example of this is the cigarette industry’s selective construction of and interpretation of scientific evidence surrounding the health effects of smoking in a way that serves their political and economic interests.

Almost always though, policy-based evidence is of a less malevolent variety – less a product of deliberate steering of evidence construction and interpretation and more an indirect response to a set of implicit incentives and commitments. For example, the UN and World Bank are both committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are mandated to conceptualize some elements of ex-combatant reintegration within this framework. This is not to point out that the MDGs are somehow inherently problematic, but rather that the idea that they should *a priori* serve as a lens for understanding the phenomena of reintegration is a political decision that affects how we construct and interpret evidence about reintegration through M&E.

All scientific inquiry makes decisions surrounding the construction and interpretation of evidence. Exposing this truth is the whole point of the critical realist distinction between the

real, actual, and empirical domains. In this way all science is reflexive, or self-referential. However, applied social science, which includes M&E, can be indirectly steered by the powerful interests of the political organizations executing, or more often contracting, such social scientific evaluations – and in this sense there may exist an extra layer of reflexivity. Booth (1988), in a step very much in line with the thinking of Foucault (1980), suggests that due to this sort of double reflexivity, government statistics can sometimes tell us more about the needs, administrative routines, and operation of government than about the condition of society itself. Indeed, Byrne (2011: 16) warns that in our critical evaluation of applied social science, we must always consider “... the degree to which he who pays the piper calls the tune”.

Keeping in mind our previous discussion of complex realism in §3.2.3, we can think of the political environments in which reintegration M&E take place themselves as complex systems. This is very much in line with Rittel & Weber’s (1973) discussion of “wicked” vs. “tame” policy problems – i.e. complex vs. non-complex. Complex political environments shape the way M&E is designed and carried out and, in turn, the knowledge produced about the complex system of reintegration. Thus, any attempt to produce knowledge about what has generated change in the complex system of reintegration must be founded on a clear understanding of the implications of the ontological specifications for the construction of meaningful knowledge derived from the complex political environment from which the knowledge of reintegration itself is produced – i.e. the positionality of such knowledge. In the next subsection explores the construction of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset in practical terms as well as the political landscape of which it is a product of, in a twofold attempt to glean the paradigm of data construction and analysis built into the data.

3.3.2 The TDRP Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation in the GLR

In outlining the TDRP approach to monitoring & evaluation in the GLR there are two important components to consider. Firstly (§3.3.2.1), it is essential to understand key features of the overarching political landscape of reintegration programming that shape the TDRP’s approach M&E. This political landscape then, secondly (§3.3.2.2), provides the

context for us to outline the more technical structure of the M&E of reintegration programming in the GLR, and the construction of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset.

3.3.2.1 The Political Landscape of Reintegration M&E

There are three overarching factors to the political landscape of reintegration programming, and broader institutional structures it exists within, that have played a decisive role in shaping the TDRP's approach to the monitoring and evaluation of reintegration in the GLR. First, at some level or another the TDRP has partnered with the UN and UN agencies in their reintegration programming related activities – including M&E. In the GLR the UN has been the key institution through which DDR programming has been planned and implemented. As such, the UN provides the larger framework through which reintegration programming is approached in the GLR – today, most notably through the IDDRS. In this regard, the TDRP's cooperation with the UN is not only unavoidable, but also essential. The TDRP's role in reintegration programming in the GLR has been threefold: as a funding conduit, a technical advisor, and as responsible for M&E. These three roles are inherently executed within the broader framework of the core mandates of the UN charter. As such, various components of the TDRP's approach to M&E are conceptualized to correspond to the broader UN framework. For example, the UN convention on the rights of the child and security council resolution 1325 on women peace and security, themselves both political processes external to ex-combatant reintegration, play an influential role in the way age and gender are conceptualized as factors in ex-combatant reintegration – in turn the forms of evidence constructed and knowledge produced through M&E about the role age and gender in reintegration.

In making this point we are by no means attempting to assert that the influence of ex-combatant age or gender are not important dimensions to ex-combatant reintegration, rather that the specific ontological and epistemological formulation the role of age and gender in reintegration M&E are influenced by a broader set of political processes external to reintegration programming itself. The extent of these external political influences is not limited to age and gender, but are evident in all components of reintegration M&E –

including key dimensions of this doctoral thesis i.e. social identity, social capital and sustainable livelihoods.

A second factor in the political landscape that drives the TDRP's approach to M&E in the GLR is accountability to donors. Reintegration programming, including M&E, are funded almost entirely through donor country contributions in the form of official development assistance (ODA). ODA is itself defined by the OECD in a broader political process completely separate from reintegration programming. Nonetheless, OECD's definition of what counts as ODA plays a role in defining what reintegration programming can include and still "count" as ODA. Considering that many reintegration programs can run expenses up into the hundreds of millions of dollars there is considerable pressure from donor countries on actors such as TDRP and UNDP to show not only that funds have been used appropriately, but also that they have generated the desired impact of reintegration. The role of this political pressure cannot be understated. The mode of inquiry in the M&E of reintegration programming is geared almost wholly towards proving the extent of programming impact – as opposed to understanding the processes and underlying mechanisms that drive ex-combatant reintegration.

Somewhat paradoxically, the political demand for knowledge that proves programming impact has often supplanted knowledge of the very processes and mechanisms that such reintegration programming means to impact. Another way to say this is that there is an inbuilt incentive in reintegration M&E to constructed evidence and knowledge based on correlations between reintegration programming efforts and ex-combatants' position across a number of social and economic indicators. This, as opposed to evidence and knowledge about the underlying causal process and mechanisms that drive ex-combatant reintegration independent of reintegration programming. Again, the point here is not to dismiss all evidence produced through M&E as useless for understanding the processes and mechanisms of reintegration – to the contrary, this doctoral thesis is based on the idea that there is enormous value in this evidence. Rather the essential idea here is to acknowledge the influence that such political demands have for the forms of evidence constructed and knowledge produced.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly for this research, the TDRP is a component in the larger institution of the World Bank and as such is subject to the broader institutional incentives of the World Bank. One could ask why the World Bank is involved in the reintegration of ex-combatants at all. After all, the World Bank is, among other things, in the business of giving loans, albeit with particularly low interest rates, to countries in need of development assistance. However, after periods of war or protracted violence it is essential the World Bank see a given country as relatively stable before issuing blanket development assistance in the form of a loan. The reintegration of ex-combatants is seen as a key component of post-conflict stabilization. Thus, targeted development assistance to ex-combatants in the form of reintegration programming is seen as an important step towards the stabilization of the post-conflict environment. This dynamic of targeted assistance (reintegration programming) as a step towards blanket assistance (development loan) has a profound impact on how the TDRP conceptualizes what reintegration is, and in turn what forms of evidence and knowledge (produced through M&E) about reintegration are needed.

As a result of these political incentives, the TDRP has focused on reintegration as constituted by ex-combatants reaching a level of parity with non-combatant community members across a broad range of social and economic indicators (i.e. civilianization). Once a certain level of parity is achieved ex-combatants are no longer seen as a uniquely disadvantaged group that requires *targeted assistance* in the form of reintegration programming, instead *blanket assistance* in the form of a development loan can take over. As we will discuss in §4.3.1, once we start to look at the underlying causal processes and mechanisms to reintegration, the formulation of reintegration as indicated by parity alone proves especially paradoxical. While it appears that parity is indeed an important element of understanding reintegration, an overt focus on parity, at the expense of focus on the underlying processes and mechanisms of reintegration, can obscure at least as much as it reveals.

The interaction of these three central political factors when combined with the overarching anti-ideological shift towards evidence based policy are the context for understanding much of the TDRP's approach to the M&E of reintegration programming the in GLR. We must temper this critical discussion of the political factors that influence the TDRP's construction of evidence and knowledge about reintegration through M&E by pointing out that there are

numerous examples of invaluable efforts at revealing the underlying processes and mechanisms of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR from within the TDRP (see e.g. Finn 2012). Counterexamples notwithstanding, the overarching approach to the construction of evidence through M&E in the GLR is one that has been less focused on what complex processes and mechanisms must exist in order for reintegration to be possible as it observed, and is instead more focused in how the process of reintegration must be for the actions undertaken in reintegration programming to be justified.

This is not to assert that the evidence constructed through the M&E of reintegration programming is not useful for exploring the underlying processes and mechanisms of reintegration. Rather, the point is that the evidence has been constructed within a specific political landscape that has had an important influence on the form, scope, and mode of data collection (its positionality). We argue in §3.4 that a careful reframing of the GLR data under a comparative case study approach utilizing process tracing can help us to shift our angle of inquiry and shed some of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset's inbuilt positionality, to give us a clearer view of some of the complex processes of ex-combatant reintegration, and the causal mechanisms that underlie them - unburdened by the pervasive incentives embedded in the political landscape.

3.3.2.2 The Construction of the GLR Data

The GLR reintegration datasets have been produced as a part of M&E under logic of a periodic non-randomized control trial designed to correspond to various phases of the reintegration programming life cycle in each of the five GLR countries. Surveys are carried on ex-combatants partaking in reintegration programming but also, critically, on community members in the areas where ex-combatants will be returning. In this way community member are intended to serve as a control group by which the specific issues relevant to ex-combatants, as opposed to those pervasive in the general post-conflict environment, can be identified (see *Figure 3.1*). The GLR surveys have covered a breadth of issues deemed relevant to programming goals (e.g. demographics, education and skills, housing and security, reintegration experiences, economic issues, social capital – for detail see the data

presentation annexes in §6-8) and were planned to be carried out at five points in a seven year program cycle.

First, there is typically a pilot survey to be completed in the first year of programming. The pilot is intended as a venue for testing and adjusting the survey tools as well as the broader M&E system (including data capture, management, and analysis) for the second survey – the baseline. The baseline survey is typically planned sometime around year one in the programming life cycle. The purpose of the baseline, as the name implies, is to provide and anchor point to compare future survey data to in order to understand the depth of change in ex-combatants. Next, tracer surveys typically are planned for years three and five of programming and are ideally used against baseline data to steer and adjust reintegration programming. Lastly, the final impact evaluation survey is planned for somewhere around year seven. It is at this point that survey data is used to assert the extent of programming impact – in the TDRP approach to M&E this is primarily signaled by the level of parity between ex-combatants and community members across the broad range of politically defined indicators surveyed. However, as explored in §4.3.1, a sole focus on parity can yield paradoxical findings.

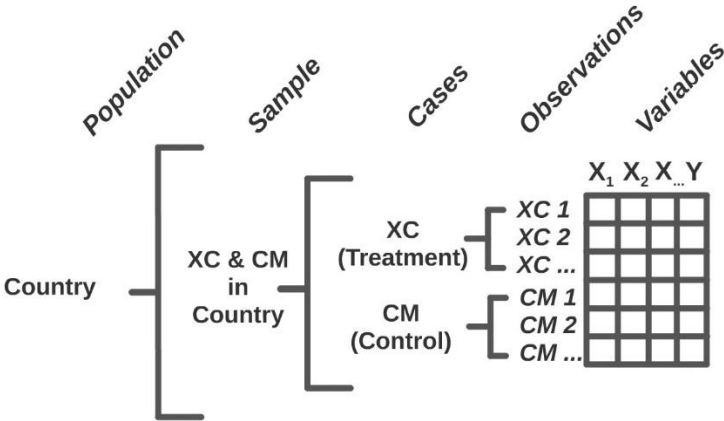


Figure 3.1– Structure of GLR Reintegration M&E Surveys. Adapted from Gerring (2007).

It is important to remember that post-conflict and development environments are notoriously unstable. Even with the logistical capacity of institutions like the UN and the TDRP, carrying out large surveys can prove very challenging. The actual timing of surveys

rarely corresponds to plans and the quality of data can vary considerably. The positivist ideal of a pure or objective dataset is rarely, if ever, approached. Though M&E strategies attempt to mimic the logic of a controlled experiment, the post-conflict environment almost never allows for this. Thus, in the process of merging various surveys from across the five GLR countries into the one mega-dataset utilized in this doctoral thesis, there has been considerable “cleaning” (i.e. throwing out bad or suspect quality data), adjusting, and recoding. The decisions made around these points is discussed in detail in the introduction to the data presentation annexes (§6).

The result of merging surveys from the five GLR countries is an incredibly detailed data source on the social and economic dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration in the region. However, as argued above, the incentive structures of the political landscape favor certain forms and scopes of data to be used for M&E. Much of the enormous potential of the GLR datasets for exploring the underlying processes and mechanisms to reintegration is never actualized through M&E in the individual GLR countries. However, as we argue in the following section, reframing the merged datasets in a comparative case-study mode of inquiry, utilizing process tracing, creates the space for shedding the political incentives that drive M&E and delving into an exploration of processes and mechanisms – the space for beginning to actualize the potential of the GLR dataset for social scientific inquiry.

3.4 Reframing the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset within a Comparative Case Study Framework

Moving forward with the ideas built in §3.2 on the meta-theoretical foundations of this research and in turn the space that this opened in §3.3 for a discussion of the *empirical* positionality embodied the GLR reintegration datasets, the current section of the methodological approach chapter aims to reframe the GRL reintegration datasets within a case study based methodological approach. It is argued in this section that adopting such a case study based methodological approach can help to ameliorate some of the issues of positionality discussed in §3.3, and open space for the exploration of the causal mechanisms

of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR and the possibility of theory building about the broader processes of ex-combatant reintegration.

To pursue these aims this section proceeds in two main subsections. The first subsection (§3.4.1) focuses on broadly on outlining the core strengths and weaknesses of case study research in the social sciences. Similarly, the strengths and weaknesses of the specific method of processes tracing within case study research are considered. In the second subsection, (§3.4.2) the specific case study approach utilized in this doctoral thesis is outlined, with specific discussion of the strategy of processes tracing from quantitative data.

3.4.1. Case Study Research in the Social Sciences

This sub-section explores the nature of case study research in the social sciences in three parts. First (§3.4.1.1), we explore the general nature of case study research, Second (3.4.1.2), we develop the relative strengths and weaknesses of case study research relative to quantitative paradigms of social scientific inquiry. Third (3.4.1.3), we give specific attention to the methodological tool of processes tracing.

3.4.1.1 What is Case Study Research?

In making a compelling argument for the application of a case study approach in this research, a useful place to start is with the fundamental question: what is case study research? Indeed, though case study research approaches, sometimes called case-based methods, have seen a resurgence in recent decades they are still far from ubiquitous. Two of the most important contemporary texts giving case study research comprehensive attention are George & Bennet (2005) and Gerring (2007), and as such, they will serve as the basis for much of the discussion here. So what is a case study? George & Bennet (2005: 5) define a case study as “... the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events...” Similarly, Gerring (2007: 211) offers that case studies are “The intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a *population* of cases).” Though it appears that George & Bennet see case studies as more explicitly tied to historical explanation (they are correct in that all causal explanation includes elements of historical explanation) it is

clear that both authors agree upon a fundamental idea of case study research; the exploration of a specific case, or group of cases, in the hopes of understanding a broader set of similar cases.

Perhaps it is helpful to look at an even more elemental level to ask “what is a case?” For George & Bennet (2006: 17) a case is “... an instance of a class of events.” Gerring (2007) agrees, but stipulates that cases must be temporally and spatially defined. This seems reasonable. A case is an instance of a class of events in a specific time (or range of time) and place – that is, a specific context. In this research there are five cases (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC) that are all instances of institutionally and developmentally weak countries in the GLR of Africa, with ex-combatants reintegrating into communities with the assistance of DDR programming after prolonged periods of violent conflict. It is important to address the point that while the predominant focus of discussions of case study research is on the strengths and challenges of taking inferences from the in-depth investigation of a *single case* and rigorously applying them to a broader set of cases, case studies can also include the investigation of *several cases*, and comparison among them, to produce inferences and reflect on a broader set of cases (George & Bennet 2006: 18). Indeed, comparison is a central component of almost all scientific inference, and has a long history in the social sciences (e.g. Mill 1843; Ragin 1987). Comparison of the trajectories of ex-combatants and community members within and across the five GLR countries will play a pivotal role in our ability to produce inferences about the processes of reintegration and the mechanisms that underlie them.

Case study approaches fit nicely into the framework of scientific realism (critical or complex varieties) presented in §3.2. It is the case study’s emphasis on the extrapolation of inferences beyond the original observation range that places it firmly in line with forms of scientific realism. The implication of such an approach is that there is something in the case that exists at an ontological level independent of that specific case - and thus exists in other similar cases. This ontological specification is what allows us to use the investigation of specific instances of processes and mechanisms of ex-combatant reintegration in the five GLR countries to hypothesize their workings across the region, and perhaps on a broader

level. However, no approach or method is infallible. There are always strengths and tradeoffs. With this, we can turn to the question of “what is case study research good for?”

3.4.1.2 What is Case Study Research Good For?

General Strengths and Tradeoffs

One way to highlight some of the broad strengths and weaknesses of case study approaches to social scientific inquiry, which are often – but not necessarily – qualitative paradigm of inquiry, is to contrast them via the predominant quantitative paradigm of inquiry, which are often – but not necessarily – rooted in regression based statistics. Indeed, as our main data source in this doctoral thesis is a large quantitative dataset one could very reasonably ask why a quantitative paradigm should not be favored instead. In beginning to address this question a good place to start is with is in exploring the general orientations of case study versus quantitative paradigm approaches to social science research.

Gerring (2007) points out that while all social science involves elements of both theory development and testing, or in Popper’s (2004b) words: “conjectures and refutations”. Case study and quantitative paradigm approaches tend to favor opposite ends of the spectrum. While case study approaches tend to favor the development of new concepts, ideas, frameworks, or theories, quantitative paradigm research is firmly rooted in the rigorous testing or “refutation” of existing theory. Much criticism of case study research, and qualitative research methods more broadly, has rested on its relative weakness in hypothesis testing, at least by the same standards of quantitative paradigm research (see e.g. King *et al* 1994). In other direction, a growing crowd of voices has been evermore critical to quantitative paradigm of inquiry for its heavy reliance on often arbitrarily defined model specifications and general tendency to supplant substantive theoretical knowledge of a topic (*episteme*) with sophisticated technical skills (*techne*). In the words of Freedman (2010: 46), “to substitute intellectual capital for labor” (see also, Brady & Collier 2010).

Another related area where case study and quantitative paradigm research approaches tend to be divisive is in the preference for explanations with high levels of internal validity versus external validity. Do we prefer explanations that are specific to the idiosyncrasies of a

specific case, but may not prove useful for understanding many other cases (high internal validity)? Alternatively, do we prefer an explanation that fits a large number of cases but may risk what George & Bennet (2006: 19) call “concept stretching” – comparing possibly inequivalent cases with concepts that may only be appropriate for some of those cases? While case study methods tend to favor internal over external validity, we will argue that the comparative case study approach utilized in this doctoral thesis helps to achieve balance between these two poles – providing explanations of the processes and mechanisms that underlie the individual-level processes ex-combatant reintegration *across* the GLR, but are also consistent with the dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration *within* each of the five GLR countries.

There are numerous general trade-offs between case study and quantitative paradigm approaches to social scientific research. Where researchers ultimately land on the spectrum of approaches between them should be directly tied to the nature of the research questions. Broadly speaking, case study methods are more adept at answer what Scharpf (1997) calls “forward looking questions”, while quantitative paradigm methods are more adept to answer “backwards looking questions” (see also Byrne 2011b). Goertz & Mahoney (2012) offer another way of phasing this distinction as that between research questions concerned with the causes of effects (backwards looking) and those concerned with the effects of causes (forward looking). In this study our research questions are predominantly backwards looking – we want to explain the causal processes and mechanisms that produce the effect of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR. Though in order to achieve such an explanation, we must also periodically investigate variation of reintegration outcomes based on variation in different causal components (effects of causes / forward looking).

In the end, the purest forms of case study and quantitative paradigm research approaches exist at opposite poles of a spectrum. However, in practice most all social research involves elements of both. Again, the research questions should most directly dictate where a piece of research falls on the spectrum. Gerring (2007: 49) suggests that the many areas of trade-off between case study and quantitative paradigm approaches to social scientific research may come down to “... a choice between knowing more about less, or less about more.” In light of the fact that our research questions explicitly ask about the processes and

mechanisms underlying ex-combatant reintegration, we now turn to explore the particular strengths of case study approaches for exploring these components of theory development and social scientific explanation.

The Search for Causal Mechanisms

In §3.2 we gave the concept of causal mechanisms a cursory treatment while outlining the core ideas of critical and complex realism. In its most elemental form the term causal mechanism is a metaphor for the generative causal force that produces observable outcomes. How are we to operationalize this conceptual metaphor in the methodological realm? Much literature on causal mechanisms agrees that it is identifying causal mechanisms that allows us to see causal chains/pathways/processes - but what does this really mean? Are causal mechanisms, and the causal processes that they account for, merely intervening variables as King *et al* (1994) suggest? If so, then perhaps statistical (quantitative paradigm) methods would be the mode of inquiry most adept to identifying mechanisms. However, the overwhelming consensus (e.g. Bennet & Checkel 2015; George & Bennet 2005; Gerring 2007) has been that operationalizing causal mechanism as intervening variables is insufficient. Establishing yet another statistical correlation, even a perfect correlation, can still yield little causal explanation. Indeed, as Hedström (2005: 26) points out: "... correlations and constant conjunctions do not explain but require explanation by reference to the entities and activities that brought them into existence."

So if mechanisms are not intervening variables, what are they then? Are mechanisms merely analytical constructs as Hedström and Swedburg (1998) suggest? Or theories within theories as Stinchcombe (1991) offers? These too seem false steps. As detailed in §3.2, the critical realist paradigm places causal mechanisms firmly in the ontological realm of the real. From this view, mechanisms cannot be merely our constructs, but exist independently of our perception of them. There are many voices in the discourse on causal mechanisms with varying operationalizations of causal mechanisms (see e.g. Bhaskar 2008; Bunge 2004; Falleti & Lynch 2009; George & Bennet 2005; Gerring 2007; Goertz & Mahoney 2012; Mahoney 2001; McAdam *et al* 2001; Pawson 2000; Stinchcombe 1991), however all agree that exploring causal mechanisms means explanations the *how* of causation. Here we are partial

to Hedström's (2005) definition of causal mechanisms, though it is one of the more abstract definitions available, for its particular congruency to many of the ideas of complex realism detailed in §3.2. Hedström (2005: 25) defines a causal mechanism as:

“... mechanisms can be said to consist of *entities* (with properties) and the *activities* that these entities engage in, either by themselves or in concert with other entities. These activities bring about change, and the type of change brought about depends upon the properties of the entities and the way in which they are linked to one another. A social mechanism, as here defined, describes a constellation of entities and activities that are organized such that they regularly bring about a particular type of outcome.”

We can easily adjust the language here to align to the specific operationalization of ex-combatant reintegration under complex realism in §3.2. The mechanisms underlying individual-level reintegration processes consist of ex-combatants (entities) with social, economic, characteristics and experiences (properties) and the activities they engage in (e.g. livelihood strategies), either by themselves or in concert with community members (other entities). These actions bring about change, and the trajectory (type) of change brought about depends on their characteristics and the way in which they are linked to one another. Ex-combatant reintegration mechanisms, as here defined, describe the constellation of ex-combatant characteristics and activities that are organized such that they regularly bring about a particular trajectory in the processes of reintegration.

Beyond the possibility of giving us glimpses into the *how* of the social world, the search for causal mechanisms is important in at least two other regards worth mentioning here. First, as mentioned in §3.2, the product of mechanism based explanations of social phenomena can be called middle-range theory. Middle-range theory is much more specific than general theory or covering laws, which George & Bennet (2005) argue are too vague to lead to any kind of valuable policy guidance (see also Byrne 2011 and Pawson 2006). Like it or not, in the field of ex-combatant reintegration in the context of DDR programming there is an inbuilt normative component. All research on processes ex-combatant reintegration in the context of DDR programming has and inherent role in guiding policy meant to affect those processes.

We argue that the rigorous application of a mechanisms focused mode of inquiry is indicative of taking these normative dimensions seriously.

However, there are at least two potential disadvantages to middle range theory. Bennett & Checkel (2015: 92) argue that because middle-range theories often have “several independent variables or mechanisms at play, it is not possible to isolate the impact of any one factor”. This is not particularly problematic for us. Our complex realist framework rejects the idea that isolating causal impacts is the goal of scientific inquiry - all variables (parameters) are inherently interacting, causing and being caused, at some level. The goal of scientific inquiry in the complex realist framework is to account for the ways the parameters of systems “tend” to interact through mechanisms to produce the trajectories of those systems over time. A second drawback to middle-range theory is that through its micro-focus on mechanisms within specific temporally or spatially delimited frames, it can risk becoming decontextualized from broader macro-factors that have bearing on those mechanisms that play out at lower levels. In one way, this is a real point of criticism for our approach in this doctoral thesis - there is little explicit account of the role of specific macro forces that shape individual-level ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR. At the same time, our conceptualization of country-level reintegration trajectories in §4.3, as types of “second order” processes, creates a broad conceptualization of the role of macro forces, even if there is only a limited range of forces considered.

The second point worth emphasizing is that focusing on mechanisms within a case study framework allows us to take complexity seriously. Gerring (2007: 61) dismisses complexity in saying that: “Indeed, “complexity,” as the term is used in social science circles, seems to refer to any feature of a causal problem that does not fit snugly with standard assumptions of linearity, additivity, and independence. As such, it is a red herring, for it has no determinate meaning.” On the other hand, George and Bennet (2005) repeatedly state that case study approaches help to address complexity – though they never offer any explicit operationalization beyond the notion that case studies leave space for equifinality. We have endeavored in §3.2 to give complexity an operationalized meaning within the complex realist paradigm of social inquiry. Further, we posit that our specific operationalization of complexity is not only compatible with a case study approach to social inquiry, but actually

enhances its already inherent strengths. For us, adopting a mechanisms focused approach is part of taking complexity seriously,

Turning back to the beginning of this sub-section, it is the case study's emphasis on the extrapolation of inferences beyond the original observation range that places it firmly in line with forms of scientific realism. Furthermore, it is this explicit rooting in scientific realism, in our case critical and complex realism, which makes case study approaches to social research particularly attuned to the search for causal mechanisms. Case study research, however, is a broad framework for analysis that can be filled with a variety of specific methods for inquiry. One specific method used in this study, that is also commonly paired with case study approaches to social research more broadly, is that of process tracing. If case study approaches to scientific inquiry are the broad framework that make possible the critical and complex realist paradigm of scientific explanation possible, then we argue that process tracing is a method by which these explanations can be actualized in this study.

3.4.1.3. Process Tracing

While case study approaches to social research do not necessarily have to utilize process tracing specifically, process tracing almost always occurs within some variety of a case study framework. In this way, process tracing and case study approaches are deeply intertwined. Tilly (1997: 48) suggests that process tracing aims to establish "... relevant, verifiable causal stories resting in different chains of cause-effect relations whose efficacy can be demonstrated independently of those stories." But what does process tracing look like in practice? How do we construct causal stories? Indeed, much of the challenge with process tracing is its amorphous nature. Gerring (2007: 178) points out that at times process tracing "borders on ineffable". To critical eyes (e.g. King *et al*), process tracing can appear as nothing more than atheoretical historical explanation - story telling. In light of such skepticism, there has been a growing effort on the part of case-based methodologists to clarify and explain process tracing, as well as to establish a set of best practices (e.g. Bennet & Checkel 2015).

George & Bennet (2005: 206) posit that process tracing “... attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between and independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.” This is a good place to start. George & Bennet’s (2005) definition points process tracing at understanding the processes and mechanisms between cause and effect – the “black box” of causation. However, their language of independent and dependent variables invites the idea, which we have already rejected, of mechanisms as intervening variables. How do we get around this? Bennet & Checkel (2015: 6) offer some clarity in saying that process tracing involves “... the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest.” Bennet & Checkel (2015) then go further to suggest that in examining the intermediate steps in a causal process we use multiple forms of evidence on the processes, sequences, and conjuncture of events in a causal story. They suggest that we can think of these multiple forms of evidence as “diagnostic evidence”, and thus drop the term intervening variable – along with its associated, and problematic in critical and complex realist views, ontological and epistemological commitments to positivism.

The utilization of multiple forms of evidence is a key component of process tracing. Gerring (2007: 173) goes as far as to say: “The hallmark of process tracing, in my view, is that multiple types of evidence are employed for the verification of a single inference...” Indeed, using multiple forms of evidence to “triangulate” inferences seems logical. However, it is this inclusion of multiple forms of non-comparable evidence that has led to some of the critique of process tracing as lacking the rigor of, for example, more strict statistical methods. The detective analogy is useful here again. Through the careful and laborious examination of multiple sources of evidence, we are in the process of detection – seeking the causal process between evidence (causes – or traces in the language of complex realism) and outcomes (the trajectories of systems over time).

In this doctoral thesis our primary source of evidence is the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. However, this quantitative data is far from the only evidence used to process trace in this study. Other forms of diagnostic evidence utilized in this study include existing theory and empirical case material in the scholarly discourse on peacebuilding, development, DDR, and

reintegration; internal documents to the TDRP; personal interaction and field experience while working for the TDRP, as well as interviews and consultations with experts from the World Bank, UN, and other stakeholding organizations on the local dynamics of reintegration in the GLR. All of these sources provide clues that collectively create leverage for triangulating inferences about the nature of ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR and the underlying mechanisms that govern them. In other words, all these are the diagnostic evidence that allow us to process trace.

So we have a lot of evidence and we are building a causal story, but what are the actual procedures by which we do this in process tracing? Because the nature of every case study and forms of evidence they offer are unique, so too are process tracing procedures highly idiosyncratic. However, generally speaking, process tracing involves a laborious process of examining many pieces of evidence in an iterative process of inductive and deductive reasoning. The research “soaks and pokes” in the data to inductively produce some initial inferences about the nature of the causal process or mechanism at hand (Bennet & Checkel 2015). This is essentially what we do in the annexes (§6-8) of this doctoral thesis. With an initial inductive inference, or even partial inference, the researcher moves to the deductive mode to search for the observable implications of that initial inference in the other diagnostic evidence at hand.

In this way the researcher is retroductively reasoning about what must be true for a given phenomenon to be as it is. Does the evidence match the inference? Is it contrary? Is there no substantive evidence through which to evaluate the inference? Based on this search for the observable implications of an inference the researcher can attempt to deduce the validity of the initial inductive inference – leading to confirmation, adjustment, or rejection. Process tracing proceeds in an iterative loop of this inductive and deductive investigation of evidence. It is in this way that case studies using process tracing can produce explanations with high levels of internal validity – the inferences they make have been iteratively tested against other available diagnostic evidence in a slow and laborious process.

The idea of testing process tracing inferences by their observable implications by comparison to other within case diagnostic evidence has been the crux of skepticism about the process

tracing method. Rueschmeyer (2003: 305) laments "... the most conventional view, taught in countless classes on the methodology of social research. It holds that studying a single case yields only one reasonable theoretical outcome, the generation of hypotheses that may be tested in other more numerous cases." Indeed, one can reasonably ask whether it is possible for cases to betray the highly specific process tracing derived inferences constructed around those very cases. In other words, are process tracing inferences from a single case, or small group of cases, irrefutable without being tested on other cases? This comes back to our previous discussion of internal versus external validity as two poles in a spectrum on which case study / process tracing approaches land firmly on the side of internal validity. A growing faction of methodologists are staunch in the idea that process tracing can indeed produce valid inferences that can be tested against other diagnostic evidence within a single case or small group of cases (see e.g. Bennet & Checkel 2015; Brady & Collier 2010; George & Bennet 2005; Gerring 2007; Mahoney & Rueschmeyer 2003; Ragin 1985, 2008; Rohlfing 2013). George & Bennet (2005: 219) surmise this logic well:

"We differ with many methodologists in that we argue that a theory can be derived or modified based on the evidence within a case, and still be tested against *new facts* or *new evidence* within the same case, as well as against other cases. Detectives do this all the time – clues lead them to develop a new theory about a case, which leads them to expect some evidence that in the absence of the new theory would have been wildly unexpected, and the corroboration of this evidence is seen as strong confirmation of the theory."

The inferences hypothesized and tested through process tracing can amalgamate to produce detailed causal narratives of the processes between cause and effect (for classic examples of process tracing see e.g. Collier & Collier 1991; Mahoney 2001b; and Skocpol 1979). When performed rigorously (see Bennet & Checkel 2015), these explanations include the identification of the hypothesized causal mechanisms that govern the causal processes of the specific case that can be evidenced to exist independent of the specific case. To achieve this last part, evidencing that mechanisms exist independent of the specific case, focused and structured comparison to other "like cases" is essential (George & Bennet 2005). Not only this, but comparison across other similar cases can help to sharpen the formulation of

the processes and mechanisms occurring within a case. It is only when we begin to compare outside the first case that the impact of elements that may have been held constant, and thus invisible, become plain to see. In this way deviant cases can play an especially important role in building explanatory leverage - as DRC does in §4.3.1 of this doctoral thesis.

Comparison in process tracing is an important part of amplifying the external validity of the hypothesized causal mechanisms. Byrne & Uprichard (2012) argue that in taking the step of comparison process tracing moves beyond retrodiction, explaining what mechanisms and conditions must exist for ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR to be as it is, to retrodiction, explaining what might happen (what trajectory) in the future in light of the mechanisms and conditions that must exist. This in turn opens space for exploring how to purposively shape these trajectories through reintegration programming. A comparative case study approach utilizing process tracing provides a framework for evidencing the causal processes and mechanisms within a specific case and, further, the generalizability of these specific processes and mechanisms to other similar cases. This is the approach utilized in this doctoral thesis, and outlined in the following sub-section.

3.4.2 The Great Lakes Region as a Comparative Case-Study

This sub-section outlines the specific approach in this doctoral thesis to reframing TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset in a comparative case-study approach, and proceeds in three parts. First (§3.4.2.1), we outline the specific structure to the case-study approach. Second (§3.4.2.2), we outline the range of “diagnostic evidence” utilized in the comparative case-study approach. Third (§3.4.2.3), we outline the strategy of processes tracing from quantitative data.

3.4.2.1 Comparative Case-Study Structure

The case-study approach in this doctoral thesis is structured in three distinct phases. First, in the detailed data presentation annexes (§6-8) the initial “soaking and poking” of the data occurs. We describe the contents of TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset and, aided by additional diagnostic evidence, we reason about the relationships between various parts in

the iterative process of inductive and deductive reasoning. This first phase gives us a broad understanding of the shape of the data on ex-combatants and community members across the five GLR countries, and the trends within and across them. This is the groundwork of process tracing.

The second phase of our case study approach moves to focus on individual-level reintegration processes and mechanisms. To do this each ex-combatant and community member is examined as an individual case / system. The variables of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset are conceptualized as the parameters that constitute the individual ex-combatant and community member systems spaces, and the observed traces for individual ex-combatants and community members within those parameters collectively define their system states. This is where we really roll up our sleeves and get into the heavy lifting part of processes tracing. We compare ex-combatants and community member trajectories, and the trajectories of many sub-groups, within and across the five GLR countries to retroductively reason about the processes and mechanisms that we reason must exist in order to account for the trajectories of individual ex-combatant and community member systems over time. This retroductive effort is guided by the theoretical perspectives presented in the conceptual approach chapter (§2), and in this sense is carried out in harmony with an abductive re-understanding of the TDRP-GLR data within that conceptual framework. The fruits of these efforts are presented in §4.2 of the analysis chapter of this doctoral thesis.

In the third phase of our case-study approach (presented in §4.3), based on our understanding of individual-level reintegration processes and mechanisms, we turn to reflect on the ways in which the collective trajectories of ex-combatants and community members as sub-systems in each of the five GLR country super-systems amalgamate to produce country-level reintegration trajectories. While in the second phase of our case-study approach each individual ex-combatant and community member is understood as its own case / system, here the trajectories of individual ex-combatants and community members become the traces that constitute the trajectories of respective ex-combatant and community member sub-systems, which in turn constitute the trajectories of the five country-level super-systems in the GLR. Though the comparison of the country-level

reintegration trajectories in the GLR, and their component ex-combatant and community member sub-systems, we utilize further retroductive reasoning to conceptualize a “second order” processes that produces country-level reintegration trajectories. Based on our understandings of the processes and mechanisms that drive ex-combatant reintegration at the individual and country levels we take the next step to retrodictively elaborate a taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories that could exist outside of the context of the GLR, and to reflect on the potential for reintegration programming to impact these country-level trajectories.

3.4.2.2 Data Sources

While the empirical material utilized in this study is dominated by the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset, there are numerous other sources of ‘diagnostic evidence’ that guide the comparative case study / process tracing approach outlined here. Again, the particularities of the GLR reintegration dataset as a source of evidence are discussed in more detail in the data presentation annexes (§6-8). Other forms of evidence include:

- Social scientific theory on social and economic processes presented in the conceptual approach outlined in §2 of this study
- Other scholarly and institutionally based literature on ex-combatant reintegration
- Internal documents, including impact evaluations, from the TDRP and partner NDDRCs in the respective GLR countries
- Field experience working with the TDRP on the design and implementation of pilot and baseline reintegration studies as a part of M&E in South Sudan summer 2013
- Numerous data analysis consultations with TDRP experts (and affiliates) on reintegration processes within each of the five GLR countries.

Though these sources of diagnostic evidence often fade into the background in the detailed data presentation in (§6-8) and analysis (§4), their importance is paramount. Without a guide in the form of the substantive knowledge that these forms of diagnostic evidence represent, a meaningful exploration of a large quantitative data source such as the GLR reintegration dataset would be fraught. Indeed, a regression based statistical analysis might

be the only recourse. However, this need not be the case here; the presence of such sources of non-comparable diagnostic evidence guide the process tracing approach outlined below.

3.4.2.3 Process Tracing with Quantitative Data

In this doctoral thesis we engage in process tracing to, as Gerring (2007: 178) puts it, “... make sense of a congeries of disparate evidence, each of which sheds light on a single outcome or set or related outcomes.” For us the primary source of evidence is the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. While key authors point out that process tracing with quantitative data is not problematic in principle (e.g. Bennet & Checkel 2015 or George & Bennet 2005), there are few guiding examples of what exactly process tracing from quantitative data entails. Even well regarded case studies that process trace from large amounts of quantitative data can be somewhat illusive in their exact method (e.g. Kalyvas 2006 or Wood 2003). In the end, we may be guilty of this lack of clarity too. Explaining in technical terms the steps of inductively and deductively reasoning from descriptive quantitative data seems somewhat of fool’s errand. While there is clear logic, the moments of understanding are often sudden and ephemeral in nature.

Is quantitative process tracing merely Lieberman’s (2005) “nested analysis” in which one or a few cases are selected from a quantitative cross-case analysis for further analysis of the correlation results? Is quantitative process tracing really just another way of saying agent based modeling (e.g. Checkel 2013)? Or, even further, is quantitative process tracing rooted in Bayesian (e.g. Bennet 2015) or Boolean algebras (e.g. Ragin 2000, 2008 or Rihoux & Ragin 2009)? While it seems that there is an abundance of sophisticated quantitative and semi-quantitative techniques, providing a rich toolbox for researchers interested utilizing quantitative data, there is little harmony in the discourse about the relative strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches. In fact, the only consistent view seems to be on the limits of the predominant regression based statistical analysis for contributing to process tracing - mostly because of the inherent epistemological and ontological ties to positivism.

The approach to process tracing from quantitative data utilized in this doctoral thesis is most directly inspired by Tukey’s (1977) strategy of exploratory data analysis. Tukey proposes that

quantitative data analysis is comprised of two components, exploratory analysis and confirmatory analysis. The second component, confirmatory analysis, is comprised by the vast body of statistical methods that attempt to confirm extent of relationships between variables – the very methods that dominate the social sciences today. Even in the 1970’s Tukey (1977: vii) lamented that, the first component, exploratory data analysis was often regarded as “mere descriptive statistics” - no matter how much we learned from it. This sentiment remains today.

Exploratory data analysis, the first component of Tukey’s idea of data analysis, is a strategy of data expression, re-expression, and comparison, essentially analogous the iterative inductive deductive loop of “soaking and poking” that can later play a role in confirmatory analysis. In asserting this point Tukey compares the relationship between the exploratory and confirmatory sides of quantitative data analysis to that of the investigative and judicial arms of law enforcement. Tukey (1977: 3) posits that: “Unless the detective finds the clues, judge or jury has nothing to consider. Unless exploratory data analysis uncovers indications, usually quantitative ones, there is likely to be nothing for confirmatory data analysis to consider.”

Tukey essentially suggests that we should mull over data. We should express and re-express data through descriptive techniques in order to see what we can re-understand in the data in the context of other diagnostic evidence and alternative conceptual frameworks (abductive reasoning). Tukey is staunch in the view that exploratory tools must be guided by substantive knowledge of the subject matter. In this vein, turning again to the detective analogy, Tukey (1977: 1) points out that: “A detective investigating a crime needs both tools and understanding. If he has no fingerprint powder [tools], he will fail to find fingerprints on most surfaces. If he does not understand where the criminal is likely to have put this fingers [substantive subject knowledge], he will not look in the right places. Equally, the analyst of data needs both tools and understanding.” Tukey’s analogy here is reminiscent of our previous discussion of *techne* and *episteme* in §3.3.1. While the exploratory analysis of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset in this doctoral thesis is largely a technical exercise (*techne*), the guiding of this analysis by our other data sources and substantive knowledge

on the topic (*episteme*) that allows to use the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset for process tracing.

In practice we are involved in a sort of rudimentary cluster analysis where we are comparing various groups and subgroups in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset to identify key their similarities and differences. Age, gender, and other demographic group traits provide consistent categories, or “clusters”, that are analyzed throughout our analysis. With the categories we define at the outset, and discover along the way, we are able to move to reason about the possible explanations behind these similarities and differences through pattern matching (e.g. Campbell 1988) and micro-correlation (e.g. Roberts 1996). This processes of analysis is guided by all the forms of diagnostic evidence outlined in the previous section §3.4.2.2. As discussed throughout this chapter, comparison of the data trends within and across the give GLR countries is an essential part of increasing leverage in our explanations. In this vein, Tukey (1977: 115) reminds us that “... no body of data tells us all we need to know about its own analysis. It always takes information and insight gained from other, parallel bodies to let us analyze our body of data as well as we can.”

As a whole this form of analysis is a slow and laborious process. However, the result is that it allows us to iteratively reason about the processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR and the possible mechanisms that underlie them. Overall, this approach seats well in the complex realist paradigm advocated in §3.2.3. As such, this approach to processes tracing from quantitative data creates the space for us to take the complexity of reintegration as a phenomena seriously in the analysis presented in §4 of this doctoral thesis.

We remain wary though, as in §3.3, that the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset is inherited, and as such comes with inherited biases. Two of the ways these biases potentially manifest themselves in the GLR data is in the technical expression of data (e.g. scaling and concept operationalization) as well as the range and depth of data collected. On the first point, Tukey’s (1977) emphasis on re-expression as part of data exploration helps to ameliorate some of this. Especially through exploring different data field scaling, we can view data in different ways, from different angles, and see how, if at all, this alters our understanding of emerging processes – potentially revealing biases built in to particular forms of data

expression. On the second point, George and Bennet (2005: 21) are correct to point out that all studies utilizing existing or slightly modified databases face the problem that, because the range and depth of data are already defined, they do not have a direct means of inductively including new variables. This remains mostly true in our exploratory analysis of the GLR dataset; though there are some examples of being able to compute a new variable based on the values of others (e.g. using current age, time since demobilization, and time with armed group to compute approximate age at mobilization). Overall, our strategy in addressing these limitations is to lean heavily on our other forms of diagnostic evidence outside the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset - to reason about what parameters are important, and to reason about their meaning outside the bounds of the dataset itself (as dataset observations); that is, within the larger body of diagnostic evidence (as causal process observations). This is where process tracing takes place. This is where we observe the processes of reintegration in the GLR and hypothesize the causal mechanisms that underlie them.

3.5 Summary of Methodological Approach

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach utilized in this doctoral thesis in three main parts. First, we detailed the meta-theoretical foundations of our methodological approach. We argue that a serious commitment to both the critical realist notion of causal mechanisms and the ontological specifications of complexity are brought into harmony through a complex realist meta-theoretical framework. We have explored at length how these ontological and epistemological commitments are operationalized in this study of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR, as well as the space they create for a comparative case study approach.

Second, in light of the critical realist notions of the transient and intransient domains of science, we have turned a critical eye to the constructed nature of the primary data source in this study – the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. We explore the broad political incentives that steer the act of evidence construction in the M&E of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR within a broader framework of applied social science and an overarching shift towards

evidence based policy. This in an effort to take seriously the idea that inherited data comes with inherited biases.

Lastly, this chapter explores case study research approaches and the method of process tracing at length. We argue that case study based approaches, especially when combined with processes tracing, are an especially good fit to our meta-theoretical emphasis on causal mechanisms and complexity. In this vein, we conclude the chapter by outlining the comparative case study approach utilized in this doctoral thesis and explore the particularities of our approach to processes tracing from primarily quantitative data.

4 Analysis of Ex-Combatant Reintegration in the GLR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present an analysis of ex-combatant reintegration processes in the Great Lakes Region based on the primary data presentation annexes in part four (§6-8) of this doctoral thesis. While the analysis here is coherent as a standalone piece, for optimal analytical value it should be read in conjunction with the annexes. There are two main sections to this chapter. In the first section (§4.2) we explore the individual-level processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR while devoting special attention to explicating some of the key social and economic mechanisms that underlie those processes. In the second section (§4.3) we move further to situate individual ex-combatant reintegration processes within the trajectories of the communities they return to. We explore the nature of country-level reintegration trajectories and the paradoxes that ensue viewed from the perspective of reintegration programming.

4.2 Individual- Level Processes & Mechanisms

In this section we draw heavily on the primary data presentation annexes in part four (§6-8) of this doctoral thesis. It is at this point that we move beyond descriptive and exploratory examination (as we put it in §3.4.2.1: “soaking and poking”) of the data, presented in the two annexes, to engage in the strategy of process tracing outlined in the methodological approach chapter (specifically §3.4.1.3 and §3.4.2.3). We attempt to consolidate our insights and weave together a coherent picture of the individual-level processes by which ex-combatants reintegrate, with special attention given to identifying key mechanisms that govern them.

This exploration of the individual-level processes and mechanisms of ex-combatant reintegration proceeds in five subsections. First, we explore the dynamics of mobilization into, and demobilization from, armed groups in the GLR. Our focus is on the legacies that mobilization and wartime experiences carry for shaping individual ex-combatants’ prospects at the outset of reintegration. Second, we focus specifically on economic processes of

reintegration by exploring the predominant livelihood strategies that ex-combatants follow - the processes by which they achieve sustainable livelihoods, and the barriers for those who do not. We argue that human-capital based and natural-capital based livelihood strategies can act as key mechanisms that dictate the achievement of overall sustainable livelihoods in the GLR. Third, we turn to social reintegration processes by exploring the processes by which ex-combatants build social connections in the community, and the extent to which they can leverage this social capital towards tangible and intangible social and economic outcomes. We argue that marriage is a key mechanism through which ex-combatants gain access to bridging social networks and the resources they represent, as well as signal a shift in their social identity from soldier to civilian.

Fourth, given the social and economic processes and mechanisms outlined, we explore the profound role of gender as a structuring force that shapes the space in which female ex-combatants can exert their agency while navigating reintegration processes. We argue, however, that to truly appreciate the extent of gender-based disadvantages we must situate female ex-combatants within the broader context of gender dynamics across the Great Lakes Region. Fifth, and lastly, we draw together the previous strands of argument to outline an integrated model of reintegration processes and mechanisms. We argue that while separating the social and economic dimensions of reintegration can prove instrumental during initial analysis, in reality these social and economic processes and mechanisms are one and the same – entangled and inseparable.

4.2.1 From Mobilization to Demobilization: Missed Opportunities

Individuals mobilize into armed groups through various pathways. There those who join for ideological reasons, there are some that join for protection in the context of intense insecurity, there are others that join out of anger or in seeking revenge, and still there are others who join groups to escape the misery of extreme poverty. Most perversely, there are also those that are forcibly mobilized into armed groups. The pathways by which individuals mobilize can create lasting legacies that they must face as they return to communities as ex-combatants (see e.g. Baas 2012). Unfortunately, while we know some about when ex-combatants joined armed groups and how long they spent with them, there has not been

any systematic capture of their mobilization pathways and wartime experiences in the GLR countries. Thus, our analysis here is limited.

In the GLR countries the majority of ex-combatants were mobilized as adults between the ages of 18-30. These ex-combatants spend on average between three and seven years with armed groups, meaning the majority of them return to communities between the ages of 31-40. These trends are remarkably durable across the GLR countries. Ex-combatants in the GLR return to communities to face a range of interrelated social and economic disadvantages to their peers, tending to lag behind community members in terms of social and economic parameters. However, despite their universal disadvantage at the outset of reintegration, the majority of ex-combatants across the GLR display an overall positive trajectory of improvement over time.

However, there are important nuances that need to be made to this general picture of ex-combatants' disadvantage to the broader community. When we turn our attention to those ex-combatants in the GLR who were mobilized under the age of 18 the mediating role of age at time of mobilization on the extent of ex-combatants' social and economic disadvantages at the outset of reintegration becomes apparent.

4.2.1.1 Mobilization under the Age of 18

One-third (33.4% on average and just over 40% for females) of all ex-combatants across the GLR were mobilized as children under the age of 18. While there is much that can be said about when adulthood begins across the different cultural contexts in the GLR, the figures show that of those ex-combatants mobilized into armed groups under the age of 18, the average age of mobilization was only 13 – in early adolescence by international legal norms. These findings are robust across the GLR countries and drives home the point that the wars in the GLR have been fought with children to a significant extent - even though they may demobilize as adults. No ex-combatants that demobilize under the age of 18 are included in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset, and we can only presume that that their presence would only further evidence the pervasiveness children mobilization into armed groups across the GLR.

Those ex-combatants in the GLR who were mobilized under the age of 18 spend on average just under seven years with armed groups, meaning that the majority of them leave armed groups between the ages of 18-30 (64.1%). However, though these individuals return chronologically as adults, their social and economic starting point for reintegration is weakened. Mobilization at such a young age carries considerable legacies. Through their absence from a “normal” community setting while in armed groups these ex-combatants have missed out in the processes of education, maintaining and building familial connections through marriage, building social networks, engaging in community structures, and building an a basic economic track record. Indeed, in most indicators of these processes those ex-combatants who were mobilized under the age of 18 perform considerably worse than their community member peers in the same age categories – as well as compared to older ex-combatants in general.

In this sense younger ex-combatants in the GLR, most of who were mobilized under the age of 18, start the process of reintegration with a handicap, having missed opportunities for personal development during their formative years. These ex-combatants face a double transition of relearning, or often learning from new, societal norms of adulthood while simultaneously reshaping their identity from soldier to civilian. As Özerdem & Podder (2011: 9) point out:

“... in post conflict settings youth face a dual and complex transition, while life–stages preceding adulthood are characterized by complex and challenging transitions, conflict exacerbates the transition to adulthood by breaking down social norms and cultural practices, disrupting education systems and employment opportunities and for many youth, promoting a sense of identity based on the exertion of power through violence.”

In the GLR, the missed opportunities for social development (social identity and social capital) that ex-combatants mobilized under the age of 18 face manifest themselves in terms of weaker perceptions trust, solidarity, inclusion, and overall social cohesion in the community; smaller social networks and lower levels of sociability; as well as weaker

perceptions of their own sense of empowerment (i.e. their ability to affect change in their lives). As we discuss later (in §4.2.2 and §4.2.3), this range of social disadvantages has direct consequences in the economic realm, as ex-combatants seek to establish sustainable livelihoods.

There is another important dimension to understanding the effects of age at mobilization on reintegration. While there is no consistent trend in the GLR, it is clear that the amount of time spent with armed groups to some degree shapes the extent of disadvantages that ex-combatants, especially those mobilized under the age of 18, face at the outset of reintegration. Of those ex-combatants mobilized under the age of 18, the general extent of their social and economic disadvantages to other ex-combatants (and community members in the same age bracket) increases with the amount of time they have spent with armed groups. However, there appears to be a threshold to the effect of time spent with armed groups as an amplifier of the range of disadvantages associated with those ex-combatants mobilized under the age of 18. Disadvantages at the outset of reintegration peak for those ex-combatants mobilized under the age of 18 who have spent between around 8-10 years with armed groups, and dissipate after this point. The reasons for this dissipation remain unclear.

What is remarkable, however, is that while younger ex-combatants in the GLR (the majority of whom mobilized under the age of 18) may start with a range of disadvantages to other ex-combatants, and not least to community members, they are quick to build momentum in an overall positive trajectory of reintegration towards parity with the community – displaying an overall narrative of reintegration processes similar to their older ex-combatant peers. Indeed, upon returning to communities the vast majority of ex-combatants in the GLR report being welcomed home by immediate family members (to the extent that they have them).

4.2.1.2 Beyond Missed Opportunities: The Legacies of Mobilization and Wartime Experiences

The pathways into, and experiences with, armed groups hold significant legacies for the prospects that ex-combatants face in the process of reintegration at war's end. However, we have revealed little of the actual effects of mobilization and wartime experiences on

reintegration. If we are to take seriously Özerdem & Podder's (2011: 313) point that "... reintegration does not happen in a vacuum and is not isolated from previous experiences of recruitment and involvement in armed groups" then it may be that appreciating the role that mobilization and wartime experiences have for reintegration processes goes beyond acknowledging opportunities missed.

Perhaps the most stark and directly visible legacies of war for ex-combatants includes physical disability. Amputations, blindness, paralysis, or other serious head or body wounds are commonplace disabilities among ex-combatants that are lucky enough to survive serious injuries sustained during violent conflict in the GLR. Those ex-combatants in the GLR with physical disabilities face distinct barriers in the economic realm in terms of achieving a sustainable livelihood. Physical disability may also serve as a powerful symbolic reminder of ex-combatants mobilization and wartime experiences as they navigate the process of negotiating identity and building social capital - processes that all ex-combatants navigate.

Indeed, there remains much to be learned about processes that youths and adults go through as they are socialized in the use of violence and the individual legacies that these socialization processes hold for the prospect of reshaping identities and building social connections— especially for youths who may have missed the opportunity for learning "regular" societal norms. There are some authors paving the way in this endeavor. Vermeij (2011), for example, provides a particularly good account to the dynamics of socialization of those mobilized as youths in Northern Uganda and the challenges that this these in reintegration as these ex-combatants may not be returning to a previously learned set of norms and customs, but entering an foreign social context. Similarly, Slegh *et al* (2014) has explored the effects of socialization in violence from a young age on masculine identities and the challenges of ex-combatant reintegration in Rwanda.

However, perhaps the biggest blind spot in terms of the individual legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences is that of psychological illness. Epidemiological research has consistently shown that mental disorders are common in war-affected populations (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010). This is an issue that affects not only ex-combatants, but

also their families and the communities they return to, and has remained all but absent in reintegration programming in the GLR. Hinkel (2003: 5) paints the situation starkly:

“What all psychiatric illnesses have in common is the fact that they impair the sufferer in every day functioning: reducing the capacity to sustain intimate relationships and friendships, hindering successful participation in work, lowering scholastic achievements, limiting the ability to participate in communal life and impairing the ability to plan and follow-up on realistic goals for the future. In this way, the mental consequences of war, terror and organized violence on the individual are long-term and psychiatric illness is often chronic. If mental health is not addressed in ex-combatant rehabilitation, the effort of improving social capacities and reducing poverty is clearly weakened.”

Horn’s (2014) (2013a) (2013b) work on psychosocial well-being among ex-combatants in Uganda and DRC corroborates the idea that there are certain inherent mental health legacies that ex-combatants struggle with in reintegration. These mental health legacies can manifest through ex-combatants’ troubles in maintaining relationships and overall social withdraw, heightened anger and aggression, depression and hopelessness, trouble maintaining diet and hygiene, nightmares, and alcohol or narcotic substance abuse.

Age at mobilization and the amount of time spent with armed groups matter for ex-combatants’ prospects at the outset of reintegration – especially in terms of opportunities missed. However, going beyond this may require acknowledgement the social and psychological legacies of mobilization and wartime experience. While it remains true that most ex-combatants across the GLR countries have a positive reintegration trajectory, moving towards parity with community members, understanding which ex-combatants fall behind and why may involve engaging with wholeheartedly with the range of mobilization and wartime experiences that ex-combatants carry with them. In this regard, future research and programming aimed at psychosocial health may be able to play an important role.

4.2.2 Economic Processes & Mechanisms

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants are significantly disadvantaged to their fellow community members along economic lines. However, despite remaining economically disadvantaged to the broader community, most ex-combatants across the GLR countries see a trajectory of moderate economic improvement over time. Understanding the sources of the economic disadvantages that ex-combatants face, and in turn the pathways by which they are able to begin to overcome disadvantages, is an essential step in deciphering the broader processes through which ex-combatants achieve a sustainable economic livelihood – an essential dimension of reintegration.

The macro-structural features of the GLR countries are such that their economies are characterized by extreme development challenges as well as, in the emergence from prolonged periods of violent internal conflict, fractious polities. In the GLR countries, the states' very ability to provide the basic services and protections that underlie the social contract is severely weakened. It is in this context that ex-combatants must return to communities to carve out a livelihood. In this weakened setting, the demand for labor in local economies across the GLR is often negligible. At the same time ex-combatants' return represents a flood in the supply of available labor for often exacerbating the situation for all. This is a risky prospect that can potentially breed resentment from the community. Especially when combined with ex-combatants' range of missed opportunities for establishing economic footing due to time spent with armed groups, opportunities for wage based employment simply do not exist for the vast majority of individuals across the GLR countries. This is true for ex-combatants and community members alike. While reintegration programming can help close some of gaps ex-combatants face, i.e. their missed opportunities, for example in terms of education and vocational skills, no reintegration program alone will be able to solve the large-scale structural problems that shape the broader economic context of reintegration (Shibuya 2012).

With this broader economic context in mind it is easier to understand why the vast majority of ex-combatants and community members across the GLR countries take independent, non-wage based, livelihood pathways – they have no other options. This means that the

overwhelming majority of ex-combatants and community members across the GLR countries base their livelihoods on small-scale agriculture, small business selling staple goods, or some combination of the two. Small-scale agriculture is the predominant livelihood pathway for ex-combatants and community members across the GLR countries, a fact that highlights the importance of access to arable land. Let us be clear though, for the vast majority of individuals in the GLR countries small-scale agriculture means subsistence level agriculture, in which few can truly prosper. Most ex-combatants and community members in the GLR that depend of small-scale agriculture alone struggle to carve out a livelihood in which they can merely subsist.

In some regards this economic dynamic represents a dangerous prospect. Are ex-combatants returning to the very situations of economic marginalization and immobility that may have served among the grievances that contributed to their mobilization into armed groups in the first place? Does economic reintegration in the GLR mean, to use McMullin's (2004) (2013) oft cited quip, "reintegration back into basic poverty"? If so, the danger is that renewed feelings of helplessness and marginalization among ex-combatants can possibly feed into remobilization into armed groups – perpetuating a pervasive cycle of poverty and violence across the region. With this in mind, we observe that those ex-combatants across the GLR countries that combine small scale agricultural with small business activities appears to be those with the livelihood pathway offering the largest possibility of upward economic mobility.

From here, we move forward to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of economic reintegration processes by utilizing the five forms of capital in the sustainable livelihoods framework. We argue that in the economic realm there are two key mechanisms that are especially important for ex-combatants' livelihood outcomes. First, human-capital based livelihood strategies - such as small business, vocation, or wage-based labor - can serve as an important mechanism through which ex-combatants actuate improvements in their food, housing, and income security. Second, natural-capital based livelihood strategies, namely small-scale agriculture, also serve as a key mechanism through which ex-combatants make similar improvements. However, it appears that either of these two livelihood strategies alone includes certain pitfalls. Those ex-combatants across the GLR countries who

can engage in both human-capital based and natural-capital based livelihood strategies in combination achieve the most “sustainable” livelihoods.

4.2.2.1 Human-Capital Based Livelihoods

Recall our previous discussion (§2.3) of the five dimensions of capital in the sustainable livelihoods framework: human capital, physical capital, financial capital, natural capital, and social capital. These five forms of capital weave a complex web of deeply interrelated economic factors. Indeed, the five forms of capital dynamically interact, within a broader structural context, to shape individuals’ possible livelihood pathways. In the GLR countries there are consistently identifiable patterns in ex-combatants’ positions in the five forms of capital, and their interaction, that lend narrative to the processes by which ex-combatants navigate towards a sustainable livelihood. In addition, this narrative reveals some the dynamics by which livelihood processes can become blocked, locking ex-combatants in patterns economic insecurity and immobility.

Human-capital based livelihood pathways a good place to start. Human capital can be deeply shaped by mobilization and wartime experiences – especially for younger ex-combatants. In addition, human capital is an area where large portions of reintegration programming resources are aimed – so it has special policy relevance. We can think human capital in two parts that do not always move in unison: capacity and sense of empowerment.

Understanding capacity is straightforward. Ex-combatants’ levels of education combined with vocational and other skills dictate their range of livelihood *capacities*. Reintegration programming such as primary or secondary education, vocational training, small business and entrepreneurship training, and even basic literacy and numeracy training are all designed to affect what ex-combatants’ are capable of achieving – i.e. the capacity side of human capital. Empowerment is, however, more subtle to appreciate. Essentially empowerment is ex-combatants’ perception of their own ability to affect change in their lives. Even with a strong set of capacities in the form of education and skills, if an individual ex-combatant does not perceive that they are capable of achieving social and economic outcomes (empowered) their ability to actually do so will be diminished. Social and economic factors, as well as individual histories and legacies of wartime and mobilization

experiences, all coalesce to shape ex-combatants' perceptions of their own situation and the space for their own agency with it. So while bottom-line capacities are important, empowerment is also.

As discussed in §4.2.1, for the majority of ex-combatants in the GLR participation in violent conflict represents a series of missed opportunities. This is especially true in terms of human capital. Across the GLR countries ex-combatants show clear disadvantages in education and skill levels in comparison to community members due to their missed opportunities to develop these areas. This is especially true for younger ex-combatants, who with the aid of reintegration programming are the most active in closing education and skills gaps over time. However, there is a minority of ex-combatants, especially those who mobilized into armed groups under 18 but demobilized as adults, who face specific social barriers to closing education gaps. Essentially, these ex-combatants may perceive a return to the classroom, now with younger pupils, as an existential challenge to the sense of adulthood, and deeply interrelated sense masculinity, developed while with armed groups. In this way, education and vocational training programming is a setting where the individual struggle to redefine peacetime identity can come to the fore. Without confronting these social barriers to closing capacity gaps, this minority of ex-combatants may risks developing enduring disadvantages in education and skills.

Human capital in the GLR has a complex relationship to the other four forms of capital in the sustainable livelihoods framework. Human capital does not appear to have a direct relationship to ex-combatants' levels of natural capital, most importantly access to arable land. However, higher levels of access to arable land are associated with stronger perceptions of empowerment. Perhaps this is not surprising. Remember, small-scale agriculture is the most viable, and accordingly predominant, livelihood pathway across the GLR. It is perhaps not surprising that those with better access to arable land perceive themselves as having a stronger ability to affect their economic situation. However, there is a more complex dynamic visible in the GLR countries than just this.

Higher levels of education and skills (human capital) are associated with stronger income security (financial capital) and in turn stronger food security (physical capital). However,

housing security (also physical capital) is more directly shaped by land access (natural capital) than income security or access to formal or informal credit (financial capital). Indeed, those ex-combatants with access to arable land see higher levels of food and housing security (physical capital) compared to those without. In turn, those ex-combatants with higher food and housing security (physical capital) have stronger perceptions of empowerment, though they do not necessarily have higher levels of capacity in terms of education and skills (human capital). This makes sense: without the burden of insecure housing and regular hunger, ex-combatants have a stronger perception of their ability to affect their situation. However, improved food and housing cannot directly shape education and skills levels. It is arguable, however, that improved physical capital not gained through improved income (e.g. through social pathways) can increase the financial yields gained from those skills and education – as a smaller proportion of income needs to be utilized to cover housing and food deficits.

In this dynamic interaction between human, natural, financial, and physical capital an important livelihood pathways begin to emerge. Those ex-combatants with higher levels of skills and education (capacity side of human capital) who engage in small business activities, vocational trades, or wage labor (to the extent that it is available) are able to secure relatively higher levels of income security (financial capital), in turn higher food and housing security (physical capital), and thus have stronger perceptions of empowerment (human capital). These ex-combatants are more likely to apply for formal credit (financial capital), to the extent that it is available, and vastly more likely to be successful in their applications. In turn, these ex-combatants can invest further in their small business, vocational trade based activities (this is less true for the few ex-combatants who engage in wage-based labor) and redouble their yields in terms of income security (financial capital) and food and housing security (physical capital). In this way human-capital based livelihood strategies can play a role as a mechanism for actualizing sustainable livelihood outcomes. This dynamic is displayed in *Figure 4.1* below.

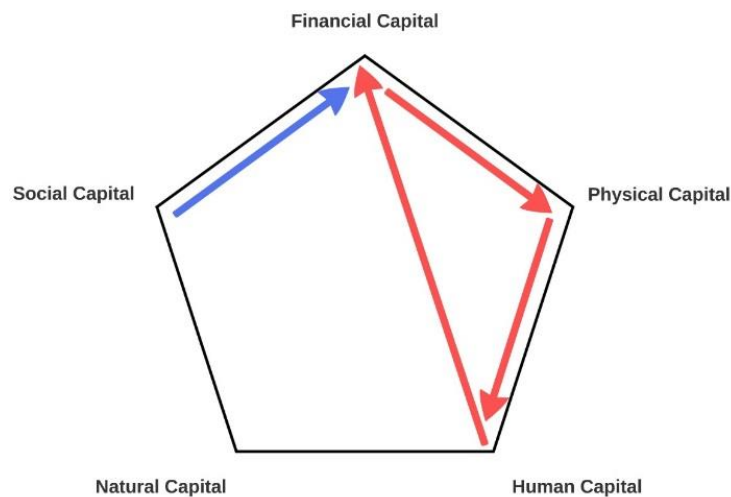


Figure 4.1 - Human-Capital Based Livelihood Strategies

However, it appears that this positive loop is highly dependent on the presence of strong social networks (social capital – especially bridging social capital) that can serve as ex-combatants’ clientele networks in their small business endeavors. Anyone who has been to a market in the rural regions of the GLR countries can appreciate this. Hundreds of individuals run stalls selling an identical set of staple goods for identical prices. There is little space for product individuation to establish a competitive advantage through which individuals can help their businesses win over a clientele of customers. Thus, doing business in this kind of setting is heavily dependent on having a network of clientele who will loyally buy staple goods from you that are otherwise available at identical prices from other vendors. Without the presence of strong social networks, this positive economic loop between human, financial, and physical capital is far less likely to occur in the context of the GLR countries. Even the few ex-combatants who do make their way into wage-based labor may do so as a product of their social networks. Recall, in the GLR setting demand for labor is generally low, while supply is abundant. Education and skills (human capital) alone may not be enough for individuals to secure competitive advantage over their fellow laborers, and social networks may play an important role in this context. It may be that formal education only becomes especially relevant for wage-based labor after secondary education completion, when the doors to civil service (to the extent that it exists) open.

Those ex-combatants in the GLR who move towards small business or wage based livelihoods *without* strong social networks are more likely to come into an alternative negative loop of income insecurity (financial capital) that feeds into food and housing insecurity (physical capital), and erodes their perception of their ability to affect their situation (human capital) - ultimately undermining their ability to actually do so. The ex-combatants in this negative loop are more likely to engage in informal borrowing from family networks (bonding social capital), to the extent that they have them, to fill their food and housing deficits. However, the danger is that these ex-combatants come to rely on an unsustainable loop of “subsistence borrowing” that ultimately undermines their ability to establish a sustainable livelihood. In the worst instances, ex-combatants in this negative loop report that on top of regular informal borrowing they must eventually sell other forms of physical capital, such as tools and materials important for their livelihood, to cover income, food, and housing gaps - and in the act of doing so further undermine their ability to secure income. Disabled ex-combatants, who have slightly weaker human capital compared to non-disabled ex-combatants in terms of skills and education, but dramatically weaker human capital in terms of perceived ability to affect their situation, are particularly likely to fall into this negative loop – reporting especially high dependence on their family networks to fill income gaps. This dynamic is likely related to the role that their individual physical disabilities play as barriers to engaging in various livelihood strategies.

The ex-combatants trapped in this negative loop can quickly reach a position where the need for basic survival in the present moment outweighs investments in a sustainable economic future. Those ex-combatants who do not have the broader social networks to ensure a clientele network (bonding social capital) or the familial networks (bonding social capital) that can support them to fill income, food, and housing gaps are, however, at even more heightened risk for economic insecurity, marginalization, and immobility, and are among the most disadvantaged individuals across the GLR countries. These ex-combatants report greater willingness to migrate for the prospect of improved economic opportunities. However, in doing so they may further undermine their footing in the community – exacerbating their already weak social capital.

Thus, in reflecting on these two iterations of human-capital based livelihood strategies, one positive loop and one negative loop, it is evident that human capital *in combination with* social capital (to be discussed at length in §4.3.2.) is important for determining if human-capital based livelihood strategies can serve as a mechanism for achieving an overall sustainable economic livelihood in the GLR. Reintegration programming can play an important role as an enabler in human-capital based livelihood strategies by improving ex-combatants capacity through the provision of education and vocational skills training (human capital), micro-credit schemes (financial capital), and vocation related tools (physical capital). However, the empowerment and social capital sides of the equation may lie outside of reintegration programming's ability to directly affect (a point discussed further in §5.2.2)

Moving forward, if we are to understand the livelihood pathways for the vast majority of ex-combatants across the GLR countries then we must go beyond human-capital based livelihoods to also explore natural-based livelihood strategies (i.e. small-scale agriculture), and the deeply entangled dynamics of access arable land, as a key mechanism for understanding economic reintegration processes in the GLR.

4.2.2.2 Natural-Capital Based Livelihoods

For many ex-combatants in the GLR, the economic context of pervasive poverty and underdevelopment characterized by a broad lack of labor opportunities, especially for those with low levels of skills and education (capacity side of human capital), means that human-capital based livelihood strategies simply may not be viable as a standalone livelihood strategy. The vast majority of ex-combatants, and community members in the GLR, must engage at some level in natural-capital based livelihood strategies (i.e. small-scale agriculture), either as a primary livelihood strategy or in combination with human-capital based livelihood strategies. The viability of natural-capital based livelihood strategies as a mechanism to an overall sustainable livelihood is almost entirely dictated by ex-combatants' levels of access arable land. Social capital plays an important role in access to arable land, however we will set this issue on the side for now and revisit it in the following section (§4.2.3).

Those ex-combatants with access to arable land (natural capital), especially those who see increases in access over time, display higher levels of food and housing security (physical capital) than those ex-combatants who engage in standalone human-capital based livelihood strategies. These ex-combatants in turn, as described in the previous section (4.2.2.1), hold stronger perceptions of empowerment (human capital). The capacity side of human capital can also play a role in natural-capital based livelihood strategies too, as advanced knowledge and skills in agricultural techniques can contribute towards actualizing access to arable land into improved food and housing security (physical capital).

However, it appears that access to arable land has a more subtle two-part relationship to income security (financial capital). One side of access to arable land's relationship to financial capital is quite direct. Those ex-combatants who have more access to arable land, predominantly represented by those aged over the age of 30, are able to move beyond mere subsistence agriculture to make some direct income gains. Those ex-combatants who are especially successful in engaging in small-scale agriculture as a primary livelihood strategy may be able to use increased financial capital to invest back into farming tools (physical capital) that can help increase agricultural yields further, and that can then serve as the financial basis for greater access to arable land through either rent or purchase. In this way natural-capital based livelihood strategies can enter a positive loop - serving as a key mechanism for achieving sustainable livelihoods. This pattern of natural-capital based livelihood pathways is presented in *Figure 4.2* below.

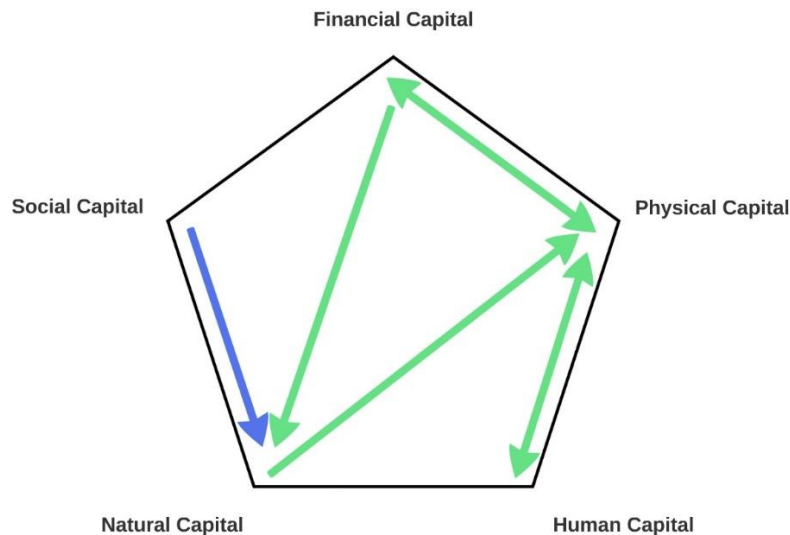


Figure 4.2 - Natural-Capital Based Livelihood Strategies

However, there is also another indirect relationship between natural capital and financial capital. For those ex-combatants who have less access to arable land or less secure tenure, a group predominantly represented by younger ex-combatants (who have missed out on opportunities to establish land access while in armed groups) and female ex-combatants (who, as to be discussed in §4.2.4., access arable land almost exclusively through marriage, but are also the least marrying demographic group in the GLR), small-scale agriculture remains a subsistence level activity. Due to their limited land access, these ex-combatants do not produce strong enough agricultural yields to actualize improved food security (physical capital) into improved income security (financial capital), and in turn the possibility of reinvesting that improved financial capital into improved land access (natural capital). In this dynamic natural-capital based livelihoods strategies at a subsistence level relieve pressure on overall income needs by filling food and housing gaps (physical capital), but they do little to contribute directly to income (financial capital). Without any other sources of supplementary income these ex-combatants may be surviving, but many remain locked in economic insecurity and immobility.

Thus, those ex-combatants with less access to arable land and that are in turn only engaging in small-small-scale agriculture at a subsistence level are especially dependent on combining natural-capital based livelihood strategies with human-capital based livelihood strategies. Indeed, ex-combatants report the amount of time in a year that they spend engaged in

natural-capital based livelihood strategies versus human-capital based livelihood strategies as moving in almost direct proportion to each other (though this is also likely steered by growing seasons too). However, a paradox of small-scale agriculture is that even though it represents an important part of ex-combatants overall livelihood opportunities, it may be perceived as a return to the basic poverty that may have played a role in some ex-combatants' mobilization into armed groups in the first place. This perception is not unfounded. Especially when considering the seasonal nature of farming across some parts of the GLR, it appears that for most ex-combatants natural-capital based livelihood strategies can be problematic as a standalone livelihood strategy. Again, ex-combatants may be surviving, but few prosper with this strategy alone.

In contrast, those ex-combatants in the GLR who combine natural-capital based livelihood strategies with human-capital based livelihood strategies are the most successful in improving overall economic situation. Those ex-combatants who engage primarily in natural-capital based livelihood strategies can benefit from supplementary human-capital based livelihood strategies that can bring additional income security (financial capital). This income can then be leveraged towards improving food and housing security, as well as other forms of physical capital like tools, which can improve yields from natural or human-capital based activities. With improvements in income security from stronger agricultural yields and supplementary income from human-capital based activities ex-combatants may be able to accrue the necessary financial resources to invest in improved access to arable land that can serve as a further foundation for achieving a sustainable livelihood.

In addition those ex-combatants who engage in primarily in human-capital based livelihood strategies can benefit from even subsistence level engagement in small-scale agriculture, as it can ease expenses related the food and housing security (physical capital) and help prevent them from slipping into an unsustainable loop of subsistence borrowing (described in §4.2.2.1.) that undermines their ability to achieve a sustainable livelihood. In these ways, it is the combination of natural-capital based and human-capital based livelihood strategies as distinct mechanisms that create the most "sustainable" overall livelihood strategies for ex-combatants in the GLR. Indeed, diversified livelihood strategies are better equipped to deal with the seasonal nature of agriculture across the GLR, trends in increased competition

for labor, and the unexpected shocks of volatile post-conflict economic environments. The combined patterns of natural-capital based and human-capital based livelihood pathways are displayed in *Figure 4.3* below.

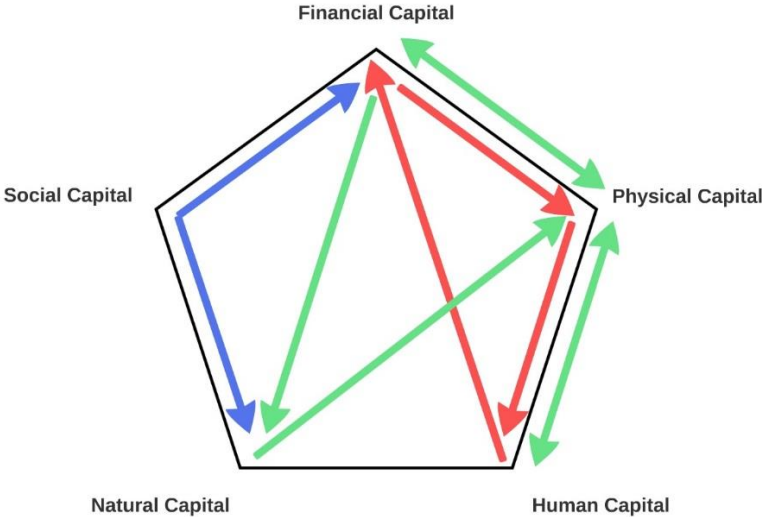


Figure 4.3 - Combined Human & Natural-Capital Based Livelihood Strategies

As with human-capital based livelihood strategies, reintegration programming can play an important role as an enabler in natural-capital based livelihood strategies. Skills training related to agricultural and animal husbandry techniques can improve human capital, provision of basic agricultural tools and supplies can improve physical capital, and micro-credit schemes can help provide the financial capital to help ex-combatants actualize natural capital based sustainable livelihoods. However, access to arable land is a key issue that has traditionally stood outside the bounds of reintegration programming. While it does seem feasible that reintegration programming could build forums through which individual ex-combatants were able to negotiate access to community managed land (to the extent that it exists), broader measures regarding the allocation or reform of land access will likely remain outside the ability of reintegration programming to directly affect (discussed further in §5.2.2).

So, it is clear that access to arable land is important for ex-combatants’ economic reintegration processes across the GLR. Thus, a very important question is “by what processes do ex-combatants ensure access arable land”? It appears that just as social capital

plays an important role in ex-combatants' ability to actualize human-capital based livelihood strategies, so too does it play a central role in their access to arable land. To deepen our understanding of the important role of social capital in in the economic reintegration processes of achieving a sustainable livelihood we will now shift our focus to an exploration of the social reintegration processes, and the mechanisms that underlie them, visible across the GLR.

4.2.3 Social Processes & Mechanisms

Social reintegration is the processes by which ex-combatants reshape their social identity, in their own eyes and the eyes of the community, and weave themselves into the fabric of society. This is no simple task, and involves multiple processes by which ex-combatants build social networks and a broader sense of trust and inclusion in the community. Those ex-combatants who are successful in reshaping their identity and building social networks can, in turn leverage these networks towards tangible and intangible social and economic outcomes. These are a complex and slow moving set of processes – a fact that the experiences of ex-combatants in the GLR countries speaks to clearly.

While in terms of economic parameters ex-combatants see a moderate, though limited, trajectory of improvement over time, in general moving relatively quickly towards parity with community members, but plateauing before achieving full parity. In the realm of social reintegration processes, progress moves more slowly. Ex-combatants have overall smaller social networks than community members and tend to be heavily reliant on their immediate family network for social support, to the extent that they have one, when compared to community members. Indeed, while ex-combatants report being accepted by their family networks upon returning to communities at a high level, they still have less familial contact than community members overall and expand their familial networks through marriage less frequently.

Marriage is a core component to the process of social reintegration. Indeed, marriage is a mechanism through which ex-combatants extend their familial networks, signaling a shift in

identity to the community that serves as a platform for building broader social and economic networks, which then can be leveraged towards further social and economic outcomes. So, the fact that across the GLR countries ex-combatants marry significantly less frequently than community members is troubling. Ex-combatants and community members alike communicate their hesitancy around the idea of marrying an ex-combatant, citing stigma or fear as a central issue. The dynamics of ex-combatant marriage as a component of social reintegration presents a quandary. Marriage is a central pathway for ex-combatants to reshape their identities, erode stigma, and connect into society. However, pathways into marriage for ex-combatants appear to be blocked until they can begin to do the very things that marriage is the central pathway to achieving (reshaping identities, eroding stigma, and connecting into society). In this way marriage drives social reintegration processes, but is simultaneously a product of them

Despite the challenges related to stigma and marriage, overall general trust does not appear to be an enduring problem for social reintegration processes in the GLR countries.

Community members consistently report high levels of fear regarding the return of ex-combatants before their arrival, but afterwards few report having few fears, and more often than not describe the positive contributions that ex-combatants make to communities.

Indeed, both community members and ex-combatants report high levels of overall trust in the community (and improvement in trust over time) that contributes to an overall sense of togetherness and broader social cohesion across communities in the GLR. These are very positive findings indeed.

However, stronger social cohesions does not appear to translate to higher levels of happiness or improved perceptions of their standing in communities. Indeed, ex-combatants are more likely to report being unhappy, unsatisfied with their lives in general, and that they have a negative impact on the community. Moreover, ex-combatants perceive themselves as considerably worse off than community members in wide range of social and economic categories – a perception that community members corroborate. Interestingly, despite these disadvantages ex-combatants, like community members, report a generally positive outlook on their future and a clear understanding that social change occurs over a long period of time.

Generally speaking, communities in the GLR countries have provided a positive social context into which ex-combatants can begin to reintegrate (with the exception of DRC, to be discussed in §4.3.1.1). However, there are very real barriers that ex-combatants face to social reintegration in the long run - primarily those related to marriage as a building block to establishing broader social and economic networks in the community, and in turn the ability to leverage these connections for tangible and intangible social and economic outcomes. Indeed, evidence from the GLR countries gives credence to the idea that while ex-combatants can make quick gains in forms of human capital such as education and skills, especially with the help of reintegration programming, these gains are less likely to be leveraged to actualize improvements in income, food, and housing security through either human capita-based or natural-capital based livelihood strategies without a solid foundation of social capital. However, because social reintegration processes move more slowly, economic reintegration processes tend to plateau for ex-combatants. This is worrisome, as it may be that the processes of building social capital in the GLR remain outside the ability of reintegration programming to directly affect. To explore this point, we turn to a more focused discussion of the dynamics social capital in the GLR.

4.2.3.1 The Dynamics of Social Capital in Reintegration

Social Reintegration is perhaps *the* pivotal step in linking individual level reintegration processes to the larger prospect of building peace and reconciliation. Many scholars and practitioners alike acknowledge the centrality of social reintegration processes, yet the logic of social reintegration is rarely handled with any explicit operationalization (Bowd & Özerdem 2013; Bowd 2008; and Porto *et al* 2007 are notable exceptions). Indeed, understanding social reintegration is deeply challenging because, as we have argued in §2, it involves delving into an amalgamation of complex and overlapping ideas from different corners of the social science. Exploring the logic of social capital, and its implicit reflection of social identity, will shed much light on the social reintegration processes that ex-combatants in the GLR countries navigate.

Recall from our conceptual discussion in §2.2., for us the core of the processes of social reintegration revolve around social capital - the idea that social networks have value both tangible and intangible. These networks, and the trust they represent, provide the basis for and social cohesion. Behind the idea that social networks contribute to social capital and in turn social cohesion is the distinction between three types of social capital: bonding capital, bridging capital, and linking capital. Bonding social capital is that between immediate familial networks. Ex-combatants in the GLR indicate their quick acceptance into familial networks and heavy social and economic reliance on them, to the extent that they have them. In this way, it appears that many ex-combatants in the GLR countries are quick to build a basic foundation of bonding social capital, though in general they have less contact with their families than community members. However, as we will discuss, ex-combatants face specific stigma based barriers to expanding this bonding capital through marriage.

Bridging social capital is about building crosscutting ties through networks that are not defined by familial connections. Ex-combatants' bridging social capital is constituted by the quantity of social groups and demographic makeup of those groups, regularity of socialization, membership to economic associations, holding a seat on an organizing committee in a local organization, participation in community based activities, and etc. (see §6-8 for greater detail). These arenas transcend specific familial networks and connect individuals to the broader community. Interestingly, those ex-combatants with stronger levels of bonding social capital also display higher levels of bridging social capital, suggesting that familial acceptance may be an important pathway to bridging social capital – the broader social acceptance in the community that it represents.

From country to country ex-combatants in the GLR vary in the extent to which they have been able to build bridging social capital. Specifically, in Rwanda and Burundi, where regular communal labor is institutionalized and serves as a platform for social interaction outside of familial networks and as a forum for discussing community issues, ex-combatants and community members alike appear to have higher levels of bridging social capital. In Rwanda this institutionalized national practice of communal labor is called *Umuganda*. In Burundi a similar national practice is called *Travaux Communataires*. In contrast, ex-combatants and community members in DRC and RoC and Uganda appear to have considerably less bridging

capital. Bridging social capital can have very real impacts on ex-combatant's access to economic opportunities. As we discussed in §4.2.2.1., the viability of human capital based livelihood strategies across the GLR are largely dependent on access social networks – including those beyond immediate familial networks. Moreover, bridging social capital is the core of building a sense of overall social cohesion in the community. This is supported by the fact that those ex-combatants with larger social groups and more regular social contact report stronger perceptions of trust and togetherness in the community.

If bonding social capital is about connections between ex-combatants and their core familial networks, and bridging social capital is about connections broader community networks, then linking social capital is about the connections between ex-combatants and higher-level civic structures. This is the upward logic of social cohesion that connects individual ex-combatants' familial networks to those between more disparate groups, and onward to the civic function of the country as a whole. In part, linking social capital is what we are referring to when we talk about the political reintegration of ex-combatants – building a relationship from the individual ex-combatant to top-level institutions. In the post-conflict context of the GLR, typified by weak states, this large-scale transformation of linking social capital is something that ex-combatants and community members face together. In this sense, we can understand the development of linking social capital as part of the process of linking individuals and groups to communities, and communities to the functioning of the state unit.

There has been very little data collected in the GLR countries in this study that contribute directly to an understanding of linking social capital. The only directly related measures captured being ex-combatants' rate of engagement with government leaders, and their perceptions of the extent that their concerns are taken into account by those leaders when making decisions. This gives us a very limited set of parameters by which to triangulate an overall sense of linking social capital. One can speculate that the large scale institutionalization of communal labor and meeting forums in Rwanda and Burundi contribute to overall linking capital by providing a mandatory forum for civic engagement (Barnhart 2011 implicitly supports this idea). Indeed, in Rwanda almost all ex-combatants report regularly meeting to express concerns to government officials, and an above average rate in Burundi. However, these higher rates of civic participation do not appear to translate

to stronger perceptions of being taken into account in government decisions. While ex-combatants civic participation is an important part of bolstering post-conflict states, it is unlikely that more political participation from ex-combatants can directly shape a fractured and ill-functioning state into a fluid whole. However, our ability to seriously reason about linking social capital is limited in this doctoral thesis. Linking social capital is ultimately peripheral to the main focus here - an investigation of the connections between individual level social and economic processes, but not the political sides of these processes. This, even though we recognize that the political sphere is just as inseparable from the social and economic spheres as they are from each other (discussed further in 5.2.1).

The evidence on ex-combatant social reintegration processes from across the GLR countries gives credence to the idea of different varieties of social capital, and the interconnected nature of these different varieties, established in the works of Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam, and Woolcock (discussed in §2.2.2.). Intriguingly, in the GLR countries we can observe an upward dynamic of social capital. It appears that bonding social capital begets bridging social capital, and in turn bridging social capital begets linking social capital (to the extent we are able to measure linking social capital). We make this inference through observing that while there are those ex-combatants that have relatively well established bridging social capital without a strong base of bonding social capital, there are relatively few ex-combatants with that strong base of bonding social capital who do not have stronger bridging social capital. Likewise, while there are those ex-combatants who have relatively strong linking social capital (again, to the limited extent that we are able to observe it) without a solid foundation of bridging, and in turn bonding, social capital. However, relatively few ex-combatants have a rich foundation of bonding and bridging social capital without stronger linking social capital.

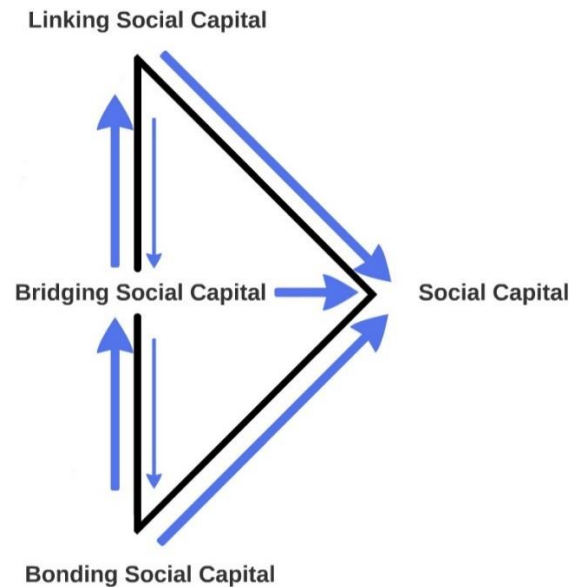


Figure 4.4 – Social Capital Dynamics

This upward dynamic of social capital is visible in *Figure 4.4*. However, it is important to emphasize that the interaction of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital is not unidirectional. The three varieties of social capital interact dynamically – and thus there is weaker downward dynamic that is important to bear in mind. Guided by the social capital and social identity theory discussed in §2.2., we posit that overall social capital in ex-combatant social reintegration processes is the dynamic product of the three varieties of social capital. With this in mind, we can say that we have a general picture of the process of social capital accumulation for ex-combatants reintegrating in the GLR. However, what are the key mechanisms that underlie this upward process of social capital accumulation? From here we move forward to argue that marriage is a key social reintegration mechanism that can galvanize a foundation familial acceptance (bonding social capital) into broader community networks (bridging social capital). Together these factors play a key role in social identity reformation.

While it appears that reintegration programming can play an important role as an enabler in economic reintegration processes, its possible role in social reintegration processes is more obscure. Unlike many forms of human, physical, financial, and even natural capital that can be provided directly through reintegration programming, the social connections that

underlie the various forms of social capital cannot simply be delivered. However, this does not mean that reintegration programming has no role to play. Information and sensitization campaigns prior to the return of ex-combatants can play an important role in creating the space for forming expectations about ex-combatants' return through shaping communities' understanding of the challenges that ex-combatants will face in reintegrating (Malan *et al* 2003). Community development projects that involve both ex-combatants and community members can bolster the perception that the community stands to benefit from the presence of ex-combatants, as well as providing a forum for social interaction that can contribute to breaking down stigma and identity based barriers (Veale & Stavrou 2003). Reintegration programming that supports civic organizations in the community such as sports and religious organizations can likewise create space for the slow processes of negotiating identities. Lastly, reintegration programming that dovetails with broader reconciliation-based initiatives help build trust and acceptance in the community (Malan *et al* 2003). However, reintegration programming can only serve as an enabler by helping to shape the context in which social reintegration processes take place, arguably in an even more indirect way than as with economic processes, and it remains ex-combatants themselves who navigate these complex social processes.

4.2.3.2 Marriage: A Key Social Reintegration Mechanism

When ex-combatants leave armed groups, one of the first places that they may begin the process of reshaping their identity and weaving themselves into the broader fabric of society is with their pre-existing familial networks – the other obvious place where this transition begins being DDR programming itself, which may or may not precede return to family settings. Of course, due to the widespread dynamics large-scale loss of life and displacement in the GLR countries, not all ex-combatants have, or have contact with, their prewar familial networks. However, with the exception of DRC (see §4.3.1.1), ex-combatants across the GLR countries report generally high levels contact with familial networks. Recalling our discussion of social identity in §2.1.1, we can say that the family is among the one of the most important fields where ex-combatants have the chance to reconcile gaps between, as Goffman (1968a) puts it, their “virtual” and “actual” identities. This is one of ex-combatants' most important opportunities to reestablish their sense of self as an individual in relation to

others in their family networks - what Jenkins (2001)(2002)(2014) calls the “individual order” of identity. In this step, ex-combatants create the space to confront, and if they are successful, to begin to erode, possible stigma and fear associated with their “actual” status as former member of an armed group. This is what building bonding social capital in ex-combatant social reintegration is all about.

How do ex-combatants that are successful in negotiating social identity and acceptance with their familial networks leverage these gains towards broader acceptance in the community? In the GLR it appears that those ex-combatants that are able to expand their familial networks through marriage are more likely to have higher levels of bridging social capital. Through marriage, ex-combatants signal a clear adherence to broader societal norms in the community, including those related to gender. In the GLR countries an important part of being seen as a man (female gender dynamics are discussed at length in §4.2.4.), and as a member of the community more broadly, may revolve around having a wife, a family, a house, and land to cultivate on – being a provider and a protector. As ex-combatants marry they are signaling a shift - eroding the differences, and building the similarities, between themselves and the broader community. As with the negotiation of identity and acceptance *visive* the family, marriage is an important step in the negotiation with the broader community to erode stigma and establish the ground in which bridging social networks can take root. For Jenkins (2001) (2002) (2014) this is the negotiation of the “interaction order” of identity.

With these dynamics in mind we can conceptualize marriage not as directly caused by acceptance in bonding familial networks - though familial acceptance appears to be a near necessary condition for marriage – as almost none of the ex-combatants without familial connections in the GLR are go on to marry. Nor is marriage the only pathway to the establishment broader bridging social networks. There are some ex-combatants without family networks that do build moderate bridging social capital in the community. However, missing in family networks leave these ex-combatants more exposed to economic hardship in terms of food, housing, and income security – gaps that bridging social capital alone does not fill. Marriage is a mechanism through which ex-combatants can leverage existing familial networks as a platform for building the broader community acceptance that allows bridging

social networks to grow. Marriage may not be the only way to build the trust necessary for bridging social networks to thrive, but in the GLR is an important and regularly observable causal mechanism through which this happens.

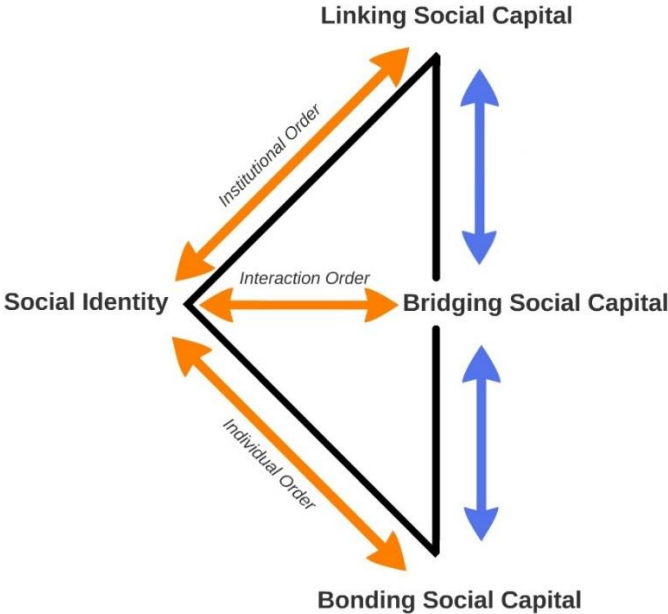


Figure 4.5 – Social Identity Dynamics

Lastly, bonding and bridging social capital can, as Putnam (2000) argues, create the collective interests that spark the civic engagement that is then the basis for linking social capital. Again, we are limited in terms of data when it comes to linking capital, however what little we can glean supports the general idea that those ex-combatants in the GLR with smaller bonding and bridging networks are less likely to engage with local government authorities, and if they do, they do so less frequently. In terms of the connections to social identity, linking social capital is analogous to Jenkins’ (2001) (2002) (2014) notion of the “institutional order” of social identity. Figure 4.5 displays our conceptualization of the dynamic relationship between social capital and social identity; combining the individual, interaction, and institution orders of social identity with bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.

As discussed in §4.2.2., overall social capital is an important component of a sustainable livelihood. Social networks represent a resource in terms of access to informal economic support and to economic opportunities that can grant income security (financial capital). In

addition, social capital appears to correspond closely to the empowerment side of human capital. Those ex-combatants who are better integrated into social networks, and thus have a stronger sense of social identity rooted in the community, perceive themselves as more able to affect change in their lives. However, perhaps the most essential way in which social capital appears to be connected to the other sustainable livelihood dimensions is through access to arable land (natural capital). Indeed, access to land in the GLR appears to be dictated through social connections for around half of all ex-combatants, and even more so for young (aged 18-30) and female ex-combatants.

About half of ex-combatants in the GLR countries report accessing arable land by purchasing or renting it. These ex-combatants tend to be those who are over the age of 30 and with a track record of engaging in natural capital based livelihood strategies prior to mobilization into armed groups. In contrast, younger ex-combatants who have missed the opportunities for establishing land access and an economic track record while in armed groups tend to be granted access to, or inherit, family owned land. Perhaps not surprisingly, the vast majority of ex-combatants that access land via their family networks display higher levels of familial acceptance (bonding social capital). Another important pathway to land access for younger ex-combatants, but especially for female ex-combatants, is marriage. Through marriage, ex-combatants can expand their bonding networks and in turn expand their access to socially allocated arable land resources. In this way, marriage is also a means through which ex-combatants can leverage bonding social capital towards tangible economic resources. Indeed, the centrality of marriage as a mechanism for achieving social acceptance in the community and in turn for access to arable land is underscored in the following discussion of female ex-combatants in the GLR, who face distinct gender-based barriers in these regards.

4.2.4 Female Ex-Combatants in the GLR: Gender, Stigma, & Marginalization

Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants, almost without exception, stand out as the most disadvantaged segment of ex-combatants across the parameters of social and economic reintegration processes in the community. The mechanisms through which male ex-combatants reintegrate are often stalled in a state deadlock for female ex-combatants. In

this way female ex-combatants remain at clear risk for social isolation and economic marginalization.

Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants are more likely to be mobilized under the age of 18, though they spend notably less time with armed groups. As with male ex-combatants, the legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences are important for understanding the pathways to reintegration. For female ex-combatants in the GLR the challenges these legacies present are acute. The widespread experience of abduction, socialization in norms of violence, and exposure to sexual and gender-based violence that female ex-combatants may experience in conflict create extensive stigma based barriers to reintegration upon their return. In the eyes of communities, female ex-combatants may have stepped outside of societal gender norms through their roles as roles within armed groups, whether forced or complicit in their actions, and face the prospect of severe social and economic marginalization as a result. Indeed, in many contexts across the GLR this stigma is so strong that some female ex-combatants avoid self-identifying as ex-combatants – in turn forfeiting access to the valuable assistance for that reintegration programming represents.

One case in the GLR that reflects this issue is Rwanda, where as soldiers and refugees trickle back into the country from DRC they are set into tracks for assistance. Anecdotal evidence combined with the extremely low number of self-identifying female ex-combatants returning to the country suggests that many female ex-combatants choose to avoid ex-combatant labeling due to the stigma associated with it. In the case of Rwanda special attention to the dynamics of return is essential to help illuminate this issue. The conflicts that Rwandan ex-combatants took part in during the Second Congo War, and subsequent local conflicts in North and South Kivu provinces, occurred almost wholly in Eastern DRC (see §1.2.1). This, combined with the fact that returning soldiers in Rwanda have spent a long time away from home (average 9.09 years), is what allows them to return to communities and, in a sense, choose their identity. Essentially community members cannot really know what ex-combatants were up to in DRC – whether they were soldiers or are the displaced persons (having fled west in the wake of the Rwandan genocide) that they sometimes return under the guise of. The truth may often be a mix of both. In this way female ex-combatants

returning to Rwanda maintain a strong control over both their “virtual” and “actual” identities.

Stigma related issues might be even more detrimental for those female ex-combatants that return to settings where they have less control over the narrative of their experiences and actions. Kelly *et al* (2011) outline the dynamics of stigma in eastern DRC surrounding survivors of sexual violence – many of them ex-combatants. Female ex-combatants who are survivors of sexual violence may avoid being seen in public (e.g. going to the market or to church) or participating in economic activities for fear of being gossiped about. In doing so female ex-combatant survivors of sexual violence can become isolated from potential sources of social support in the community. Stigma may also come at them from within their family networks. Female ex-combatant survivors of sexual violence may return to husbands who believe that sexual contact with another man, irrespective of consent, means the marriage is void. Fear of sexually transmitted infections combined with external pressure from the community to reject female survivors of sexual violence can push husbands to reject their wives, depriving them of vital social and economic support. Indeed, Kelly *et al* (2011) note that husbands themselves can become targets of stigma and shame in the community for failing to protect their wives from abduction or sexual violence and can be a factor which can contribute to their decision to reject female ex-combatants upon their return. Stigma also shapes female ex-combatants prospects of marriage in the future.

Indeed, lower levels of access to marriage is perhaps the core of the disadvantages that female ex-combatants hold. While female ex-combatants in the GLR countries generally report acceptance into existing familial networks upon return to communities, they face distinct barriers in expanding these networks through marriage. Female ex-combatants are the least likely demographic group, from ex-combatants or community members alike, to be married and the most likely to be divorced, separated, or widowed. Indeed, while male ex-combatants in the GLR see a positive trajectory of improved marriage rates over time, female ex-combatants marriage rates are near stagnant. Male ex-combatants and community members alike communicate their general unwillingness to consider marriage with female ex-combatant, primarily due to stigma and fear related issues – lending explanation to female ex-combatants’ near stagnant access to marriage over time. It is likely

that economic considerations for attitudes towards marrying female ex-combatants play a role here too – as evidence suggests that female ex-combatants are disconnected from inheritance structures and may thus carry little economic value for male ex-combatants or community members through marriage.

This social disadvantage in terms of marriage for female ex-combatants dynamically interacts with economic factors – notably access to arable land. As discussed in §4.2.2.2, movement into small-scale agriculture is the dominant economic trajectory for all ex-combatants across the GLR. As such, access to arable land is an important control parameter shaping ex-combatants ability to actuate a sustainable livelihood through the mechanism of natural-capital based livelihood strategies. For male ex-combatants marriage and inheritance are important pathways to increasing land access. However, female ex-combatants, as the least marrying demographic across the GLR countries, do not access this pathway to increased land access and generally do not inherit land. In combination these factors contribute to an overall shallow reintegration trajectory for female ex-combatants in the GLR. This dynamic interaction of gender, stigma, marriage and access to arable land in the GLR countries is among the core structural barriers to reintegration processes that female ex-combatants must face.

Further, female ex-combatants across the GLR have lower literacy, education, and skills levels (i.e. capacity side of human capital) than male ex-combatants; a factor which they identify as a barrier to engaging in human-capital based livelihood strategies. While female ex-combatants are more likely to be economically inactive they are also less likely to be a sole household breadwinner, and thus less exposed to the economic risk that this status represents in the GLR countries. It is likely that female ex-combatants are less commonly sole breadwinners because of their heavy reliance on immediate familial networks. Indeed, while female ex-combatants report general acceptance from their immediate family networks, they have few other social or economic networks and their overall bridging social capital in the community is weak.

Female ex-combatants report lower levels of trust in the community and lower perceptions of improvement in trust over time than male ex-combatants. With a lack of social capital and

a lack of trust in the community, female ex-combatants report weaker perception of empowerment compared to male ex-combatants. Further, female ex-combatants across the GLR countries understand the range of disadvantages that they face; reflected in the fact that they consistently report perceptions of their overall weaker situation compared to others in society. Despite the expansive range of disadvantages that female ex-combatants face across nearly all parameters of social and economic reintegration processes, they consistently report a stronger sense of overall happiness, overall life satisfaction, and a better overall outlook on the future compared to male ex-combatants. These are curious findings indeed.

While in almost every regard female ex-combatants are disadvantaged to male ex-combatants, this is only half the story. To truly appreciate the context of the gender dimensions of reintegration in the GLR, and the possible programming related impacts, we have to include a comparison of female ex-combatants to female community members in our analysis – rooting it in the wider context of gender dynamics in the GLR countries.

4.2.4.1 A Broader Transformation of Societal Gender Dynamics

Across the GLR countries female community members have a very similar range of disadvantages to male community members as female ex-combatants do to male ex-combatants. In effect, the space between female ex-combatants and female community members across parameters of social and economic processes is often little – though female ex-combatants are almost always disadvantaged to female community members. Perhaps the core advantage that female community members hold is their higher rates of marriage, better prospects for marriage in the future, and overall better integration into extended familial networks that contributes to stronger bonding social capital in the community. In other dimensions, such as gender discrimination in the livelihood related activities, female community members and ex-combatants have similar experiences of gender-based disadvantages – though it appears that ex-combatant status and the stigma that it carries can have an amplifying effect on the deeply ingrained gender inequalities that exist across the GLR countries.

There are of course subtleties to this overall picture of female disadvantage in the GLR countries. For example, female ex-combatants express senses of empowerment to control their lives and everyday activities at levels skewed slightly higher than female community members. This finding supports research that suggests that in some circumstances conflict can actually create opportunities for female empowerment - at the same time as it shapes predominantly negative gender and stigma based disadvantages (see e.g. Specht 2013). For example, female ex-combatants may have new identities of social and economic independence thrust upon them during their time with armed groups, and upon their return to communities who do not fully accept them. These new identities may represent a new forms of empowerment not possible within the confines of traditional gender norms, and at the same time cement female ex-combatants as violators of traditional norms – thus subject to stigma, rejection, and social and economic marginalization. For female ex-combatants returning to traditional gender identities may not be an option, or even desired. That is to say, reintegration into traditional gender norms may mean a return to gender-based social and economic marginalization (i.e. non-integration).

Another subtlety worth mentioning is that female ex-combatants and community members in the GLR countries are more likely to be involved in microeconomic activities than males. This also aligns with previous research (see International Alert 2010) in the region that suggests that the large scale mobilization of men into conflict, and overall displacement dynamics may create an opportunity vacuum that females can exploit to attain microeconomic support programming - which they might have otherwise had to compete with males to a greater extent for.

The fact remains that in the GLR countries female ex-combatants and community members share a broad range of gender-based disadvantages. These disadvantages are structurally ingrained and culturally reproduced. In this sense, the landscape that female ex-combatants in the GLR countries face as they navigate is fraught with the challenges of overarching gender disadvantages. If female ex-combatants are to gain parity with female community members, the amplifying effects of stigma-based gender disadvantages will no doubt serve as a barrier to entering the community. However, if female ex-combatants are rather to reach parity with male community members, a much deeper set of social-structural barriers

stand in their way – barriers that they and their female community member counterparts face together.

Reintegration programming can play some role in addressing gender-based disadvantages to reintegration for female ex-combatants. The main way reintegration programming does this is through attempts to remain gender conscious and inclusive in all programming elements. This means, for example, that information and sensitization campaigns to the community about ex-combatants' return can include special information about gender issues, and support of civic organizations can include specific provision for women's groups. Economic reintegration programming delivering education or training, food and material resources, or financial support can do so with consideration to the societal expectations of women, and thus the limits and barriers women may face in participating in programming. The idea is through being gender conscious in program planning and implementation practitioners will be able to identify opportunities to contribute to the transformation local gender norms. However, this ambitious task may lie outside the ability of reintegration programming to directly affect. In a way reintegration is caught in the middle when it comes to gender based disadvantages. Reintegration programming must simultaneously take on a balance of recognizing traditional gender norms and reflecting them in programming, at the same time it must use reintegration programming as an opportunity to address the negative implications of those local gender dynamics for affecting the reintegration of female ex-combatants and contributing to the transformation of societal gender norms more broadly.

4.2.5 Integrated Reintegration Processes

In this sub-section we draw together the strands of argument from our previous discussions on mobilization & wartime experiences, sustainable economic livelihoods, social capital and social identity formation, and gender dimensions of reintegration to elaborate an integrated model of ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR.

In *Figure 4.6* (below) our previous schema of ex-combatant livelihoods pathways in the GLR (based on the asset pentagon) is visible on the right. Within the pentagon we can see

human-capital based livelihood pathways in red (from §4.2.2.1). Those ex-combatants with stronger human capital (in terms of capacity and empowerment) tend to, especially when combined with stronger social capital (blue arrow), have stronger financial capital (in terms of their incomes security and access to informal credit). With this improved financial capital ex-combatants are able to improve their physical capital (in terms of food and housing security), which in turn tends to be associated with stronger human capital (in terms of empowerment). In green we see natural-capital based livelihood pathways (from §4.2.2.2). Those ex-combatants with natural capital (in the form of access to arable land) tend to have markedly stronger physical capital in terms of food and housing security. This physical capital improves ex-combatants' financial capital in terms of income security by relieving food and housing related expenses. At the same time, as with human-capital based livelihood pathways in red, the physical capital security associated with access to natural capital (in the form of access to arable land) is also strongly associated with stronger human capital in terms of empowerment. In terms of financial, physical, human, and natural capital, those ex-combatants that achieve the most "sustainable" livelihoods in the GLR are those that combine some form of human-capital based (red arrows) and natural-capital based (green arrows) livelihood strategies. However, it appears that ex-combatants' ability to flourish in either or both of these two livelihood pathways tends to plateau, and further progress is at least partially dictated by the slower moving processes of building social capital in terms of bonding and bridging social networks (blue arrows).

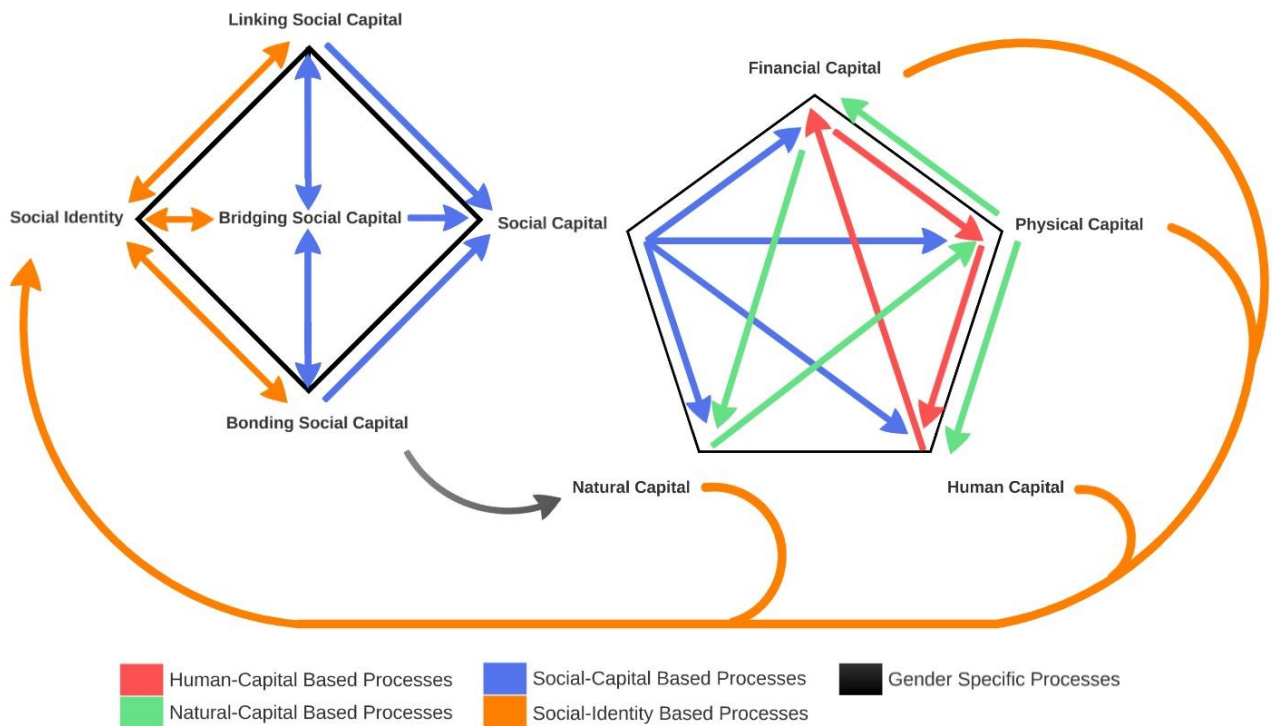


Figure 4.6 – Integrated Reintegration Processes

To the left of the asset pentagon in *Figure 4.6* we see the triangular schemata of social capital (from §4.2.3.1.) and of social identity (from §4.2.3.2.) combined into a diamond. Bonding, bridging, and linking social capital dynamically interact to produce an ex-combatant’s overall level of social capital (blue arrows) in terms of their overall social connections in the community and their perception of trust and cohesion within these networks. Though, there tends to be an upward logic to the accumulation of bridging, bonding, and linking social capital, this pathway is not unidirectional. Those ex-combatants with stronger social capital tend to have four advantages within the sustainable livelihoods asset pentagon (blue arrows). First, those ex-combatants, especially younger and female ex-combatants with stronger social capital see better natural capital in terms of access to arable land – which some extent a socially allocated resource. Second, ex-combatants with stronger social capital see stronger financial capital in terms of access to labor opportunities, loyal customer bases, and informal credit. Third, ex-combatants with stronger social capital tend to have stronger human capital in terms of their sense of empowerment. Fourth, ex-combatants with stronger bonding social capital tend to have better physical capital in terms of food and housing security.

Orange arrows on the left side of the diamond show the pathways connecting social capital and social identity – the iterative dialogue of identification of similarity and difference between individuals and collectives. The three levels of social capital are highly congruent to the individual, interaction, and institutional orders of social identity (from §4.2.3.2.). In this way social capital, and the social networks that it represents, contribute to shaping individual ex-combatants’ sense of identity. This is the space where the negotiation of identity occurs. However, social identity is a complex and encompassing construct. Social capital is not the only factor that is important for identity. The other four forms of capital in the asset pentagon (orange arrows) are also important for shaping individual ex-combatants’ identity (discussed in §2.3.2.) in their eyes and the eyes of the community.

A single black arrow in *Figure 4.6* denotes a gender specific pathway. Marriage is a key mechanism through which all ex-combatants in the GLR countries expand bonding social capital into bridging social capital, and leverage these gains towards improvements in financial, human, and natural capital. However, for female ex-combatants in the GLR countries it appears that marriage is almost the only path to natural capital gains in terms of access to arable land. Troublingly, stigma based the barriers mean that female ex-combatants face the lowest marriage rates of any ex-combatant or community member demographic group across the GLR countries. This dynamic of lack of access to marriage, when combined with the fact that female ex-combatants have the lowest skewed human capital in terms of both capacity and affect, means female ex-combatants face barriers to *both* of the predominant livelihood pathways (natural-capital based or human-capital based) in the GLR countries. The result is that female ex-combatants face not only economic insecurity, but these livelihood dimensions may feed back into female ex-combatants’ social identity and social capital. This negative feedback loop puts female ex-combatants in the GLR countries at extreme risk for continued social and economic marginalization.

It is important that we take a moment to explicitly frame the model presented in *Figure 4.6* within the complex realist paradigm of science presented in §3.2.3, for doing so will add considerable continuity to our analysis. We conceptualize that each of the nine nodes in *Figure 4.6* are control parameters in the individual-level system of ex-combatants in the GLR.

Each of these control parameters is made of sub-control parameters, and these are made up of further parameters. For example, we understand physical capital as a control parameter that is made up of (primarily) the two sub-control parameters of food and housing security. The sub-control parameters of food and housing security are defined by their component parts in a constellation of more specific parameters such as the regularity that members of a household go hungry or the type and tenure of housing. Collectively, all parameters constitute the “range of the possible” (or system space) in the system of ex-combatant reintegration as it is constructed in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. What we observe within these parameters (empirical domain) are the system traces (actual domain) for each individual ex-combatant. The system of ex-combatant reintegration is complex in that every control parameter directly or indirectly affects every other control parameter in a dynamic and near simultaneous manner. The position of all system traces together constitute the system state for each individual ex-combatant. In this mode of thinking, the lines between the social and economic spheres to reintegration are constructs (empirical domain) that simplify the complex and interconnected nature of all system traces (actual domain). Behind the inherent veil of our own gaze, in the real domain, the divisions between the social and the economic disintegrate – they are one and the same.

Essentially what we are saying in *Figure 4.6* is that everything is causing, and being caused by, everything else - embracing the ontological stance that reality is complex. However, there are patterns in this complexity. Each ex-combatant’s position in the processes of reintegration (system state) is in a constant and dynamic evolution (i.e. emergent, recall §2.1.1). However, where ex-combatants start their journey in the process of reintegration is determined by a number of factors. Demographic factors such as age, gender, and physical disability; historical factors such as mobilization and wartime experiences; and broader structural features of the post-conflict landscape such as the economic, political, and security contexts all play important roles in shaping ex-combatants’ “system states” at the outset of reintegration – and continue to serve as structuring forces that shape the ongoing processes of reintegration as they evolve. Within this multidimensional context, the control parameters identified in *Figure 4.6* are important because they serve as, to use Bourdieu’s words, “structuring structures” that dynamically interact to observably shape the “dispositions” (Bourdieu’s phrasing), “tendencies” (Bhaskar’s phrasing), or “propensities”

(Popper's phrasing) of system states over time. That is, those forces that regularly shape the trajectory of reintegration processes for individual ex-combatants over time. The causal interaction of these control parameters with broader contextual features of the GLR county settings is what allows mechanisms to produce reintegration processes. We have identified three mechanisms that occur when ex-combatants have the requisite properties within the control parameters, and when the context allows, that drive reintegration processes. Human-capital based and natural-capital based livelihood strategies are mechanisms through which ex-combatants in the GLR actuate the potential inherent in their skills and education, access to land, and other resources towards sustainable economic livelihoods. Marriage is a mechanism through which ex-combatants in the GLR leverage their acceptance in familial networks, and its implicit connection to their social identity, towards solidifying acceptance in the community, asserting their renegotiated social identity, and gaining access to socially allocated economic opportunities and resources (both tangible and intangible).

In a sense, what we offer in *Figure 4.6* is a map - a map of the system of individual ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR. Like a map of the physical world is constructed as a representation of the features of the physical landscape, so too is our map a constructed representation of the landscape of ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR. Like the maps of explorers, there are still places unknown and paths uncharted. Inevitably our map will see revisions as we explore forward through continued scientific inquiry. The positions of geographic features in relation to one another may become more accurate, passages between them that may have remained hidden from view may be revealed. Also, just as a map of one valley in the physical world is not necessarily useful for understanding all valleys, so too our map of social and economic reintegration processes in the GLR may prove of limited usefulness in other regions where the context of reintegration processes vary. Most importantly, our view of the landscape (system) of ex-combatant reintegration is bounded by the lens through which we view it. In this sense, the specific data in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset creates our lens – i.e. the “range of the possible”. Thus, no matter how much we attempt to pull back the veil to glimpse the “real” structures and mechanisms of reintegration processes, our map will always remain reflexively produced. Nonetheless, this map gives us a frame for thinking about the about

the broad strokes of the complex and dynamic individual level processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR, and the causal mechanisms that underlie them.

With this map of individual-level processes in hand, we now turn to an exploration of the collective trajectories of ex-combatants at a country level. It is at this point that we shift our focus away from each individual ex-combatants as a case, and instead refocus on each of the GLR countries as a case. At this point there is also a shift in the predominant mode of inquiry. We move from a predominantly process tracing-based mode of inquiry that has allowed us to explore the individual-level processes of reintegration, to predominantly comparative based mode of inquiry that will help us to explore the broader implications of these individual-level processes for understanding reintegration at a country level. In making this shift in focus paradoxes ensue.

4.3 Country-Level Trajectories & Paradoxes

In this section we shift our focus from the individual level processes and mechanisms of ex-combatant reintegration to an exploration of the overall trajectories of ex-combatants at a country-level of analysis as they progress, or do not, relative to the trajectories of communities more broadly. The comparison of ex-combatant and community trajectories within and between each of the five GLR countries plays an especially important role in this effort. When viewed through a programmatic lens the insights gained through comparing the five GLR countries are especially paradoxical. This section precedes in two main subsections. First, we focus specifically on the case of DRC to explore the discord between the individual-level ex-combatant reintegration processes and mechanisms outlined in §4.2, and the programmatic assumption of parity between ex-combatants and community members (i.e. civilianization) along social and economic parameters as an indicator of those processes happening at a country level. We call this discord the paradox of parity. We argue that beyond mere parity, the country-level trajectories of communities play a structuring role that shapes and constrains ex-combatants' trajectories at a country level. Second, to further illuminate the paradox of parity we use a complex realist framework to reframe country-level reintegration trajectories as comprised of three parts: ex-combatant

trajectories, community member trajectories, and parity trajectories. We use these three factors to elaborate a taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories and explore the implications for understanding the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts.

4.3.1 The Paradox of Parity

The idea that the level of parity between ex-combatants and community members across a broad range of social and economic reintegration parameters is an indicator of the extent of reintegration processes occurring is core to the logic by which reintegration policy and programming has been planned, executed, and evaluated in the GLR (discussed in §3.3.2.1). However, in this regard DRC presents a paradox. While ex-combatants in DRC do best across the GLR countries to move towards parity with community members, the *processes* of reintegration that are observable across the rest of the GLR countries (see §4.2.5) are only occurring to a very limited extent. How do we reconcile this discord between the relative absence of reintegration processes and the presence of high levels of parity?

We approach this quagmire in two steps. First, we explore the unique dynamic of reintegration in the context of ongoing local conflict and insecurity in Eastern DRC. In this context barriers emerge, blocking reintegration processes from taking root. However, the social and economic challenges that exist in the context of ongoing local conflict and insecurity in Eastern DRC are not wholly unique to ex-combatants. Community members in Eastern DRC are also deeply disadvantaged in this volatile setting. Thus, secondly, we explore the role of community member trajectories in the core social and economic processes that underlie reintegration as a structuring force that enables or limits the possible trajectories of ex-combatant reintegration processes.

4.3.1.1 DRC: Reintegration in the Context of Ongoing Local Conflict & Insecurity

Since the end of the Second Congo War in 2003 DRC has been on a path of peacebuilding and slow recovery from the social and economic legacies of colonialism and the widespread corruption of the 1970's and 80's. Indeed, in 2006 and 2011 free elections were held peacefully in DRC, and security in Kinshasa has improved greatly. However, in Eastern DRC

insecurity and violence have persisted – shaped by a range of local and international actors (see §1.2.1). Indeed, the complex constellation of violent actors in Eastern DRC is a challenge to keep track of. Since 2004 the Government of DRC has worked to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants involved in the local conflicts in the eastern parts of the country, especially Kivu provinces, and has made considerable programming gains in this effort. However, due to the context of continued and quickly shifting local violence in Eastern DRC, many of the ex-combatants that go through reintegration programming begin the *process* of reintegration in the context of ongoing conflict and insecurity. This dynamic is unique across the GLR countries during the 2010-2012 period in which the TDRP GLR data was captured. As a result, ex-combatants and community members in DRC are significantly worse off in almost all social and economic parameters, despite the small space between them, than those in the rest of the GLR countries.

Ex-combatants in DRC have spent the longest amount of time with armed groups before demobilization and are more likely to have been mobilized under the age of 18 compared to the other GLR countries. Despite this, ex-combatants in DRC do not appear to have significant disadvantages to the community at the outset of reintegration. Together ex-combatants and community members in DRC perform worst compared to others in the other GLR countries in terms of human capital (education, skills, and empowerment) or natural capital (access to arable land and livestock ownership) - both which are essential components to the two primary livelihood pathways in the GLR. Indeed, ex-combatants in DRC engage in overall livelihood pathways towards human-capital based or natural-capital based livelihoods, or a combination of the two, that fits with that of the rest of the GLR countries. However, in the context of ongoing local conflict ex-combatant *and* community members in DRC are less successful in actualizing these livelihood strategies into stronger financial capital (in terms of income security) or physical capital (in terms of food and housing security). Ex-combatants and community members remain in a situation of ongoing food, housing, and income insecurity. In this regard, it appears that while ex-combatants may not have not missed out on much relative to the community while away in conflict because the community itself has missed out on so much through bearing the weight of ongoing local conflict and insecurity.

Indeed, in the context of continuing insecurity in the Eastern DRC, ex-combatants and community members alike are exposed to a level of economic hardship considerably worse than that characteristic of the rest of the GLR countries. These are challenges ex-combatants and community members in DRC face together. However, the crux of understanding the weight of both ex-combatant and community member disadvantages in the context of ongoing conflict is in terms of social capital. Ex-combatants in DRC have the weakest familial networks in the GLR (bonding social capital). This is likely an effect of both the challenging social geography of eastern DRC, in which severely dilapidated transport infrastructure and mountainous terrain combined with heavy seasonal rains can make travel near impossible, and the large scale nature of displacement in the context of continuing violence and insecurity. Essentially, familial networks are physically dispersed by displacement, and this dispersion is maintained by ongoing insecurity and geographic factors. Even if ex-combatants have existing family networks that might be willing to accept and support them, they may have no way of knowing if they are alive or where they have been displaced to and how to contact them. In this sense, ex-combatants in DRC are often missing the basic social footing that many ex-combatants in the other GLR countries are afforded – a basic familial network to which to return.

Though ex-combatants in DRC build new family networks through marriage on a similar level to community members, the absence of foundational familial networks appears to have serious consequences for ex-combatants in DRC in terms of social capital and the social cohesion in the community that it enables. Ex-combatants in DRC are the most likely group among the GLR countries to have no one to turn to for economic help; have the weakest feeling of togetherness with the community; feel they have the least amount of power to make important decisions in their life; perceive the weakest ability to control their everyday activities; are the least likely to perceive that they make a positive impact on the community; are the least likely to gather to express political concerns; the least likely to feel their voice is taken into account by leaders; the most likely to think their overall situation will deteriorate in the future; and have the lowest level of life satisfaction across the GLR countries. In terms of social change, DRC is the only GLR country where ex-combatants see drops in their perception of their overall situation relative to the rest of the community even though they are observably moving towards parity.

However, the detrimental effects of ongoing local conflict and insecurity in DRC on social capital are not limited to ex-combatants in DRC. In contrast to the rest of the GLR countries, community members face similar dynamics of broken social networks. As a result, not only do ex-combatants lack the social capital necessary to leverage social and economic outcomes, but community members do as well. Thus, in the parts of Eastern DRC facing continued conflict and insecurity there is very little in the way of social capital, and in turn social cohesion, for ex-combatants *or* community members to leverage. In sense, these parts of Eastern DRC have very little in the way of a social fabric for ex-combatants to reintegrate into at all.

It appears that the upward logic of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital (see §4.2.3.1.) does not function in the context of continued insecurity prevalent in Eastern DRC. Ex-combatants and community members in DRC remain economically marginalized and socially incohesive (Horn 2013b; Kelly *et al* 2011; Lamb 2011). Large-scale displacement and the social geography of Eastern DRC keep bonding familial networks dispersed, and they thus cannot serve the role as a springboard by which ex-combatants and community members can interweave their social networks together. Even when ex-combatants in DRC marry a community member, which they do so at similar rates as ex-combatants in other GLR countries, they are more likely to be marrying a community member who is also lacking familial networks. Thus, marriage ceases to serve as a key mechanism for expanding social networks in the way that it does in the other GLR countries. In this context much of what we think of as the community loses analytical meaning - there is little social capital and little social cohesion in which to reintegrate. Paradoxically, ex-combatant reintegration as parity in Eastern DRC may end up meaning return to settings of social and economic marginalization (i.e. non-integration). This is the paradox of parity.

It is worth revisiting a passage from Colletta and Cullen (2002: 279) that we previously cited in §2.2.2.2., for it speaks well to the challenges that exist across society as a whole in the areas of Eastern DRC affected by ongoing conflict:

“Intrastate conflict divides the population, undermines interpersonal and communal group trust, and destroys norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for the common good, decimating social capital stocks – and, thus, exacerbating communal strife. This damage to a nation’s social fabric impedes the ability of states and communities to recover after hostilities cease. Even if other forms of capital are replenished, economic and social development will be hampered unless social capital stocks are restored. “

Indeed, in the context of ongoing local conflict characterized by extreme violence, sexual violence, displacement, abduction, and overall insecurity in Eastern DRC the undermining of trust, destruction of social norms and values, and decimation of social capital persist – perpetuating an ongoing cycle of social and economic marginalization.

4.3.1.2 The Structuring Role of Community Trajectories

Here we step back for a moment and attempt to distill the essence of the paradox of parity in DRC and to try to understand what this paradox means for our broader understanding of ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR. We argue that the case of DRC reveals the role of broader community trajectories as a structuring force that shapes ex-combatant trajectories themselves.

Ex-combatants in DRC start the process of reintegration the least disadvantaged to the community in terms of parity compared to the other GLR countries. From this starting point, ex-combatants in DRC see slight improvements across social and economic parameters over time. These improvements are the smallest compared to those that ex-combatants in other GLR countries make. However, even though the improvements they make are slight, ex-combatants in DRC quickly achieve the highest level of parity across core social and economic parameters with community members of any country in the GLR. Despite the strong parity between ex-combatants and community members in DRC, the underlying processes of ex-combatant reintegration that are consistently visible across the other GLR countries are only occurring to a limited extent. In the context of ongoing local violence, ex-combatants in DRC meet significant barriers when navigating the prospect of reintegration.

The core of understanding barriers that ex-combatants in DRC face revolve around the effects of continued local conflict and insecurity on the broader communities to which they return. Community members in DRC see a slightly negative trajectory in core social and economic parameters over time. So ex-combatants start not so far behind community members and make slight improvements, while at the same time community members make a slight decline. In this way, ex-combatants quickly hit the roof of their possible trajectory of improvement. The trajectory of communities serves as a structural limiter to the processes of reintegration. Even though parity is high, there is arguably no space for reintegration processes to progress forward.

The structuring role of community trajectories on possible ex-combatant trajectories is driven home when we contrast DRC against the other GLR counties. In the other GLR countries ex-combatants start more disadvantaged to communities than in DRC. However, both ex-combatants and community members see positive trajectories with significant improvement over time. Even though ex-combatants in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Republic of Congo remain more disadvantaged to the communities over time in terms of parity, they have a continually expanding space for improvement. The roof of ex-combatants social and economic position is always moving up. In the more stable peacetime environments in the other GLR countries ex-combatants have been able use the upward trajectory of communities as a springboard for their own trajectory of improvement. In this way, community trajectories serve as a structural enabler in which the ex-combatant reintegration processes can take root.

In some ways the idea that the broader social and economic trajectory of post-conflict societies is important for ex-combatant reintegration processes is no revelation. This may be what scholars and practitioners in the field of DDR mean when they say that context matters, even if they do not operationalize the analytical meaning of this idea – this is what we intend to do. As we will argue in the next section, taking the structuring role of community trajectories for ex-combatant reintegration seriously can have considerable implications for how we think about reintegration programming. Not least among these implications are those for how we understand reintegration programming impacts beyond

the notion of parity / civilianization. Specifically, how we think about the limits what it is possible for reintegration programming to achieve in certain contexts.

4.3.2 Country-Level Reintegration Trajectories

In this section we collect our insights on the nature of individual-level reintegration level processes and the role community trajectories as a structuring force on ex-combatants at a country-level to conceptualize the implications for our understanding of country-level reintegration outcomes, and the possible scope that exists for reintegration programming to affect these outcomes. This section proceeds in two subsections. First (4.3.2.1), we return to our meta-theoretical rooting in complex realism, and in doing so find a frame for conceptualizing the dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration at a country level. Second (4.3.2.2), with this conceptualization in place we move on to elaborate a taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories, and explore the programming related implications.

4.3.2.1 Country-Level Trajectories in a Complex Realist Framework

In our previous discussions in the methodology chapter (§3.2.3) we drew together two strands of thought, complexity science and critical realism, under the meta-theoretical banner of complex realism. Though the complex realist framework has implicitly guided our analysis throughout this chapter, it has only occasionally come to the fore. Now we return to complex realism to explicitly anchor our emerging understanding of country-level reintegration trajectories within this framework.

Recall that at the country level we can think of ex-combatants and community members as existing within their own respective complex systems. These systems have a constructed “system space”, or in other words “range of the possible”, that is defined by the parameters by which we explore them. In our case, the variables of the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset define our construction of the system space for ex-combatant and community member systems in the GLR. Ex-combatant and community member systems are sub-systems that are distinct, yet have almost completely overlapping “system space”. Together they constitute

the larger super-system space of the country-level cases – because reintegration is about ex-combatants *and* community members. Both ex-combatants and community member sub-systems have a “system state”, which is the total of all actual observable positions of individual ex-combatants and community members (i.e. “system traces”) across the parameters that define their respective sub-system spaces.

Over time, the position of traces in the system space move through causal processes. We have endeavored to explain the trajectories of these traces as they move over time by exploring the individual level processes and mechanisms of reintegration that are observable across the GLR countries. The combined trajectories of each pair of ex-combatant and community member sub-system states interactively produce the trajectories of each of the five country-level systems in the GLR (Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, RoC, and Burundi). As we have argued in our discussion of the country case of DRC (§4.3.1.), the trajectory of the community member sub-system can have a structuring effect on possible trajectory of the ex-combatant sub-system. Another way to say this is that we think of the community sub-system trajectory in a given country case itself as control parameter that shapes the possible trajectory of the ex-combatant sub-system, and in turn the trajectory of the broader country case super-system which they collectively constitute in a sort of “second order” process.

Recall from our previous discussion of the TDRP approach to monitoring and evaluation (§3.3.2.1) that the extent of parity between ex-combatants and community members across key social and economic parameters is the predominant paradigm through which reintegration programming impacts are understood in the M&E of reintegration programming in the GLR. From the perspective of reintegration programming, a trajectory of improving parity between ex-combatants and community members would be grounds for a positive impact evaluation of reintegration programming. In the language of complex realism, parity is the amount of space between ex-combatant and community member sub-system states. A trajectory of improving parity would mean that ex-combatant and community member sub-system states each have a trajectory towards the same part of the country-level super-system space. Complete parity would mean that ex-combatant and community member sub-system states occupied the same part system-space in the country-level super-system. That is, there would cease to be any observable distinction between ex-

combatant and community member. In this way, parity is indeed an important part of understanding reintegration impacts.

However, as we outlined through the case of DRC (§4.3.1.), viewing programming impacts through the lens of parity alone is paradox inducing. In DRC, ex-combatants have the highest levels of parity across the GLR countries. Despite this parity, a closer examination of DRC reveals that the individual level processes of reintegration occurring in the other GLR countries are only visible to a very limited extent in DRC. In DRC ex-combatants return to contexts of continued insecurity, distrust, and pervasive poverty in which the social and economic processes that underlie reintegration all but absent. The negative effects of this context are also felt by community members, who themselves see a slightly negative trajectory over time. In this sense, the bar for parity is set low for ex-combatants in DRC. They may move towards parity quickly, but negative trajectory to the community represents a structural limit to their possible progress in reintegration processes. With these insights in mind, it appears that parity can obscure as much as it reveals, and that when used alone it may be an inadequate tool for understanding country-level reintegration.

From the complex realist perspective parity itself implicitly points to the importance of understanding not only the trajectory of the amount space between ex-combatants and community members, but the position and trajectory of the ex-combatants and community members systems of which parity is a product of. This point may seem somewhat elementary, but it should not be discounted. As we have discussed in §3.3.2.1, the political incentives of the TDRP as a component of the broader World Bank institutions play an enormous role in shaping the overt focus on parity in programming impact evaluations, sometimes at the expense of other forms of relevant evidence. To further develop this point, we move to elaborate taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories based on the trajectories of ex-combatants, community members, and the parity between them. Taking idea that all three of these factors are important seriously adds considerable nuance to how we understand country-level reintegration outcomes, and the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts.

4.3.2.2 A Taxonomy of Possible Country-Level Reintegration Trajectories

If we take the trajectories of ex-combatants, community members, and the parity between them as three control parameters that constitute overall country-level reintegration trajectories, then we can elaborate a basic taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories. If we dichotomize the trajectories of these three factors as either improving or declining then we have eight (2^3) possible combinations. These possible combinations are presented in *Figure 4.7* below.

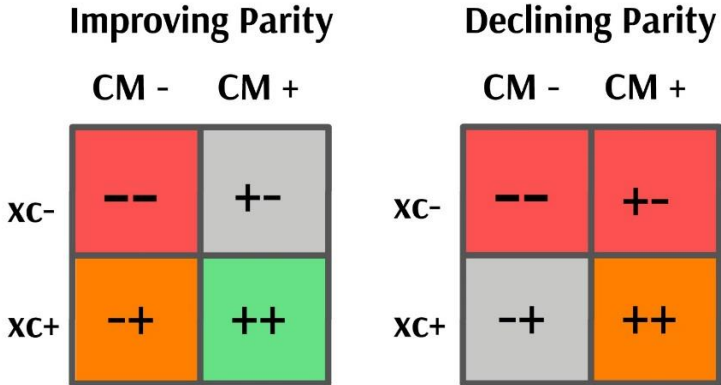


Figure 4.7 - Taxonomy of Country-Level Reintegration Trajectories

We have broken the eight combinations into two 2x2 matrices, in the first matrix all combinations of ex-combatant (XC) and community member (CM) trajectories have improving parity, and in the second matrix all combinations have declining parity. We make two key assumptions: 1) we assume that ex-combatants always start disadvantaged to community members; and 2) that ex-combatant do not exceed community members in their social and economic position. These two assumptions are consistent within each of the GLR countries. With these assumptions in place, two cells in the matrices (shaded grey) are logically impossible combinations of the three factors. It is not logically possible for ex-combatants and community members to see improving parity if ex-combatants, who always start disadvantaged to community members, see a declining trajectory while community members see and improving trajectory (matrix one, upper right-hand corner). Likewise, it is logically impossible for parity to decline, i.e. for the space between ex-combatants and community members to be growing, if ex-combatants are seeing a trajectory of

improvement while community members are seeing a trajectory of decline. With these two logically impossible combinations removed, there are six remaining cells for us to consider.

We should reiterate here that the idea of trajectories of ex-combatant and community member populations in each of the GLR countries is a conceptual metaphor for their respective progress over time in the social and economic processes that underlie reintegration. These are the individual-level processes and mechanisms revolving around social identity, social capital, and sustainable livelihoods that we have outlined in the previous sections of this chapter.

In the bottom right-hand cell in the first matrix (shaded green) in *Figure 4.7*, we see what from a reintegration programming perspective is an ideal country-level reintegration trajectory. As is presented in the schema in *Figure 4.8* below, community members have a positive trajectory of change over time in social and economic processes over time, as do ex-combatants. However, ex-combatants have a steeper trajectory of improvement and thus the parity gap between the two is shrinking (i.e. improving parity).

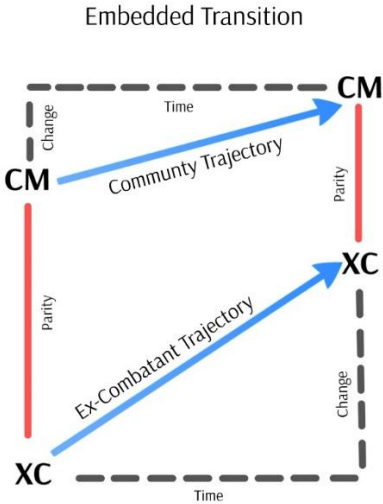


Figure 4.8 - Ideal Reintegration Trajectory

We call this type of country-level reintegration trajectory an “embedded transition”. In this scenario, ex-combatants’ progress in in social and economic processes is *embedded* in the broader community’s improvements in the wake of peace. In this way, the community’s

upward social and economic trajectory serves as the springboard through which ex-combatants can move towards parity. Ex-combatants' negotiation of social identity and social capital is *embedded* in the broader communal processes of improving trust and social cohesion. Likewise, ex-combatants' navigation of economic livelihood pathways is *embedded* in the broader community's improving economic stability with growing opportunities for commerce. This embedded transition is exactly the type of country-level reintegration trajectory visible in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and RoC (i.e. all GLR countries except DRC). These are very positive findings indeed.

In this embedded transition country-level trajectory, reintegration programming can play an important enabling role for ex-combatants' as they navigate social and economic processes through approaches designed to enhance, to the extent that it is possible, ex-combatants human, financial, physical, natural, and social capital. However, while reintegration programming can help shape ex-combatants' positions in the various control parameters that are important for individual-level reintegration processes, it is still individual ex-combatants themselves that are the agents of change in their lives. There are essential parts of individual-level reintegration processes, for example the negotiation of social identity and social capital, that reintegration programming can only peripherally affect. Further, the upward trajectory of communities in an embedded transition country-level trajectory means there is a constantly expanding space for improvement in ex-combatants' social and economic position. For reintegration programming, this translates as a moving goalpost successful reintegration in terms of parity. It may be that reintegration programming in an embedded transition trajectory may play an important enabling role for ex-combatants, even if absolute parity is never achieved. Indeed, absolute parity at a country-level likely remains an intergenerational project that exceeds the temporal boundaries of reintegration programming.

It is important to highlight that when an embedded transition trajectory is occurring, i.e. the social and economic positions of both ex-combatants and community members are improving, the trajectory of parity between ex-combatants and community members may actually be a reasonable standalone indication that individual-level reintegration processes are occurring. This may be one contributing factor for why organizations involved in

assessing the impacts of reintegration programming put such a heavy emphasis on parity. Organizations implicitly assume that with the establishment of peace, communities will rebound in positive trajectory of social and economic recovery and that reintegration programming will be able to help close the gaps ex-combatants and those rebounding communities.

Moving on, all cells in the matrices in *Figure 4.7* where ex-combatants see a negative trajectory over time (shaded in red) represent problematic country-level trajectories from a reintegration programming perspective. These three possible trajectories are presented in *Figure 4.9* below. We call the country-level trajectory in the upper left-hand cell of the first matrix a trajectory of “community-led decline”. Both ex-combatants and community members see declining trajectories over time, i.e. they regress in social and economic processes, however community members do so more quickly. Similarly, we call the country-level trajectory in the upper left-hand cell in the second matrix a trajectory of “ex-combatant-led decline”. In this type of country-level trajectory, instead of community members, ex-combatants decline more quickly. Lastly, we call the country-level trajectory in the upper right-hand cell of the second matrix a trajectory of “ex-combatant rejection”. While community members achieve social and economic improvements, ex-combatants see extensive exclusion from these processes and an ultimate rejection from communities more broadly – solidifying them as a marginalized segment of society.

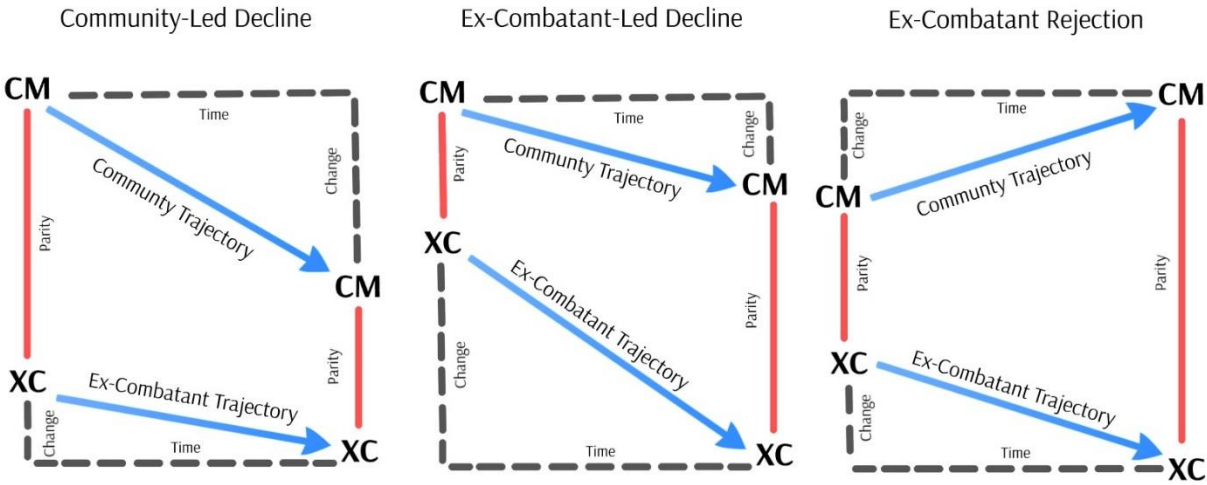


Figure 4.9 - Problematic Reintegration Trajectories

There are no country cases in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset that display any one of these three country-level trajectories. Thus, we must approach these three trajectories and the possible factors shaping them, speculatively. The ex-combatant rejection trajectory is easiest place to start. This trajectory is the antithesis of the embedded transition trajectory outlined above, and indeed is for what reintegration programming exists to prevent. In an ex-combatant rejection trajectory, communities would benefit from peace and engage in processes of social and economic improvement. Ex-combatants, however, remain excluded from these processes, and become ever more socially and economically marginalized from society. As outlined in the previous sections of this chapter, ex-combatants generally face a comprehensive range of social and economic disadvantages to the community. Missed opportunities for socialization, building a family and social connections, education, and establishing an economic livelihood; along with the legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences that manifest as psychosocial trauma and social stigma in the community that reduce their capacity to take part in and contribute to community are the starting points that ex-combatants may face in reintegration processes. If these disadvantages become ingrained, an ex-combatant rejection trajectory could emerge.

There is an important role for reintegration programming to play in helping to address the disadvantages that ex-combatants face by serving as an enabler that, if successful, may help to turn an ex-combatant rejection trajectory into an embedded transition trajectory. So at the outset of reintegration programming an ex-combatant rejection trajectory would mean that there was an important job for reintegration programming to do, and a large scope for potential programming impacts. However, if an ex-combatant rejection trajectory were visible at the end of reintegration programming, it would be a clear indication of the failure of reintegration programming to impact reintegration processes. Moreover, this trajectory could represent a warning signal of the prospect for the remobilization of ex-combatants into armed groups, which in the context of rejection from communities could represent their best, if not only, social and economic opportunities.

At first glance, community-led decline and ex-combatant-led decline trajectories seem more likely to be characteristic of the lead up to the outbreak of grievance-based conflict than the

period of recovery after the immediate cessation of conflict. Indeed, a country-level trajectory in which not just ex-combatants but communities more broadly, regardless of which declines more quickly, see a social and economic decline hardly seems characteristic of the establishment of peace – where one might expect to see a rebound in the trajectory of communities. Though DRC does not fit into either a community-led decline or ex-combatant-led decline trajectories, it is illustrative as the only GLR country where communities do see a trajectory of decline over time. In DRC this negative community trajectory is precisely a result of the fact that peace has not been established. Ongoing local violence and insecurity mean that overall situation continues to deteriorate for both ex-combatants and community members. It may be that a community-led decline or ex-combatant-led decline trajectories could be characteristic of such settings of ongoing violence. Alternatively, community-led decline or ex-combatant-led decline trajectories could be a signal that even though violence may have been halted and security improved, underlying social and economic structural violence (see Galtung 1996) that may have driven, and perhaps transformed during, conflict may remain unresolved – pushing communities and ex-combatants into a negative trajectory despite that fact that the guns have stopped firing.

In both community-led decline and ex-combatant-led decline trajectories the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts appears somewhat limited. While reintegration programming may play an enabling role in helping ex-combatants to make social and economic improvements, the broader community remains outside the mandated beneficiary group of reintegration programming. Thus, the trajectory of communities remains outside the potential of reintegration programming to directly affect. The best outcome that reintegration programming could hope to affect in such a setting is to turn a community-led decline or ex-combatant-led decline trajectory into the type of “limited transition” trajectory visible in DRC (discussed below). However, even this is a mixed success. Thus, the scope for potential reintegration programming impacts are limited. If visible at the end of reintegration programming, both community-led decline and ex-combatant-led decline trajectories would be causes of serious concern, and would be a clear signal that reintegration programming had failed to impact ex-combatant reintegration processes - to

the limited extent this is possible. The fact that none of these trajectories is visible across the GLR countries is a positive finding indeed.

It is important to highlight that the in a trajectory of community-led decline, parity between ex-combatants and community members would actually be improving, while the overall situation would be clearly deteriorating. This observation reinforces the idea that in many contexts parity alone may be insufficient for understanding the strength of reintegration processes.

Returning to *Figure 4.7*, from a reintegration programming perspective the cells in shaded orange represent mixed success trajectories. These two trajectory types are presented in *Figure 4.10* below. We call the type of country-level trajectory in the lower left-hand cell of the first matrix of *Figure 4.7* a “limited transition” trajectory - in contrast to the embedded transition trajectory. Ex-combatants see improvements through social and economic processes, however communities more broadly see a decline in these same processes. The broader societal upswing which ex-combatants are able to implant themselves within in the embedded transition trajectory is not present. Thus, ex-combatants quickly hit the roof of their possible improvement. As discussed at length in §4.3.1.1., this is exactly the trajectory that is visible in DRC. In DRC we attribute the subtle decline of communities to a dynamic of ongoing local conflict and insecurity that continually undermines social cohesion and economic activity.

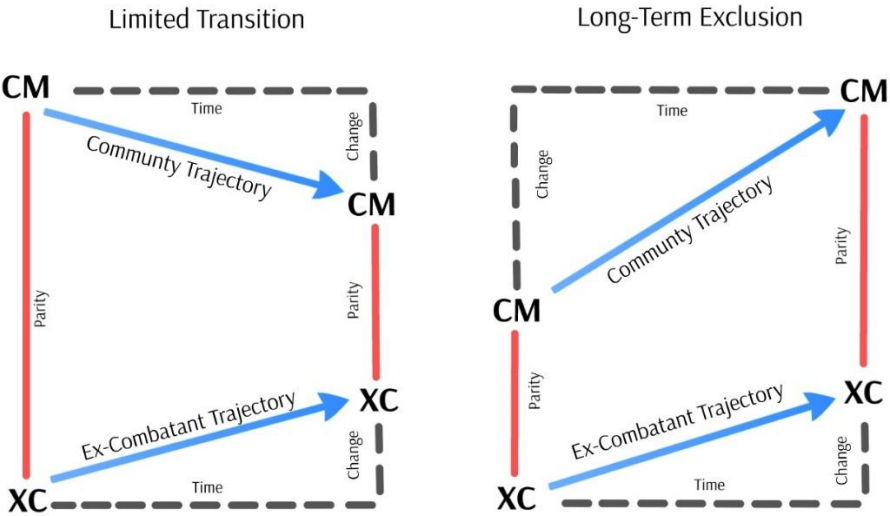


Figure 4.10 - Mixed-Success Reintegration Trajectories

From a programmatic perspective, a limited transition trajectory can be thought of as a mixed success. The structuring role that the trajectory of the broader community plays for limiting the upward trajectory of ex-combatant reintegration processes means that there is also a limit to the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts. In a limited transition trajectory, reintegration programming may be able to play an important enabling role in helping ex-combatants get back on their feet. Indeed, in such a setting of broader community decline ex-combatants themselves might see a trajectory of decline without the targeted support of reintegration programming. In this way there is scope for reintegration programming to serve as an important factor that drives a country away from community-led or ex-combatant-led decline trajectories (described above). However, due to the trajectory of the broader community, it appears unlikely that programming can achieve the more transformational impacts of the embedded reintegration trajectory. Even if, with the support of reintegration programming, ex-combatants were to meet the community trajectory and achieve absolute parity, they might then join the overall trajectory of decline once targeted assistance ceased.

Indeed, if ex-combatants did exceed the social and economic position of the community this would be of equal cause for alarm. Indeed, even if communities only perceive ex-combatants as better off than themselves, or even as receiving more or undeserved assistance, this can breed serious resentment in the community that and actually create social barriers to reintegration. The experiences of numerous reintegration programs speak well to this point (Schelhofer-Wohl & Sambanis 2010). As Shibuya (2012: 134) points out, this is a precarious line for reintegration programming to walk:

“As the distinction between “combatant” and “civilian” becomes less meaningful within the community, financial and other assistance should be disbursed towards the larger community rather than to individual combatants. In post-conflict situations where this distance is not great in the first place, reintegration assistance that targets individual combatants can cause resentment, and even in situations where special incentives for combatants is a good idea, over time

doing so will perpetuate the distinction that the assistance is meant to eliminate.”

Though second generation DDR programs have taken on a broader set of responsibilities and agendas, no reintegration program alone will solve the large-scale dynamics that drive conflict afflicted communities into negative trajectories. Indeed, it is not even in the mandates of reintegration programs, whose primary beneficiaries remain ex-combatants, to affect communities directly. In the worst case, a limited transition trajectory may mean that ex-combatants “reintegrate” back into a setting of insecurity, distrust, and poverty that may have played a role in the grievances that drove mobilization into armed groups in the first place. That is to say, a setting of marginalization or non-integration. This is risky prospect, as without broader improvements across communities armed groups may continue to represent the best, if not only, modes of social and economic survival for ex-combatants. If the factors that limit ex-combatants upward trajectory exist outside the mandate, or even ability, of reintegration programming to affect, then even the best planned and executed reintegration program could only achieve a limited impact. It may be that limited transition trajectories, like in DRC, where high levels of parity between ex-combatants and community members is achieved, but this parity is shrouded in the veil of broader community decline, represent a mixed success or a “level of acceptable failure” for reintegration programming. The impacts are suboptimal, but it is likely that the sort of embedded transition that reintegration programs implicitly assume is happening is not yet possible in such a setting.

Lastly, we call the country-level trajectory in the cell in the lower right-hand corner of the second matrix in *Figure 4.7* a trajectory of “long-term exclusion”. While both ex-combatants and community members see improvements through social and economic processes, community members do so to a greater extent than ex-combatants, and thus gap between them grows over time (declining parity). Again, as with three problematic reintegration trajectories described above, there are no country cases in the GLR that reflect this trajectory and so our ideas remain somewhat speculative. In contrast to “community-led decline” and “limited transition” trajectories, which show that parity between ex-combatants and community members can be improving while the overall situation is disintegrating, the “long-term exclusion” trajectory shows that the overall situation can be

improving for both ex-combatants and community members while at the same time gap between them is widening. This trajectory would be a mixed success in terms of reintegration programming impacts. The risk is that even though ex-combatants are seeing social and economic improvements, in the long-run they end up as becoming solidified as a marginalized segment of society. However, if in this context of social and economic improvement ex-combatants perceive themselves as included in the broader societal transformation, even though there is a widening gap in their actual social and economic positions, this may buy considerable breathing space for reintegration programming to help address special barriers that ex-combatants face in catching up to community members. Perceptions, however, can prove fickle, and reintegration programming will still have an important job to do even if the immediate urgency is somewhat relieved.

An important take away from reflecting on these six different country-level reintegration trajectories is that collectively they emphasize the equifinality (and for that matter multifinality) of parity outcomes. There are multiple pathways to parity between ex-combatants and community members, but not all of these pathways represent reintegration in a meaningful way beyond the idea of civilianization (see §2.1.2). The trajectories of ex-combatants, community members, and the parity between them *in combination* are important for understanding the different contexts in which parity does or does not occur. This insight offers a framework for contextualizing reintegration programming impacts beyond this overarching emphasis on parity alone. However, here we can segue to another fundamental question that we have let hang in the background of our analyses. Namely, does reintegration programming “cause” country-level reintegration trajectories?

We should emphasize that there has been no systematic capture of reintegration programming in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset, and thus our ability to draw causal connections between reintegration programming and ex-combatant trajectories through systematic analysis is negligible. However, what our previous discussion of the underlying social and economic processes reveals is some of the key control parameters of ex-combatant reintegration processes which reintegration programming can affect. The extent to which reintegration programming in the GLR countries actually has affected these key control parameters has not been the focus of our analysis. However, the lack of empirical

capture of reintegration programming may not stand in the way of reasoning logically about the extent of *possible* causal impact from reintegration programming on country-level reintegration trajectories. In light of our taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories, we can reason that reintegration programming can affect, at most, half of the equation that determines country-level reintegration trajectories. No reintegration program can affect the broader social and economic trajectories of post-conflict societies. At the same time, the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts is highly dependent on the very community trajectories that it can only peripherally affect. This insight underscores the point that reintegration programs must be situated in the context of the broader peacebuilding and development initiatives in a given setting that may actually play a more significant role in steering community trajectories. Indeed, expanding the scope of possible reintegration program impacts is dependent on doing so.

For as long as there has been war ex-combatants have faced the challenges of reintegration, with or without external help. In the wake of conflict, ex-combatants must navigate a complex and interconnected set of social and economic processes as they return to society. Ex-combatants' paths in these processes may be limited by their personal traits and histories, the legacies of mobilization and wartime experiences, and the broader structural context of the post-conflict environment. As we argue in §1.3.2, in a critical or complex realist framework, the processes that ex-combatants navigate exist independently of the normative policy and programming that are meant to affect them. With this perspective in mind, the role of reintegration programming can be understood as an enabler. Reintegration programming may shape, and then capitalize on, the momentum of reintegration processes by affecting the control parameters of individual-level reintegration processes (e.g. human capital). Indeed, effective reintegration programming may ease the unique social and economic barriers that ex-combatants face, and may not have otherwise overcome without assistance. However, it remains ex-combatants themselves who navigate these processes. In this sense, it may be a combination of reintegration programming and ex-combatants' own agency in navigating a context of opportunities and barriers that the individual-level ex-combatant reintegration processes are "caused".

Even though reintegration programming may play an important role for ex-combatants as they navigate reintegration trajectories, it does not directly do so for community members. Indeed, as highlighted in the discussion above, the trajectory of community members may play a role as a structuring force on the possible extent of ex-combatant trajectories. Communities are the context into which ex-combatants must reintegrate, and the trajectory of this context matters enormously for the overall country-level reintegration trajectory. Though reintegration programming can peripherally improve the position of community members, for example through community-based approaches programming delivery, programming directly targeting community members directly is outside the mandate of reintegration programming. The primary beneficiary group of reintegration programming remains ex-combatants. In this way, half of the equation of country-level reintegration trajectories is outside the ability of reintegration programming to affect directly. So, the extent of causal force that we can attribute directly to reintegration programming is somewhat limited. Reintegration programming can play an enabling role in ex-combatant trajectories, but because it cannot shape community trajectories, it is ultimately unable to wholly steer country-level trajectories. In this way, reintegration may not be the “determinate” causal force behind country-level trajectories, but it is an important part of the equation.

4.4 Summary of Analysis

In this chapter we have endeavored to describe and interpret the individual-level social and economic processes by which ex-combatants reintegrate into communities. Further, we have endeavored to move beyond mere description to consider the broader implications these individual-level social and economic reintegration processes hold for how we understand ex-combatant reintegration at a country-level, and the possible role that reintegration programming can play.

The process of reintegration that ex-combatants across the GLR face entails numerous transformations along social and economic lines. These ex-combatant transformations are embedded in larger the larger transformations of post-conflict societies. To understand

reintegration processes requires understanding the context in which they occur. The processes by which ex-combatants build sustainable economic livelihoods is best understood when contextualized within broader economic trajectories of the communities to which they return. The processes by which ex-combatants build social capital is best understood when contextualized in the broader project building social cohesion and of reweaving the social fabric of communities. The processes by which female ex-combatants approach gender based disadvantages is best understood when contextualized in the broader gender dynamics in the communities to which they return. The challenges of reintegration, of transitioning from war and moving towards peace, are challenges that ex-combatants and communities across the GLR face together.

Adopting an analytical approach to acknowledging the interconnected nature of ex-combatants and the communities they return to is important. The taxonomy of country-level reintegration trajectories presented in this chapter helps us understand the scope of reintegration programming impacts at the outset of reintegration programming, the ways in which country-level trajectories and possible impacts may shift during programming life cycles, and the extent to which we can directly attribute these shifts in country-level reintegration trajectories to reintegration programming.

5 Summary & Conclusions

This chapter proceeds in two sections. First (§5.1), a summary of the context, core issues, theoretical and methodological approaches, and findings of this doctoral thesis is presented. Second (§5.2), we delve into a deeper discussion of the analytical contributions to reintegration research that the findings in this doctoral thesis represent, and in turn discuss the implications for future reintegration research and programming.

5.1 Summary

Since the early 1990's, the Great Lakes Region (GLR) has been devastated by a wave of interconnected interstate, intrastate, and local conflicts involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers in dozens of armed groups. An important part of the international community's approach to peacebuilding in the region has involved the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed groups. Because of the transnational nature of many armed groups in the GLR, a regional approach to DDR has been adopted. The World Bank's Multi-Country Reintegration Program (MDRP) and Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) have been key institutions involved in facilitating national efforts for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants across the region through their role as a funding mechanism, a technical advisor, and as responsible for monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

While DDR has evolved considerably since 1990's, the reintegration component remains among the cruxes. One reason for the enduring challenge of reintegration is that while technical approaches to the delivery of reintegration *programming* have become ever more refined, the nature of the fundamental social and economic reintegration *processes* that reintegration *programs* aim to affect have remained largely unproblematized. We call this the programming - process divide. The mixed track record of DDR programs in the GLR, and around the world, speaks to the idea that without a deep understanding of the endogenous social and economic processes of reintegration, reintegration *programs* might risk becoming detached from the *processes* they mean to affect.

Through the M&E of reintegration programming in the GLR, the TDRP has collected vast amounts of social and economic survey data on ex-combatants and community members. Previously, this data has been used to evaluate the extent of reintegration programming impacts in specific GLR country contexts. However, in 2013 the TDRP merged a series of survey datasets from across five GLR countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC) captured between 2010 and 2012. The merged TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset allows for the investigation of reintegration beyond single cases - opening the door to systematic comparative analyses of the social and economic reintegration processes that individual ex-combatants navigate across GLR as a whole. Through exploring the similarities and differences of reintegration processes across and within the GLR countries, fundamental components of those processes that exist across differing country contexts may emerge. Identifying common threads and key differences in reintegration processes across the GLR countries can help refine approaches to delivering reintegration programming as well as shed light on our understanding of the scope of past and possible future programming impacts. These prospects have been the point of departure for this doctoral thesis.

5.1.2 Theoretical & Methodological Approaches

In approaching the endeavor of exploring the social and economic processes of ex-combatant reintegration in the GLR we have employed a concert of theoretical perspectives from the social sciences. Ex-combatant reintegration is a complex and multifaceted transition along social, economic, and political lines. However, reintegration is no new phenomenon. While there is a tendency in the literature on ex-combatant reintegration to ignore the vast wealth of existing social scientific literature on reintegration of different groups (e.g. veterans and ex-prisoners) - we need not start from scratch. In this vein, we adopt social identity theory, social capital theory, and sustainable livelihoods theory as three complementary conceptual frameworks for exploring ex-combatant reintegration processes in the GLR.

From social identity theory we learn that individual ex-combatants' transitions from soldier to civilian identities is a process of iterative negotiation between ex-combatants and the communities they return to. Ex-combatants that are successful in this process can build trust

in the community over time and eventually gain access to the broader platform of social cohesion that communities represent. Conversely, those ex-combatants that falter may find themselves stigmatized - pushed to the margins of society. The gender dimensions of social identity represent especially fraught territory for both male and female ex-combatants, who after prolonged participation in violent conflict may struggle to conform to traditional gender identities in their communities of return. The paradox for reintegration programming is that it puts the former members of armed groups out in the open and labels them as ex-combatants. At the same time reintegration programming must attempt to transform the societal meaning of the ex-combatant label away from that of an inherent threat, instead redefining it to denote a trustworthy and contributing member of society.

Deeply related to social identity theory is social capital theory. If social identity theory tells us about the processes by which ex-combatants negotiate identity and community membership, then social capital tells us about the importance of the networks of relationships that ex-combatants are able to build on the basis of trust and acceptance. To some extent, strong social networks in the community are a signal of the successful renegotiation of social identity. In the post-conflict settings across the GLR the state's ability to provide support to ex-combatants is often extremely limited. In addition, economic opportunities to support oneself remain extremely limited. Social networks based on shared norms of trust and reciprocity represent an indispensable source of tangible and intangible social and economic support for ex-combatants. This informal support can mean the difference between remaining on the margins of society, or moving towards inclusion in its core. In this sense social capital and social identity are inextricably interrelated. Ex-combatants must navigate the processes of negotiating social identity and community membership in order to gain access to social networks. At the same time without any social connections in the community, especially familial networks, ex-combatants' ability to engage in the process of social identity negotiation may remain limited.

Focusing more directly on the economic side of reintegration, the sustainable livelihoods framework helps us to move beyond understanding poverty as merely a lack of income. In the sustainable livelihoods framework we are able to explore a more inclusive set of resources that ex-combatants struggle to attain. Forms of financial, physical, natural, human,

and social resources are important for ex-combatants' overall ability to establish a "sustainable" economic livelihood that can cope with the volatility of the post-conflict environment. Expanding our understanding of livelihoods allows us to see the economic opportunities, as well as barriers, that exist for ex-combatants as they reintegrate. The sustainable livelihoods framework pairs well with social capital theory and social identity theory through its emphasis on the importance of social connections in informal settings for actualizing economic outcomes, and the ways in which economic outcomes can feed back into social identity and social capital. Collectively the theories of social identity, social capital, and sustainable livelihoods form the backbone of conceptual approach utilized in this doctoral thesis.

Like the conceptual approach, the methodological approach utilized in this doctoral thesis is a synthesis of diverse philosophical, conceptual, and operational approaches from across the social sciences. At the outset we take seriously the idea that reintegration is a complex phenomenon. With this in mind, we elaborate complex realism as a meta-theoretical framework that can help us understand what exactly complexity is, and the demands it creates for the scientific investigation of reintegration processes. With this meta-theoretical framework in place, we explore the origins of the TDRP-GRL Reintegration Dataset, the primary data source in this doctoral thesis. The dataset was produced through the M&E of reintegration programming in the GLR. Thus, we explore the nature and logic of M&E, as well as the political forces that shape the TDRP's approach to the M&E of reintegration programming in the GLR. In the end, we argue that we cannot consider the TDRP-GRL Reintegration dataset as a neutral or objective representation of reality, but rather that it is a constructed representation that carries with it certain inbuilt positionalities in terms of the form and scope of data. Going forward, the comparative case-study approach that we outline is a conscious attempt to shed, to the extent that it is possible, some of this inbuilt positionality.

We argue that case-study research approaches are appropriate for our inquiry into the processes of ex-combatant reintegration for two main reasons. First, case-study research is particularly attuned to the goals of understanding causal processes and the mechanisms that govern them. This is especially important considering our research focus on ex-combatant

reintegration processes. Second, case-study research seats well within the realist paradigms of science, both critical and complex varieties, which we developed as the meta-theoretical foundation of our inquiry. This analytical continuity proves especially important as we develop the idea of reintegration trajectories later in the analysis. With these arguments in place, we outline the comparative case-study strategy utilized in this doctoral thesis, including the specific method of processes tracing from quantitative data. Thus, it is the combination of complex realism, case study methods, and processes tracing that forms the backbone of our methodological approach.

5.1.3 Findings

The findings are divided into two parts. First (§5.1.3.1), the bulk of the findings surround identification of some of the social and economic processes and mechanisms by which individual ex-combatants across the GLR countries reintegrate into communities. Second (§5.1.3.2), based on the outlier case of DRC we develop the concept of country-level reintegration trajectories as a higher-order component of country-level reintegration processes across the GRL.

5.1.3.1 Processes & Mechanisms

Despite the unique trends within each of the five GLR countries, as well as the differentiated experiences of special subgroups like disabled ex-combatants and female ex-combatants, ex-combatants across the five GLR countries as a whole display a remarkably similar range of social and economic reintegration experiences. This in itself is a significant finding, as it speaks to the idea that though individual ex-combatant experiences are unique, there is a generalizable range of reintegration processes across the region. It is apparent that lengthy participation in armed groups costs ex-combatants in the GLR much in terms of missed opportunities. Indeed, many ex-combatants across the GLR, especially younger ex-combatants who are especially likely to have been mobilized as children, have missed normal opportunities for education, building an economic track record, socialization, and marriage. Thus, ex-combatants begin the processes of reintegration with significant disadvantages to their community members counterparts. However, the legacies of mobilization and wartime experience go beyond missed opportunities. Ex-combatants with

physical disabilities can never leave their wounds of war behind. Likewise, psychosocial trauma represents an enduring legacy of mobilization and wartime experiences that may serve as a barrier to ex-combatants' full reintegration into society. The dynamics of psychosocial trauma are poorly understood in the context of ex-combatant reintegration, and represent an important topic in emerging and future research.

In terms of the processes of economic reintegration in the GLR, the majority of ex-combatants have been able to get on their feet quickly, though they remain disadvantaged to community members. Ex-combatants tend to follow one, or a combination, of two distinct livelihood strategies that serve as mechanisms through which sustainable livelihoods are achieved. First, human-capital based livelihood strategies revolve around small business and skilled or unskilled wage labor. We call these human-capital based because it appears that ex-combatants' levels of education and skills training can play an important role in determining their capacities for business or labor. Those ex-combatants with more education and training that take human-capital based livelihood strategies tend to have more secure income, food, and housing, and also tend to have a stronger sense of empowerment. However, the broader features of severe underdevelopment pervasive across the post-conflict landscapes of the GLR countries mean that, despite individual capacities, there are few opportunities for small business or wage-based labor. Social connections become extremely salient accessing economic opportunities. Those ex-combatants with weaker familial and communal networks may have trouble accessing socially allocated labor opportunities or establishing a loyal customer base, and can fall into an unsustainable loop of informal subsistence borrowing (primarily from familial networks – to the extent they exist) to cover their income, food, and housing shortages. In contrast, those ex-combatants with stronger familial and community networks, who in turn are more successful in accessing human-capital based livelihood opportunities, are more likely to borrow through formal channels and to reinvest in their livelihood or overall living situation.

A second livelihood strategy consistently visible across the GLR countries is that of natural-capital based livelihood strategies. Natural-based livelihood strategies are based around small-scale farming, making access to arable land paramount. Most ex-combatants in the GLR only participate in subsistence-level agriculture, but even this is associated with stronger

food, housing, and income security, as well as empowerment. However, because of the seasonal nature of agriculture in the GLR subsistence-level agriculture is rarely a viable stand-alone livelihood pathway for the vast majority of ex-combatants in the GLR. However, those ex-combatants with greater access to arable land are more likely to be able to produce enough yield to move beyond subsistence and turn a small profit that can help carry them through the off-season. In some cases, profits can even facilitate the purchase or rent of more arable land. However, for many ex-combatants and community members alike access to arable land is socially allocated through inheritance or marriage. Thus, acceptance within familial and communal social networks is extremely important for natural-capital based livelihood pathways.

An important finding from our examination of economic reintegration is that stronger social capital, especially bridging social capital, appears to be a differentiating factor between those ex-combatants that are more successful in their livelihood strategies and those who are less so. While there are many ex-combatants that take one livelihood pathway or the other, those ex-combatants that take a combination of human-capital based and natural-capital based livelihood strategies which achieve the most “sustainable” livelihoods in the GLR. Overall ex-combatants across the GLR make quick progress in economic reintegration processes, but tend to plateau without also engaging in the slower set of social reintegration processes. In this way, the social and economic dimensions of reintegration processes are deeply intertwined. To some extent, social reintegration processes may even appear as a necessary condition for more meaningful economic reintegration.

Generally speaking, communities across the GLR have provided a positive social setting for ex-combatants to return to. Community members express less fear of ex-combatants over time and are more likely to describe them as positive contributors to the community. Despite this, social barriers for ex-combatants persist. Most ex-combatants are quick to develop a base of bridging social capital within their pre-existing family networks, to the extent that they have them. However, ex-combatants are slower to build bridging social connections within the community more broadly. Ex-combatants’ weaker bridging social capital can have direct consequences for their economic prospects. Marriage is an important mechanism through which ex-combatants expand their bonding and bridging networks.

However, residual stigma in the community means that ex-combatants face social barriers to accessing marriage. The paradox for social reintegration is that marriage is a key mechanism for expanding social capital, and in turn improving economic prospects, as well as signaling a shift in social identity within the community. However, marriage remains blocked for most ex-combatants until they can erode stigma, build acceptance, and renegotiate identity - the very thing marriage itself is a mechanism to achieving. Thus, for most ex-combatants social reintegration remains a slow process of building trust and acceptance in the community. The stakes are high, if ex-combatants are not successful in engaging in the slow processes of social reintegration the risk is that they may become cemented as a socially and economic marginalized segment of society. Due to missed opportunities for socialization in peacetime societal norms, and the additional weight of possible psychosocial trauma, some ex-combatants may be inept in interacting with communities to build trust and acceptance. On the other side of the equation, communities may be resistant to fully accepting ex-combatants due to cultural stigma.

The social barriers to reintegration are especially pronounced for female ex-combatants, who face unique identity and stigma based barriers to social reintegration. Female ex-combatants in the GLR are more likely to be mobilized as children, and particularly likely to have been mobilized through forced abduction. Wartime experiences such as missed opportunities for normal personal social and economic development, indoctrination in violent social norms, and extreme exposure to sexual violence and slavery are particularly acute for female ex-combatants. Many female ex-combatants may have been coerced into indirect roles in violent conflict as cooks, messengers, or bush wives. However, upon their return to communities these female ex-combatants may still be perceived as willing collaborators – stigmatized as untrustworthy, of no economic value, undesirable, and unmarriageable. There are also those female ex-combatants that may adopt hyper-masculine norms of violence and take an active role in combat. Upon returning to communities these female ex-combatants may be perceived as breaking traditional community norms of femininity – leaving them equally stigmatized.

As a consequence of stigma, female ex-combatants are the most socially and economically disadvantaged subgroup across the GLR countries, facing profound barriers to reintegration

and continued risk for marginalization. However, reintegration for female ex-combatants may not be as simple as a return to traditional gender roles. A dynamic may emerge during reintegration where female ex-combatants are forced to take on traditionally masculine social and economic roles (e.g. head of household or sole-breadwinner) to cope with their overall marginalization in the community, in doing so female ex-combatants may perpetuate the perception that they are violators of traditional gender norms. However, despite their absolute disadvantages some female ex-combatants may find forms of independence and empowerment thrust upon them that were not available under traditional patriarchal gender norms. Essentially, a return to traditional gender norms may not be desirable, let alone possible. For female ex-combatants reintegration may cease to be about “catching up” to female community members, but about establishing new gender identities – identities that could lead to a broader transformation of societal gender norms.

Based on the discussion of mobilization and wartime experiences, social and economic processes, and gender dimensions to reintegration, we elaborate an integrated model of the system of reintegration processes visible across the GLR countries. This model is explicitly conceptualized within the complex realist meta-theoretical approach. In a sense, the integrated model is as a map of the possible individual-level reintegration processes, and mechanisms through which ex-combatants tend to navigate these processes in the GLR. Each ex-combatant’s pre-war personal history, mobilization and wartime experience, as well as the broader social and economic structural features of the contexts into which they attempt to reintegrate coalesce to influence individual path through the landscape of possible reintegration processes. In this way, reintegration paths are the product of the dynamic, non-linear, and simultaneous interaction of multiple factors. Reintegration paths at the individual-level are variable and highly idiosyncratic - though bounded within a clear range of possible reintegration processes. Given the similar contexts of reintegration across the GLR countries, it is perhaps not so surprising that there are broad tendencies (or propensities) in the paths that ex-combatants take as they navigate reintegration processes - despite the unique reintegration experiences in the different GLR countries, specific demographic subgroups, and individual ex-combatants.

5.1.3.2 Trajectories

We devote special attention to the country case of DRC, the only GLR country experiencing continued local violence during the 2010-2012 period in the areas of data sampling. While ex-combatants in DRC do make some social and economic gains relative to the community, moving quickly towards parity, the processes of reintegration visible across the rest of the GLR countries are only happening to a very limited extent. Essentially, in the context of ongoing local violence and insecurity in Eastern DRC, ex-combatants face a range of social and economic barriers to reintegration processes. However, ex-combatants are not the only ones affected by ongoing local violence in Eastern DRC, and communities themselves face many of the same challenges of social and economic marginalization (i.e. non-integration). In fact, DRC is the only country where communities see a slight decline in social and economic situation over time. The core issue for both ex-combatants and community members is the broad sense of distrust and social fragmentation driven by the dynamics of violence, insecurity, and displacement in Eastern DRC.

The outlying case of DRC highlights the importance of overall community trajectories as a structuring force that shapes country-level reintegration processes across the GLR. In Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and RoC, communities see a trajectory of broad and continuous social and economic improvements over time. In this sense, the possible space for ex-combatants' own improvement has continued to expand. Even though ex-combatants in these countries may remain significantly disadvantaged to community members, it appears that ex-combatants in these countries have been able to root themselves in the broader upswing of post-conflict societies. In contrast, while ex-combatants in Eastern DRC "catch up" to the community quickly, the bar is set very low. Thus, ex-combatants in Eastern DRC quickly approach the roof of their possible progress in social and economic reintegration processes. This may end up meaning that ex-combatants return to settings of broader social and economic marginalization in the community – that is, they return to settings of non-integration.

Country-level reintegration has traditionally been conceptualized and evaluated in terms of parity between ex-combatants and community members. However, the contrast between

the case of DRC and the four other GLR countries highlights the importance of two other factors beyond parity alone that are important for understanding country-level reintegration - country-level ex-combatant trajectories and country-level community member trajectories. Though parity implicitly acknowledges the importance of ex-combatant and community member trajectories, after all it is a product of them, sole focus on parity can obscure as much as it reveals about country-level reintegration. To illustrate this point we develop a taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories based on ex-combatant trajectories, community trajectories, and the trajectory of parity between them. This taxonomy carries significant implications for our understanding of what successful reintegration is at a country level, as well as for our understanding of the scope of possible reintegration programming impacts.

5.2 Conclusions

This section is broken into two subsections. First (§5.2.1), we outline the analytical contributions of this doctoral thesis by situating the findings within the field of reintegration research. Second (§5.2.2), we explore the implications of the findings for future reintegration research and programming.

5.2.1 Analytical Contributions to Reintegration Research

The findings in this doctoral thesis represent a contribution to our understanding of the social and economic processes ex-combatants navigate as they reintegrate into communities across Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, and RoC. Utilizing an eclectic range theory from across the social sciences, our findings emphasize the fact that though ex-combatants' reintegration experiences are highly individual, they adhere to a regular range of trends across the GLR. There are consistent social and economic processes that are visible across the GLR countries. These processes are not linear, but rather the emergent product of the dynamic interaction of numerous individual and structural factors. Individual ex-combatants' identity, acceptance in familial and communal networks, and economic resources and opportunities are deeply interrelated. We have been able to identify specific processes and

mechanisms that connect these overlapping elements, adding some clarity to exactly what we mean when we talk about social and economic reintegration processes in the GLR. This is a significant analytical contribution to our understanding of ex-combatant reintegration.

Within the field of reintegration studies, the findings in this doctoral thesis represent a contribution to three fundamental shifts. First, the findings in this doctoral thesis contribute to a shift in focus away from the predominant emphasis in scholarly and institutional literature on reintegration programming, and is instead almost entirely focused on exploring the very reintegration *processes* that those reintegration *programs* mean to affect. This shift in focus involves, secondly, a change in the unit of analysis to the individual ex-combatant. Though the analysis in this doctoral thesis moves between exploring reintegration processes at the level of demographic subgroups, countries, and the GLR as a whole, all these levels of analysis are built upon individual-level experiences of the nearly 10,000 ex-combatants and community members surveyed in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. Thirdly, this doctoral thesis contributes a complementary methodological shift in reintegration studies towards reliance on systematic survey data. This shift in unit of analysis and mode of data collection has facilitated the comparative case-study approach utilized in this thesis. As far as we are aware, at the time of publishing no other systematic survey-based *comparative studies* of ex-combatant reintegration processes across multiple countries have been completed. In this sense, the findings in this doctoral thesis sit on the cutting edge of research in the field of ex-combatant reintegration.

Further, the comparative case-study approach utilized in this doctoral thesis leaves the findings uniquely situated in the field of reintegration research – attempting to find a balance between the general and the specific. Previous research on reintegration processes has generally prioritized either internal or external validity in their findings. For example, qualitative-based studies on the experiences of a few ex-combatants in highly specific settings have contributed much to our understanding of individual reintegration experiences in specific contexts (see e.g. Baas 2012 or Baxter & Burrall 2011). These studies have produced findings with a high level of internal validity, but that may be so specific that they are inapplicable to different individual reintegration contexts. On the opposite end of the spectrum, most quantitative-based research (see e.g. Humphreys & Weinstein 2005; 2007 or

Kaplan & Nussio 2012; 2013) have tended to focus on producing generalized findings that speak to the average experiences of a sample of ex-combatants, even if their individual experiences may differ considerably – i.e. high external validity. We have endeavored to walk a tightrope between these two poles, aiming to produce an analysis of ex-combatant reintegration processes that is internally valid for individual ex-combatants and differentiated demographic subgroups, but also externally valid in each of the five GLR countries and across the GLR as a whole. This is a lofty task. At times we have glossed over detail in favor of a more coherent narrative, and in doing so have sacrificed internal validity. Inversely, there are also times when we have sacrificed external validity in favor of differentiating processes for demographic subgroups (e.g. young ex-combatants and female ex-combatants) or for specific GLR countries (e.g. DRC). However, we view the underlying tension between the general and the specific in this doctoral thesis not as an issue to be resolved, but as a core strength inherent to our research aims and approach. We are continuously engaged in a dialogue between the individual processes of ex-combatants in the GLR countries, and what these individual processes allow us to say about the broader nature of reintegration as a social and economic phenomenon in the GLR - and perhaps even more broadly.

Integration and reintegration are phenomena that exist beyond the context of ex-combatants, and beyond the context of the GLR. If integration is a process that involves shaping identity, building social connections of trust, establishing economic stability, and finding a sense of empowerment, then other groups such as internally displaced persons, returning refugees, and members of communities in general may face these challenges. Indeed, if these are a set of more fundamental human processes, then this may help explain why we see such a consistent range of reintegration processes across the different country contexts in the GLR. While ex-combatants' individual experiences are unique, they are bounded within a range of more general human processes that exist beyond the context of ex-combatant reintegration and the GLR. This means that the findings in this doctoral thesis may have analytical value, and normative implications, beyond the specific context of the GLR. For example, the insight that gender-based disadvantages that female ex-combatants face must be understood within the broader context of patriarchal gender dynamics in the GLR is useful when thinking about gender and integration / reintegration for a variety of

groups beyond ex-combatants, and a variety of settings beyond the GLR. In turn, these generalized understanding can shape the way normative interventions, like DDR, understand and approach gender dynamics in a diverse range of contexts and settings (discussed further in §5.2.2).

In this doctoral thesis we have attempted to critically situate our data and findings within the broader political incentives of the TDRP and its approach to the M&E of reintegration programming. Indeed, the broader intellectual frameworks, political incentives, and methodological approaches taken in M&E directly influence the shape of our possible analysis in this doctoral thesis. That being said, we can use the data to highlight paradoxes in these underlying normative perspectives. This critical inquiry comes into focus through the analysis of country-level reintegration trajectories. Reintegration programming impacts have traditionally been conceptualized as being indicated by the level of parity between ex-combatants and community members. This conceptualization is deeply rooted the broader intellectual frameworks and political incentives of the TDRP. However, by pushing the idea of trajectories beyond metaphor and towards operationalized concept, we are able to argue that parity alone is insufficient for understanding country-level reintegration impacts. The trajectories of ex-combatants, community members, and the parity between them are essential metrics when attempting to understand country-level reintegration impacts. More specifically, the trajectory of community members plays a structuring role that influences ex-combatants' possible progress in reintegration processes. These findings go beyond the ubiquitous assertion that "context matters", to offer an operationalization of specifically *how* it matters. These findings carry considerable policy implications (to be discussed in §5.2.2).

Here we can step back for a moment to situate our finding within broader theoretical debates about the nature of peacebuilding. While not the true focus of this doctoral thesis, we have periodically alluded indirectly to the role of the broader "liberal peace" intellectual framework in our analysis (see e.g. §1.3.1; §2.1.2; & §3.3.2). Essentially the liberal peace thesis is the idea that economically and politically liberal democratic states are best for both domestic peace and world order. This over-arching intellectual framework has implicitly informed the way in which humanitarian interventions, international peacebuilding, and

even international wars are conceptualized and executed (see e.g. Newman *et al* 2009). In critical discourse, liberal peacebuilding has been criticized for discounting the role of local power and agency, instead imposing western values on recipient societies and creating power structures that favor the global north (see e.g. Richmond & Mac Ginty 2015, Richmond 2012, Mac Ginty 2011, or Pugh *et al* 2008). For the most critical scholars (e.g. Duffield 2008) the power asymmetries between donor and recipient countries “both in terms of political and material resources, expose external actors to accusation of neo-colonialism, paternalism and self-interested imposition” (Schroeder & Chappuis 2014: 136).

The critiques of liberal peacebuilding can be extended to DDR, and to reintegration programming more specifically. Muggah (2009) notes that reintegration programming has amounted to a sort of social engineering – implicitly open to the same critiques that the liberal peace normative framework faces of externally imposed norms and power structures that neglect local perspectives. The overt focus on reintegration programming over local reintegration processes in the literature is an embodiment of the prioritization of the operational and technical needs of external DDR stakeholder institutions. For example, as we outlined in §3.3.2, the broader political incentives of the World Bank have shaped the way that the TDRP has conceptualized just what reintegration is, how it should be approached programmatically, and thus how to go about studying it through M&E. This has a profound effect on the range of data collected, as well as the broader frameworks and perspectives through which that data is conceptualized in M&E. The risk is that through prioritizing their own liberal normative understandings and external knowledge needs, those organizations involved in the M&E of reintegration programming may risk producing knowledge that reflexively reinforce their own framing of what reintegration is, while at the same time continuing to discount local perspectives. Though M&E is part of a distinct effort to create evidence-based reintegration policy, it may be that political incentives, and the broader liberal normative ideas they reflect, shape the approach to M&E into a producer of policy-based evidence. This matters tremendously. Because reintegration is a deeply normative activity, the production of self-referential forms of knowledge can have profound consequences for how the aims of reintegration programming are understood, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of ex-combatants, as well as their families and communities – possibly shaping the broader prospect of an enduring and positive form of peace.

The shift towards reintegration *processes over programming* in this doctoral thesis is precisely an effort to shed the political incentives in M&E and to refocus, to the extent possible, on the experiences of individual ex-combatants as they navigate the social and economic processes of reintegration. However, as noted, we are still bound by the data in TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset. The data available for us to explore reintegration processes is implicitly grounded in western liberal ideas. For example, the conceptualization of linking social capital and civic participation as important parts of a functioning state are deeply rooted in western ideas of the liberal democratic state that may not reflect local power structures. Identity and belonging are conceptualized within western traditions and local perspectives are absent. The examples go on, and ultimately at no point have the perspectives of ex-combatants themselves on what they believe reintegration processes to be been included. Thus, while we have attempted to remain critical to the overarching liberal peace framework and specific political incentives of M&E in the World Bank TDRP, we can never truly escape them. In this sense, in this doctoral thesis we are complicit in the near complete neglect of local perspectives and the reproduction of elements of the international community's discursive framing of ex-combatants, the processes through which they reintegrate, and their role in post-conflict peacebuilding and development.

Perhaps most egregious, is the complete absence of the role of local politics for reintegration processes. The local social, political, and economic grievances that have driven, and resulted from, violent conflict that persist or transform in the post-conflict landscapes of the GLR are a missing piece in the analysis in this doctoral thesis. For example, a deeper understanding reintegration in some parts of Eastern DRC might require taking into account the Hutu-Tutsi socio-cultural divide in the region, and the social, political, and economic grievances over issues like land, tax, mineral resources, competing local and state power structures, and social status that are embedded within it (Autesserre 2009 & 2010). The social and economic dimensions of reintegration are just as inseparable from the political as they are from each other. If reintegration is going to be conceptualized beyond parity as part of a broader transformation of post-conflict landscapes, then local understandings of that very landscape will be essential. By neglecting the local perspectives and grievances that ex-combatants hold, we are complicit in this doctoral thesis in perpetuating the simplified logic built into

DDR programs - “overstating [ex-combatants’] violent agency in a causal chain linking their dissatisfaction and unemployment to war making” (McMullin 2013: 247). Mobilization, demobilization, and reintegration are complex social, economic, and political processes that defy this rudimentary reasoning (Baas 2012).

A final analytical contribution to reintegration research has been in the rigorous exploration of complexity; what it means for reintegration to be complex, and what that complexity means for how we go about the scientific investigation of reintegration processes. To these ends we have applied a complex realist meta-theoretical framework that has directly shaped our selection and interpretation of theory and methods, and which has ultimately played a key role in our analysis and findings. We would go as far as to argue that our analysis of country-level reintegration trajectories might not have been possible outside of the complex realist paradigm. Though challenging and abstract meta-theoretical ideas, like those in complex realism, may seem esoteric and ultimately irrelevant to normative policy issues, like the reintegration of ex-combatants, we are steadfast in the assertion that ideas matter. How we understand the act of science, and what we see when we perform the act of science, can carry meaningful consequences for the real world policy and programming. In our case, taking complexity and its consequences for science seriously can shape how we understand ex-combatant reintegration processes, and the policy and programming approaches that attempt to steer them- ultimately affecting the lives of hundreds and thousands of ex-combatants and the communities they return to in GLR.

5.2.2 Implications for Future Reintegration Research and Programming

The findings in this doctoral thesis carry immediate implications for continued reintegration policy and programming in the GLR. Through anchoring reintegration policy and programming in the individual-level reintegration processes they mean to affect, it should be possible to refine the focus of current programming and explore possibilities for new approaches. Essentially, processes and mechanisms can serve as a sort of priority list that can highlight important programming goals. For example, our elaborations of human-capital based and natural-capital based livelihood strategies as mechanisms for achieving sustainable economic livelihoods highlight a clear set of programming imperatives. Creating

approaches to reintegration programming rooted in endogenous social and economic processes would require early mapping of those processes in the planning, and even pre-planning, phases similar to the way in which scenarios for the technical and logistical components of DDR programming are run prior to planning of programming – even while conflict is still ongoing. Indeed, preplanning studies and mapping local social and economic processes could prove invaluable when the time for DDR comes, and could contribute to a more sophisticated overall planning process than the currently exists.

Human-capital based livelihood pathways confirm the importance of education and vocational training, already a central component of most, if not all, reintegration programming in the GLR. However, reintegration programming in the GLR must acknowledge that developing ex-combatants' capacities through education and vocational training are not enough - social reintegration processes play an essential role in ex-combatants' access to economic opportunities. At least in the GLR, progress in social reintegration processes may, to some degree, serve as a necessary condition for more meaningful progress in economic reintegration processes. Though generally acknowledged as an important component of reintegration, social reintegration processes have not typically received much prioritization in reintegration programming in the GLR. This may be a product of the elusive prospect of actually affecting social processes. After all, reintegration programming cannot make communities trust and accept ex-combatants. Likewise, reintegration programming cannot build familial and communal networks for ex-combatants. Ex-combatants themselves must face these endeavors.

However, what reintegration programming can potentially do is to facilitate social reintegration by creating the settings where these processes can occur. This can be done through supporting community organizations such as civic, religious, trade, labor, or sport groups with special provisions for the inclusion of ex-combatants. Community development projects that provide labor for community members and ex-combatants can also be beneficial. Furthermore, reintegration programming can focus on taking a leading role in broader transitional and / or restorative justice measures. Reintegration programming that supports all these elements could help to create the space where social reintegration processes can occur. All this is nothing new, and most of these ideas have played some role

in reintegration programming in the GLR. However, what taking the importance of social reintegration seriously would mean is to acknowledge that without engaging in social reintegration processes, programming may risk undermining its education and vocational training contributions to human-capital based livelihood pathways. Considering this, a substantial increase in the prioritization of social reintegration in terms of material and financial resources would seem an imperative. However, selling a focus on social reintegration to program donors, who prefer to fund hard and quantifiable outcomes, may represent a barrier to serious engagement.

Natural-capital based livelihood strategies, and specifically access to arable land, represent challenging terrain that reintegration programming in the GLR has typically shied away from. Instead of engaging with land access issues, reintegration programming has typically supported natural-capital based livelihoods through the provision of tools, seed, and training in agricultural techniques. The distribution of and access to arable land is a highly complex political issue that may exceed the traditional boundaries of reintegration policy and programming. Indeed, land access issues have been among the many local sources of conflict across the GLR. In effect, reintegration programming's approach to land access has been fairly hands off, essentially waiting for land access to be granted through broader land access reform initiatives, or through social allocation mechanisms as a part of social reintegration. Indeed, meddling in land access could shape as many new problems as it solves. However, considering that natural-capital based, i.e. small-scale agriculture, livelihoods are the primary economic pathway across the GLR countries, it may be that without directly engaging in land access issues reintegration programming may risk undermining its own effectiveness. Thus, it is worth playing with ideas of what creative approaches to supporting broader local and national land access reforms could look like.

It may be possible to support ex-combatants' access to land through facilitating the negotiation of access to communal land as a part of agricultural cooperatives that would benefit ex-combatants and the community more broadly. This approach could have the collateral benefit of creating space for social networking and trust building between ex-combatants and community members. However, such an approach would be highly dependent on the community's willingness to share communally distributed resources with

ex-combatants. In the absence of such goodwill from communities, another, more assertive, approach to support land access could be for national DDR commissions to lease or purchase plots of land from local communities. This land could then be used as the basis for temporary land access grants to ex-combatants - giving them the chance to get on their feet. Some ex-combatants may later be able to establish more permanent land access elsewhere, and others may move into more human-capital centered livelihood strategies. For those ex-combatants that do not secure land access elsewhere, provisions could be included for the possibility of renegotiating of land access later through individual lease, purchase, grant extension, or other local custom. In order to avoid creating perception in communities that ex-combatants are being unfairly rewarded with access to resources, it would be important to make these land access grants were accessible to landless portions of the community as well. Such an approach could give ex-combatants an economic kick-start, and could create greater incentive for communities to interact with ex-combatants in settings where communal will does not exist. Again, such an approach would also with a much larger price tag in terms of financial and organizational resources; and donors may be hesitant to fund programming that meddles in deeply divisive issues like land access - which have unavoidable political dimensions.

As reintegration programming in the GLR continues, there are numerous elements of reintegration processes that remain poorly understood and in need of continued research. Two research priorities highlighted in this doctoral thesis emerge. First, the role of psychosocial trauma in reintegration processes is poorly understood. While it is well established that those who are exposed to intense traumatic experiences during conflict may go on to face weakened social and economic performance, what is less understood is how to support mental healing and over-all psychosocial well-being. A key part of this challenge is that many psychosocial support techniques with origins in western intellectual tradition may not be applicable to the vast and varying social and cultural landscapes of the GLR. As such, continued research into local psychosocial dynamics is essential. Horn's (2013a, 2013b, 2014) work on developing psychosocial metrics anchored in local understandings of psychosocial well-being in the GLR is a noteworthy example of research on this issue. By developing the tools to understand local contexts of psychosocial well-being, work like Horn's may help provide the insights needed to shape adequate

reintegration programming approaches. There is another dimension to consider here too. It is generally acknowledged that the effects of psychosocial trauma are worst for those that experience intense trauma during the formative periods of childhood and adolescence. This is why the bulk of current psychosocial support programming is aimed at child soldiers. However, a group that shares many of the same psychosocial traumas as child soldiers, but that does not receive access to targeted support, is that of those ex-combatants who were mobilized as children but demobilized as adults (see Slegh *et al* 2014). Future research on psychosocial trauma would do well to expanding our understanding of the special challenges this demographic sub-group faces and the varieties of support necessary.

A second area that is in need of continued research is that of gender dynamics in reintegration. As is illustrated in this doctoral thesis, we know a good deal about the ways in which female ex-combatants in the GLR are disadvantaged. However, what we have a comparatively weak understanding of is the new pathways to social and economic prosperity that may exist for them. As discussed above (§5.1.3.1.), with new self-reliance thrust upon them, a return to traditional gender norms may not be possible or desirable for many female ex-combatants. Research into understanding new gender identities and opportunities that exist within them can help us to understand which female ex-combatants are successful and why, and in turn, can inform gender sensitive reintegration programming that can bolster these new identities. In this way, female ex-combatants represent an inroad to developing broader approaches to supporting the societal transformation of gender norms across the GLR and should continue to see prioritization in future research. The World Bank's LOGiCA research program is leading example of gender research in Africa. However, female identities are only half the equation, and gender focused research must also develop a deeper understanding of the role of traditional masculine identities for reintegration. Indeed, when the term gender is used in development program settings it almost automatically means female. Male gender identities are equally important, despite the lesser range of disadvantages males face compared to females. Research focused on masculine identities in reintegration is only just emerging (see e.g. Slegh *et al* 2014 or Theidon 2009), and should continue to see prioritization in the future.

While select research initiatives can play an important role in enhancing our understanding of specific issues, creating future reintegration programming explicitly anchored in processes may require developing a broader infrastructure for systematically observing and analyzing individual reintegration processes at all phases of programming life-cycles. Much of the capacity needed to execute such a large-scale and continuous study of reintegration processes already exists in monitoring & evaluation systems. However, for M&E to reach its full potential as a tool for informing reintegration programming based on individual reintegration processes it would need to be rethought as more than execution of *pro forma* impact evaluations. The monitoring side of M&E is almost wholly focused on programming elements, and typically the only place where processes come out is the evaluation side. While there are baseline and tracer studies that explore reintegration processes carried out throughout programming life-cycle, these are still primarily aimed at bolstering final impact evaluations and tend to play a limited role in program planning and adjustment. If the observation and analysis of reintegration processes was reconceived as an ongoing monitoring activity, as opposed to periodic evaluation, that played a mandated role in steering programming activities, this could help to anchor reintegration programming in the individual reintegration processes it is meant to affect. Strong information capture and analysis platforms, like the World Bank's ICRS and the UNDP's DREAM systems, could play a key role in a shift towards the continuous monitoring of reintegration processes. Such a shift would most of all require the allocation of much, much more funding to M&E activities - which typically only receive 3-7% of budgeted program resources.

However, the ultimate success of such a reconceptualization of the aim of M&E would be highly dependent on reintegration programming frameworks that were actually flexible enough to adjust course in light of evolving understandings of endogenous reintegration processes. Too often DDR is like a train departing on a fixed route to a predetermined destination. It is up to those involved in planning and executing programming to hold tight as the momentum of DDR carries them forward through, sometimes poorly understood, social, political, and economic landscapes – they grasp what they can as the train moves forward. Occasionally, unable to alter course for unseen obstacles, the train derails. No amount of knowledge of reintegration processes will improve reintegration programming if it cannot adapt to fit those processes – the opportunities and obstacles that they represent.

If a focus on reintegration processes has the potential to help to anchor programming and policy in impacts they mean to affect, then the analysis of country-level reintegration trajectories could be a part of the framework through which programming successes and failures are evaluated. Parity alone is an insufficient point around which to organize the logic of reintegration impact evaluations. Indeed, parity can obscure as much as it reveals. By contrast, the concept of trajectories can help us to contextualize ex-combatants progress, or lack thereof, within the broader trajectory of post-conflict communities. Future impact evaluations would do well to utilize and build on the taxonomy of possible country-level reintegration trajectories. Indeed, by acknowledging the limits of reintegration programming the concept of reintegration trajectories could add nuance to our understandings of programming successes and failures.

Beyond improving impact evaluations, the true potential of studying country-level reintegration trajectories revolves around the insights they offer for understanding the scope of possible programming impacts – the limits and opportunities. In line with the discussion above of shifting the study of reintegration processes to an ongoing monitoring activity, if country-level reintegration trajectories were continuously monitored through a robust M&E system from the planning phase of programming, they could play an important role in steering reintegration programming, and adjusting when necessary, based on realistic expectations of what there is space to achieve. After all, ex-combatants remain the primary beneficiaries of reintegration programming – only half of the equation of country-level trajectories. Community members, the other half, remain peripheral beneficiaries that reintegration programming is not mandated or equipped to directly support. Thus, at least half of that which makes country-level reintegration trajectories is out of the hands of reintegration programming to directly affect.

Having a continuously updated picture of reintegration trajectories throughout the programming lifecycle could do much to ground reintegration programming in a clear understanding of the opportunities and limits inherent in the broader trajectory of communities. For example, in settings where communities are on a positive trajectory, and it appears that ex-combatants are able to anchor themselves in this general upswing

(embedded transition trajectory), a focused and minimalist approach to reintegration programming may be sufficient to close parity gaps. Alternatively, if ex-combatants find themselves excluded from this broader societal upswing (ex-combatant rejection trajectory), more expansive efforts to bring ex-combatants and communities together may be necessary. In contrast, if communities are on negative trajectories (limited transition trajectories and dual decline trajectories) then more maximalist approaches to reintegration programming that incorporate broader sections of the community in addition to ex-combatants may be appropriate. Thus, early mapping of community member trajectories in the planning phase of programming could prove extremely valuable for building programming grounded understandings of the scope of possible programming impacts in a given context.

However, and this is key, even a maximalist approach to reintegration programming alone will not turn around communities on a negative trajectory. In such an instance reintegration programming would need to be seen not as a discrete effort, but as one element in a much larger investment in peacebuilding and development. However, this sort of large-scale investment has remained generally elusive in the GLR, and instead a focus on discrete programming has persisted. McMullin (2013: 242-3) quotes an MDRP official in 2010 who surmises the issue well:

“DDR is a fallback because the international community does not want to provide longer-term financial support to post-conflict states. DDR becomes development on the cheap. We’re not willing to support states sufficiently to deal with security challenges, to build a state effective in security (or welfare) provision, so DDR is the default option. And we’re willing to invest considerable sums in DDR but nothing compared to what is required to build a state that provides security and services...”

Indeed, if the international community remains unwilling to make the level of financial investment needed to support states in recovering from conflict and facing extreme development challenges, then DDR programming will face inevitable disappointments – continuously burdened with impossible expectations that discount the importance of broader peacebuilding and development initiatives for shaping the context in which they act.

This is especially relevant in the new geographies of organized violence that are rapidly emerging today.

Today DDR is fast approaching a third generation (Muggah & O'Donnell 2015). While in the past DDR programs have almost always been initiated after a comprehensive peace agreement, today DDR programs are being undertaken in highly fragmented settings of ongoing conflict in which armed groups may be linked to organized crime or international terrorism. DDR programs are having to rapidly adapt to this new role in offensive interventions, often in conjunction with counterinsurgency tactics (COIN) and emerging approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE) (for DDR and COIN see Molloy 2013; for DDR and CVE see Cockayne & O'Neil 2015). Instead of being based on purely voluntary participation, next generation DDR programs are being conceptualized as one side of a "stick and carrot" approach to military interventions in places like Somalia, Mali, and DRC (Muggah & O'Donnell 2015). The case of DRC is of special interest for us. Since 2012, the FDLR and M23 armed groups have entered DDR programming as a part of more forceful military interventions from UN forces in Eastern DRC. However, how successful these ex-combatants will be in navigating reiteration processes remains to be seen. Unless the broader communities see social and economic improvements, it may be the latest groups of ex-combatants in Eastern DRC will face a fate similar to those that have come before them – quickly reaching the roof of their possible social and economic progress as they return to communities that themselves continue to bear the weight of ongoing and local violence and insecurity in the region. That is, ex-combatants will continue to return to settings of social and economic marginalization – non-integration.

If DRC is any bellwether, then the "limited transition" type country-level trajectory presented in this doctoral thesis may represent an outline of the inherent limitations of the emerging third generation of DDR in offensive operations. Ex-combatants may reach parity with the communities they return to, but meaningful progress in social and economic reintegration processes may remain elusive if communities themselves remain economically retarded and socially fragmented. Indeed, offensive interventions may inherently represent settings of continued insecurity, and unless such offensive interventions can create the space in which social, political, and economic prosperity can emerge, it may be that the next

generation of DDR programming faces a hard road ahead. Acknowledging this point can help to root next generation reintegration programming in realistic expectations of the scope of possible programming impacts, the strategies and levels of investments needed to support individual ex-combatants in the processes of reintegrating into society - ultimately aiding states in transitioning towards sustainable peace and development.

6 Introduction to the Annexes

The two data presentation annexes that follow this introduction (§7 & §8) utilize the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset, which merges previously collected data from studies on ex-combatant reintegration in Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, RoC, and Burundi carried out by the TDRP as a part of M&E baseline and tracer studies in the 2010-2012 period.

The total sample contributions from each of the five GLR countries in this study varied considerably and are visible below in *Table 0.1*. The samples from each country were drawn with certain purposive sampling biases and all encountered barriers to achieving their ideal sample compositions. For further details on these points see the individual ex-combatant and community member studies from within each of the five GLR countries.¹ Information concerning more specific details of the demographic compositions of each sample, and certain instances where data from certain countries is excluded or missing, is available at the start of each annex (§7.1 & §8.1).

Table 0.1: Raw GLR Country Sample Contributions

	GLR Raw Sample N					
	Burundi	DRC	RoC	Rwanda	Uganda	GLR Total
Ex-Combatants	1256	3625	668	517	410	6476
Community Members	510	722	1456	510	182	3380
Subtotal	1766	4347	2124	1027	592	9856

To avoid biasing effects of the uneven sample sizes from each of the five GLR countries the data has been weighted for the analysis here. The ex-combatant and community member samples, respectively, from each GLR country have been weighted evenly. It appears that ex-combatants experience a relatively homogenous set of reintegration processes, and as such the data weighting rarely makes a difference to the analysis of overall trends in the region. However, in several key fields it has proved an essential component of an accurate and nuanced analysis.

¹ For Burundi see World Bank (2011a); for RoC see World Bank (2011c); for Rwanda see World Bank (2012); and for Uganda see World Bank (2011d).

6.1 Structure of the Annexes

There are two annexes presented here. The first annex (§7) explores the social and economic processes through which ex-combatants across the GLR countries reintegrate. The second annex (§8) explores community members' social and economic positions, and has two roles. First, community members serve as a group which to compare ex-combatants in an effort to better glean their unique social and economic experiences. Second, to explore community members' perceptions of ex-combatants as they attempt to reintegration.

The analysis in the two annexes examine the following areas:

Demographics:

Information pertaining to a standard range of demographic factors such as age, gender and disability in addition to marital status and levels of educational achievement and vocational skills.

Housing, Land, Livestock, and Food Security:

Analysis of current living situation including housing type and tenure, access to arable land and measures of general food security

Economic Issues:

Analysis of current economic status as well as actual and perceived vulnerability and outlook for the future. In addition, further analysis on income, savings, access to credit, and economic associations is undertaken and a special focus on the dimensions gender and disability in economic reintegration is explored.

Social Capital:

Analysis of the dynamic components of social capital including: sociability; trust and solidarity; social cohesion and inclusion; empowerment; and social change.

DDR Experiences:

Analysis of ex-combatant and community member experiences of the initial phases of ex-combatants' reinsertion and return to the community – including initial levels of trust, acceptance and stigma.

6.2 Data Limitations and Challenges

This study has faced a range of challenges revolving around comparing data from the different survey formats, sample compositions, and contexts for analysis across the five GLR countries. In general these challenges create a range of limitations that fall into two categories: (i) the compatibility of survey data collected from across the GLR countries; and (ii) the comparability of the different reintegration contexts across the GLR countries.

6.2.1 Individual GLR Country Survey Comparability

The format of the GLR ex-combatant and community member surveys has been a process of iterative learning and refinement. Rwanda was the first GLR country in which the survey format was tested and developed. The data and learning that came out of that original format then influenced the design of a consolidated second format that has seen customization to the specific M&E needs in Burundi, Uganda, DRC and RoC –however its base components have remained consistent since this consolidated second format. In effect the data that exists in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset for Rwanda covers a similar range of topics as the second format used in the rest of the GLR countries, but often is often formatted in such a way that the data from Rwanda is not directly comparable to that from the other GLR countries. For this reason including Rwanda in the full range of analysis in this study has proved challenging.

The survey data in the TDRP-GLR Reintegration Dataset for community members in Burundi has also created some issues. In Burundi, community members were surveyed using a shortened version of the complete survey format – further; this format did not include a capture of basic demographic details. Due to this “missing data” including community members from Burundi in the full range of analysis in this study has proved challenging.

Because of these two factors, data formatting differences in Rwanda surveys and missing data in Burundi community member surveys, it can at times appear as though these annexes approach becoming a comparative study of only DRC, RoC, and Uganda. Further, at times there is extended analysis nuancing specific points in the survey data drawn specifically from Uganda. This does not reflect an overt focus on Uganda, but is a product of the fact that the range of survey data collected in Uganda is the most expansive – and in many instances in the only GLR country with data available to make such further nuances in data analysis. This makes sense, as the Uganda survey format is the most recent iteration used in this study and holds the most comprehensive range of data.

There are also two issues of sample validity that limit the analysis in the annexes. First, there is no analysis of ex-combatants under the age of 18 in the annexes. Across the total sample of ex-combatants from across the five GLR countries there were 326 respondents under the age of 18 (300 ex-combatants and 26 community members). These 326 have been omitted from the analysis in the annexes for two main reasons: (i) the systematic capture of information pertaining to the specific dynamics of reintegration facing minors was absent from the surveys used across the GLR countries – with the exception of DRC, where 291 of the total 300 ex-combatants under the age were sampled; and (ii) the validity issues that the small sample of ex-combatants under the age of 18 (again, almost entirely from DRC) make meaningful and valid comparative analysis infeasible.

Data along health and disability demographics also presents challenges in the total GLR community member sample. Health and disability data for community members were only collected in Rwanda and Uganda – absent from Burundi, DRC and RoC. However, even the data from Rwanda and Uganda is limited as only n=58 disabled community members were sampled (n=49 from Rwanda and n=9 from Uganda). Thus, drawing valid comparisons between these two samples of 49 and 9 disabled community members is judged as infeasible – furthermore, comparing these 58 disabled community members to the 454 disabled ex-combatants in this study presents further issues for validity. For these reasons analysis of community members along the lines of disability will be absent from the second annex (§8).

6.2.2 Individual GLR Country Context Comparability

While the conflicts that have occurred in the GLR countries are deeply intertwined, the contexts in which they have occurred, and in turn the contexts to which ex-combatants reintegrate into, are fundamentally unique. The idiosyncrasies of the GLR country contexts create challenges for comparing reintegration processes at a fine-grained level. For this reason, a number of areas have been judged as outside the scope of this study – possibly warranting focused inquiry on their own.

In in the two annexes there is no analysis of reintegration processes differentiated along the lines of armed group. There have been dozens of armed ground that have partaken in TDRP facilitated reintegration programming across the GLR. Differentiating our analysis here would increase the scope of analysis by an order of magnitude, and is judged as outside the bounds of this study. One dimension that future studies could focus on is the range of reintegration processes that members of regular versus irregular armed groups go through – if they differ and to what extent.

In this study there is no direct analysis of the reintegration processes that ex-combatants encounter by subnational geographic region. This is an important dimension to understanding varying reintegration processes at a national-level. However, similar to as with analysis by armed group, taking this frame at the regional-level would increase the scope analysis by an order of magnitude, and is thus judged as outside the bounds of this study.

In this study there is no systematic periodization of the reintegration processes occurring across the GLR countries. While the data analyzed in these annexes was all collected in a similar period of time between 2010 and 2012, questions in the surveys refer to events (such as demobilization) that have occurred in various proximity to the time of sampling. Due to the unique dynamics of reintegration in each of the GLR countries a synchronization of period specific questions is largely judged as infeasible for grain of analysis in this study.

Lastly, this study does not include a systematic comparison of DDR programming components in the GLR countries. The focus of this study is the processes of ex-combatant reintegration occurring in the GLR countries as distinct from the range of policy and programming aiming to affect these processes in each country. Programming components are relevant for understanding these processes and they are brought in for contextualization where necessary. However, there is no systematic capture as this is outside the fundamental focus of this study.

7 Ex-Combatant Reintegration Annex

7.1 Demographics

The following is a capture of the demographics of the ex-combatant sample for this comparative study. The demographics reflected in the sample here are not those of the overall ex-combatant populations in each of the five GLR countries at the time of study, but rather reflect certain purposive sampling biases. For more information about the specific sampling methods and decisions in each of the GLR countries please see the individual survey studies for ex-combatants in each of the five GLR countries.²

The unweighted ex-combatant sample contributions from the five GLR countries for the total sample of 6,475 ex-combatants in this study is as follows: Burundi comprises 19.4% (n=1,256) of the total raw sample, DRC 56% (n=3,625), Republic of Congo 10.3% (N=667), Rwanda 8% (N=517) and Uganda 6.3% (N=410). However, in an effort to create valid cross-country analysis of ex-combatants across the GLR, and especially for comparison to the community member sample, which contains proportionally different sample contributions from the five GLR countries, the raw sample contributions from each country have been weighted evenly.

Integrating the full range of data from Rwanda has proved challenging in this study. The evolving format for the individual GLR country surveys has been a continual process of learning and iterative refinement. The Rwanda survey format is the starting point from which surveys evolved in RoC, Burundi, Uganda, and DRC. So, while data content in the Rwanda surveys is very much in line with the rest of the GLR countries, much of the specific question formatting is often different enough that a direct comparison of data is not feasible. Such instances are explained in footnotes.

Collectively the data restrictions present in this study of ex-combatants across the GLR countries mean that the task of this study is to present a mosaic of findings. Up close, the

² For Burundi see World Bank (2011a); for RoC see World Bank (2011c); for Rwanda see World Bank (2012); and for Uganda see World Bank (2011d).

pieces of the picture are not always complete and data is not always congruent. Nonetheless, there are clear data trends that represent a distinct narrative of ex-combatant reintegration across the GLR countries.

Table 1: Ex-Combatants - GLR Country Demographics

	Country					
	Burundi	DRC	RoC	Rwanda	Uganda	GLR Total
Male	91.6%	86.1%	91.0%	97.5%	74.6%	88.1%
Female	8.4%	13.9%	9.0%	2.5%	25.4%	11.9%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age 18-30	65.4%	39.4%	31.3%	22.6%	38.6%	39.5%
Age 31-40	26.9%	29.0%	40.6%	53.4%	24.6%	35.0%
Age Over 40	7.7%	31.6%	28.1%	24.0%	36.9%	25.6%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Disabled	7.8%	4.6%	4.7%	24.1%	17.1%	10.9%
Not Disabled	92.2%	95.4%	95.3%	75.9%	82.9%	89.1%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Of the total sample of ex-combatants 88.1% were male and 11.9% were female. While across all individual countries the disparity of representation of males and females was high, this is most true in Rwanda where only 2.5% of the country sample was female. The sample contribution from Uganda was comprised of the largest proportion of women (25.4%). The remaining countries fell closer to the overall sample composition.³ Table 1 above gives a cross-tabulated breakdown of the age, sex and disability of the ex-combatant sample from each of the five GLR countries.⁴

In the total sample of ex-combatants 10.9% were categorized as disabled, the remaining 89.1% were categorized as not disabled. Most GLR countries were composed of a similar proportion of disabled ex-combatants, though Rwanda and Uganda had higher representations of disabled ex-combatants – 24.1% and 17.1% respectively. However, these

³ It is important to note that a portion of ex-combatants never participate in formal reintegration programming. This is especially true of female ex-combatants who are hyperaware of the heavy stigmatization that can accompany self-identification as an ex-combatant. As such, the actual proportion of female ex-combatants in the GLR is likely higher than the figures above suggest.

⁴ For the purposes of this comparative study, the demographic breakdown of the Ex-combatant sample by armed group will not be included for systematic analysis. The contexts of the different armed groups within the five GLR countries are seen as unique to each country context thus, while important units of analysis within each GLR country, not systematically comparable across the GLR countries. Further details on the Ex-combatant sample by armed group within each country are available in some of the five GLR country survey reports.

higher compositions of disabled ex-combatants may be an artifact of the process by which disability categorizations were combined across the total sample.⁵

Of the total sample of ex-combatants 39.5% are between the ages of 18 and 30, 35% are between 31 and 40 years of age, and 25.6% are over the age of 40.⁶ Most of the GLR countries' age compositions follow the trend of the total sample split, with two notable exceptions. Burundi's age composition is heavily skewed towards those aged 18-30 (65.4%), and Rwanda is particularly heavy in the 31-40 years of age category (53.4%). In the case of Rwanda this age composition is likely a result of ex-combatants prolonged time spent participating in conflict – 50.9% of ex-combatants in Rwanda having spent between 10 and 20 years participating in conflict.

The aspects of the lives of ex-combatants discussed in the following sections are key indicators of the process that ex-combatants experience in accessing pathways to reintegration across the GLR countries. Within the following sections of these annexes age, gender and disability dimensions to these processes to reintegration are explored to extract key trends across the GLR countries. The family and community, education and training, and addressing health needs are all seen as key pathways to reintegration of ex-combatants that will temper this discussion.

7.1.1 From Mobilization to Demobilization

The following is a brief snapshot of the ex-combatants' time with armed groups and the ways in which pertinent demographic details play in their experiences. Indeed, understanding the dynamics of the pathways into mobilization can add considerable nuance

⁵ Criteria for disability varied slightly from country to country across the GLR. To create a consistent categorization of disabled ex-combatants across the GLR countries, disability status was computed using the disability criteria from the Ugandan Amnesty Commission which included: (i) amputees; (ii) blind and partially blind; (iii) paralysis and partial paralysis; and (iv) body and head injury.

⁶ Across the total sample of ex-combatants from across the five GLR countries there were 300 under the age of 18. These 300 have been omitted from the analysis in this study for two main reasons: (i) the systematic capture of information pertaining to the specific dynamics of reintegration facing minors was absent from the surveys used across the GLR countries – with the exception of DRC, where 291 of the total 300 ex-combatants under the age were sampled; and (ii) the validity issues that the small sample of ex-combatants under the age of 18 (again, almost entirely from DRC) make meaningful comparative analysis infeasible.

to our understanding of the specific challenges that ex-combatants can face at the time of demobilization.

While obtaining reliable information about ex-combatants’ age at mobilization, especially younger ex-combatants who may have been only adolescents, is a challenging endeavor we can pull out general trends for comparison across the GLR countries. The following data should be treated with caution and be regarded as a rough picture rather than concrete truth of age of mobilization in the GLR countries.⁷ The average age at mobilization was 23.8 across the GLR countries, however this figure masks considerable nuance in the age at mobilization.⁸ There are two steps to understanding age at mobilization more deeply. First is to understand the proportion of ex-combatants mobilized in different age brackets and then to understand the average age at mobilization within each bracket – this data is displayed below in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Ex-Combatant Age at Mobilization⁹

	Age at Mobilization							
	Mobilized Under Age 18		Mobilized Age 18-30		Mobilized Age 31-40		Mobilized Over Age 40	
	Proportion Of Sample	Average Age	Proportion Of Sample	Average Age	Proportion Of Sample	Average Age	Proportion Of Sample	Average Age
Male	32.30%	13.83	48.40%	22.64	10.50%	34.71	8.70%	51.71
Female	40.10%	13.58	30.90%	22.74	11.80%	35.07	17.30%	50.11
Age 18-30	64.10%	13.75	35.90%	20.86	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Age 31-40	8.80%	15.09	78.40%	23.41	12.90%	33.41	XXX	XXX
Age Over 40	3.90%	15.52	30.30%	24.01	27.00%	35.51	38.80%	51.34
Disabled	30.10%	13.39	41.50%	22.67	8.30%	34.02	20.10%	51.18
Not Disabled	33.60%	13.82	46.60%	22.65	10.80%	34.79	9.00%	51.39
Burundi	35.20%	14.53	59.30%	21.85	4.30%	33.97	1.20%	45.01
DRC	43.00%	13.96	48.10%	22.21	7.00%	34.53	1.90%	48.69
RoC	32.40%	13.3	46.00%	23.36	13.30%	34.8	8.30%	56.07
Uganda	22.00%	12.87	29.80%	24.08	18.80%	35.02	29.50%	50.43
GLR Average	33.40%	13.79	46.10%	22.66	10.60%	34.76	9.90%	51.34

The largest proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries (46.1%) was between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of mobilization (on average aged 22.6). Indeed, with all GLR countries the 18-30 group is the largest. However, it is important to note the sizable number of ex-combatants who were mobilized under the age of 18 (38.9%) and who were very

⁷ For example, in Uganda 41.95% of ex-combatants were unsure of their age at the time of mobilization. However, working backwards from the current age of ex-combatants we can subtract away the time since demobilization and the time spent with armed groups to calculate an approximate age at mobilization for all ex-combatants.

⁸ Rwanda is excluded from all findings on age at mobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁹ In this table the use of XXX indicates a logically impossible field.

young at the time (on average at age 13.79) – a factor that can have a profound impact on their psychosocial wellbeing and in turn prospects for reintegration. The under 18 category was second largest within all GLR countries and in some almost even with the 18-30 category – for example in DRC where 43% of ex-combatants were aged under 18 at the time of mobilization (on average 13.79) and 48.1% were aged 18-30 (on average 22.21).¹⁰

Mobilization into violent conflict at an adolescent age can have a profound impact on the social and psychological development of individuals as they mature and, in turn, carry considerable weight for their ability to interact with communities upon their return. While data on abduction versus voluntary mobilization was not available for comparison across the GLR countries, this data may have added considerable nuance in exploring further gendered dynamics of mobilization. For example in Uganda, the only GLR country in which such data is available, where abduction is a well-known tactic for recruitment and mobilization 92.9% of females sampled between the age of 18 and 30 reported being abducted. Though as a counterpoint, there is reason to be cautious to such data. There are enormous social pressures at work and ex-combatants may fear stigma, retribution, or denial of amnesty as a result identifying themselves as willing participants in conflict – possibly inflating the proportion of ex-combatants that report abduction.

As illustrated in Table 2, it appears that there are certain gendered dynamics to the age of mobilization. Across the GLR sample, female ex-combatants were more frequently mobilized under the age of 18 (40.1%, average age 13.58) when compared to male ex-combatants (32.3%, average age 13.83), and with decreasing frequency as the age at mobilization increases – 64.1% between the ages of 18 and 30, 8.8% between the ages of 31 and 40, and 3.9% over the age of 40. This trend holds true in all of the GLR countries except for the Republic of Congo in which the pattern of age at mobilization follows more closely to the male ex-combatants' trend in which the majority of ex-combatants are mobilized between the ages of 18 and 30. Though the exact reason for this gendered dimension to the age of

¹⁰ Disaggregation of the average age at mobilization in Uganda by armed group provides some necessary nuance here. The average age at mobilization for members of the LRA in Uganda, known for their strategy of youth abduction for mobilization, was 18.38 years. This stands in contrast to the ADF who had an average age of mobilization at 31.02 years, West Nile Bank Front with 41.34 years, and UNRF with 42.18 years. Further examination reveals that 51.3% of LRA ex-combatants were mobilized under the age of 18, with an average age of 12.78.

mobilization is unclear, it is likely related to the benefits of mobilizing child soldier from an armed group's perspective – though child soldiers may be less effective soldiers in the traditional sense they are also easier to intimidate, indoctrinate, and misinform than adults.¹¹

Not surprisingly current age showed a positive correlation to age at mobilization – meaning that on average the older an ex-combatant was at the age of mobilization the older they were at the time of sampling. Disability did not show any relationship to age at mobilization.

Across the GLR countries the average number of years ex-combatants had spent with armed groups varied. At a cross-country level ex-combatants in the GLR countries spent an average of 7.08 years with armed groups. DRC and Rwanda stand out on the high end of this cross-country average with 11.16 years and 9.09 years spent with armed groups on average (respectively). Ex-combatants in Uganda spent the least amount of time on average with armed groups (4.38 years). A full table of the average time spent with armed groups is presented in Table 3. Drawing from DRC and Rwanda we can observe that those ex-combatants that were members of national armed forces (FAC in DRC and RPA in Rwanda) spent longer on average participating in conflict than those in other irregular armed groups (mean 18.99 years vs. 5.27 years in DRC and mean 12.57 vs. 8.15 years in Rwanda).¹²

The number of years spent with armed groups displayed a gendered trend across the GLR countries. Female ex-combatants spent a lower average number of years (mean = 4.95 years) with armed groups compared to their male ex-combatant counterparts (mean = 7.37 years). This trend holds across the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda – in which female ex-combatants spent on average slightly more years (mean = 4.84 years) than their male ex-combatant counterparts (mean = 4.22 years). A more detailed breakdown of years spent with armed groups across cross-cutting demographic lines can be found below in Table 3.

¹¹ See Beber and Blattman (2013).

¹² The caseload of ex-combatants in Uganda and RoC consisted almost wholly of ex-combatants from irregular armed groups (such as the LRA and ADF in Uganda and the Ninjas in RoC), thus a valid comparison of their average time spent with armed groups compared to national armed forces is not feasible here.

Table 3: Ex-Combatant Average Years Spent with Armed Group

	Average Years with Armed Group					
	Burundi	DRC	RoC	Rwanda	Uganda	GLR Total
Male	6.4	12.12	4.55	9.11	4.22	7.37
Female	4.67	5.19	4.27	8.08	4.84	4.95
Age 18-30	5.01	4.3	4.62	8.51	5.88	5.4
Age 31-40	7.14	8.48	4.77	8.56	3.79	6.77
Age Over 40	13.85	24.74	4.17	10.81	3.27	10.58
Disabled	8.43	12.57	4.5	13.24	6.41	9.4
Not Disabled	6.07	11.09	4.54	12.48	3.96	7.27
Country Average	6.25	11.16	4.55	9.09	4.38	7.08

Again, as with age at time of mobilization, current age showed a positive correlation to years spent with armed groups at a cross-country level. Though RoC and Uganda stood apart from this trend – in Uganda there was even a negative relationship between current age and average years spent with armed groups. Those ex-combatants who were categorized as disabled spent slightly longer on average (mean = 9.40 years) compared to their non-disabled counterparts (mean = 7.27 years).

On average across the GLR countries it had been 4.05 years since ex-combatants were formally demobilized at the time of sampling. In Uganda the time since demobilization was about half the cross-country average (1.87 years) while in RoC it was roughly twice the cross-country average (8.07 years).¹³ It is important to remember that some ex-combatants may spontaneously self-demobilize during conflict, leaving behind their armed groups. In addition, after the cessation of violence, ex-combatants may leave armed groups and return to their home community, or another place, on their own initiative. A considerable amount of time may pass between these ‘informal’ demobilizations and the point at which ex-combatants take part in a formal demobilization process. Being able to measure this gap may prove an important indicator in assessing dynamics of return within the GLR countries. Unfortunately, while there is data on formal demobilization across the GLR countries, there is only data in Uganda on both informal and formal demobilization collected – 42.1% having informally demobilized as much as a decade or more before participating in formal demobilization processes. These findings however are most likely relevant to the specific dynamics of return and reintegration in Uganda where ex-combatants escape from armed

¹³ Though examination of trends by armed group is not included in the analysis here, it is worth noting that in Uganda membership to different armed groups appeared to play an important role in the time since demobilization and could serve as a valuable line of inquiry for more focused analysis within each of the individual GLR countries.

groups (primarily the LRA) and return directly to their communities and then retroactively applying for amnesty, reinsertion assistance and possibly attain further referral to reintegration programming – often with a lengthy time-lapse. In contrast, other reintegration programs in the GLR leave few opportunities for accessing reintegration benefits without participating in a formal demobilization process and a fairly linear supply of reinsertion and reintegration assistance upon their return.¹⁴

7.1.2 Marriage and Household

Marriage dynamics are an important indicator of ex-combatants' basic social standing. Indeed, marriage dynamics can tell us much about ex-combatants' ability to leverage familial, economic, and social networks towards the attainment of marriage and in turn their ability redouble their engagement in these social structures through marriage – all indicators of a strong footing in the community.

Across the GLR countries there is a clear trend of increasing marriage and cohabitation rates among ex-combatants at three time points: before demobilization, at demobilization, and at sampling. As is visible in *Table 4*, the proportion of ex-combatants that were married across the GLR countries increased from 33.9% prior to demobilization, to 36% at demobilization, and 46.8% at the time of sampling.¹⁵ These increases in marriage (and cohabitation) rates among ex-combatants are matched by an even clearer decline in the proportions that were single and or never married.

There are two noteworthy trends in regards to the trajectory of ex-combatant marital status with the specific GLR countries. First, in RoC the proportion of married ex-combatants at all three time points was much lower than the GLR cross-country average (6.7% prior to demobilization, 5.6% at demobilization, and 5.6% at the time of sampling), instead the decrease in the proportion of ex-combatants that were single / never married were absorbed into the category 'living together' (47.1% prior demobilization, 60.1% at

¹⁴ For a thorough examination of trends of formal and informal demobilization in Uganda see World Bank (2011d).

¹⁵ Rwanda is excluded from findings on marital status before demobilization and at demobilization due to lack of comparable data. In addition, Burundi is excluded from findings on marital status at demobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

demobilization, and 75.3% at the time of sampling). Second, Rwanda is the only GLR country in which ex-combatants are more frequently married than community members at the time of sampling (77.4% vs. 46.9%) – a point that will receive attention in the summary of the ex-combatant portion of this study.

There are certain demographic trends that can be extracted regarding marriage. Concerning gender, female ex-combatants are less likely to be married at all time points than male ex-combatants. As is visible in *Table 4*, this disparity between female and male ex-combatants grows from 7.7% prior to demobilization, to 13.2% at the time of demobilization, and 24.2% at the time of sampling. This growing disparity between male and female ex-combatants can be explained in part by looking at the proportion of female-combatants who were divorced, separated, or widowed compared to male ex-combatants – female ex-combatants are the most likely to be divorced, separated, or widowed at any time period.

Essentially it appears that while male ex-combatants' marital trajectory across the three time points is primarily one of moving from single / never married to married or living together, female ex-combatants by contrast see only very marginal increases in marriage and cohabitation – instead their decreases in the single / never married category are absorbed into the divorced or separated, or widowed categories. These differing trajectories flag female ex-combatants across the GLR countries as facing clear barriers to accessing marriage and in turn the primary social unit for reintegration, the family, leaving them at increased risk for social isolation and marginalization. It is likely that stigma plays a core role in female ex-combatants very shallow trajectory towards marriage compared male ex-combatants.¹⁶ While male and female ex-combatants alike carry the burden of stigma and distrust as perpetrators of violence, female ex-combatants can face the additional cultural stigma of having stepped out of traditional gender roles.

¹⁶ For a good introduction to the range of gender specific challenges that female ex-combatants can face see Coulter *et al* (2008).

Table 4: Ex-Combatant Marital Status at Three Time Points¹⁷

	Marital Status Before Demobilization				
	Married	Living together	Divorced or Separated	Widowed	Single/Never married
Male	35.00%	15.10%	1.00%	0.30%	48.60%
Female	27.30%	14.30%	4.50%	9.10%	44.80%
Age 18-30	14.40%	8.10%	0.60%	0.40%	76.50%
Age 31-40	38.80%	23.20%	2.10%	0.70%	35.30%
Age Over 40	65.00%	18.60%	2.30%	4.80%	9.20%
Disabled	36.10%	10.10%	1.30%	3.10%	49.40%
Not Disabled	33.80%	15.30%	1.50%	1.40%	47.90%
Burundi	29.90%	4.50%	0.20%	0.10%	65.30%
DRC	45.50%	7.40%	2.00%	1.50%	43.60%
Republic of Congo	6.70%	47.10%	3.40%	1.30%	41.50%
Uganda	51.20%	3.70%	0.70%	3.40%	40.90%
GLR Average	33.90%	15.00%	1.60%	1.60%	48.00%
	Marital Status at Demobilization				
Male	38.20%	24.10%	3.80%	1.30%	32.70%
Female	25.00%	15.00%	11.30%	19.10%	29.60%
Age 18-30	15.70%	17.70%	4.70%	1.70%	60.30%
Age 31-40	38.50%	32.90%	5.60%	2.00%	21.00%
Age Over 40	60.70%	19.70%	5.10%	9.60%	4.90%
Disabled	30.60%	13.10%	7.60%	12.20%	36.50%
Not Disabled	36.70%	23.40%	4.80%	3.30%	31.80%
DRC	51.20%	8.60%	3.90%	1.90%	34.40%
Republic of Congo	5.60%	60.10%	5.00%	3.10%	26.20%
Uganda	48.40%	2.70%	6.40%	7.40%	35.10%
GLR Average	36.00%	22.70%	5.10%	4.20%	32.10%
	Marital Status at Sampling				
Male	55.90%	23.30%	2.90%	1.20%	16.60%
Female	31.70%	17.60%	13.00%	16.30%	21.30%
Age 18-30	40.00%	21.50%	4.00%	1.10%	33.40%
Age 31-40	60.90%	27.30%	4.10%	1.60%	6.10%
Age Over 40	66.90%	18.40%	4.70%	8.10%	2.00%
Disabled	57.70%	16.50%	6.10%	7.70%	12.10%
Not Disabled	51.00%	23.90%	4.00%	2.60%	18.50%
Burundi	60.00%	11.50%	0.80%	0.60%	27.00%
DRC	59.90%	9.30%	4.10%	2.70%	24.00%
Republic of Congo	5.60%	75.30%	7.40%	2.80%	9.00%
Rwanda	77.40%	13.00%	1.70%	0.60%	7.40%
Uganda	60.70%	5.90%	6.80%	8.30%	18.30%
GLR Average	46.80%	25.10%	4.80%	3.60%	19.60%

Turning now to age demographics, at all time points age shows a positive relationship to the likelihood of being married and accordingly a negative relationship to the likelihood of being single / never married (as is visible in *Table 4*). While those aged 18-30 are the least likely age demographic to be married at all time points they have the most positive trajectory towards marriage across age demographics – there is a 25.6% increase in the rate of marriage between prior to demobilization and the time of sampling among those aged 18-30 versus a 22.1% increase in those 31-40, and only 1.9% increase in those over the age of 40. So while it appears that younger ex-combatants face considerable challenges in accessing

¹⁷ Rwanda is not calculated into the cross-country statistics for marital status at the time of sampling. Essentially, even with the sample weighting, including Rwanda in cross-country figures on marital status at the time of sampling can make it appear as though across the entire GLR ex-combatants marry more often than community members – even though Rwanda is the only country in which this is actually true.

reintegration pathways through marriage compared to other age demographics, their rate of change towards the near stagnant levels of marriage among those over 40 is the greatest – giving credence to the idea that one dimension to younger ex-combatants’ lag behind their elder peers, struggling to make up for time lost in conflict.

As seen above divorce was low across the GLR countries, however of those who were divorced 26% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries said that their divorce was related to their ex-combatant status.¹⁸ When asked to explain more specifically the most common responses were: (i) Stigma or the influence of the spouses family (19%); (ii) the emotional abuse and fear that spouses married with ex-combatants faces; (iii) lack of tools or money. Female ex-combatants most notably cited that they were in the bush with their spouse, but escaped leaving them behind (29.9%).

On average across the GLR countries, 13.5% of ex-combatants who were married had a spouse who either was then, or had at one point been a combatant.¹⁹ The GLR countries deviating notably from this trend were RoC, in which a slightly higher proportion of ex-combatants had a spouse who was or had at one point been a combatant (24%), and Rwanda where rates of marriage with other ex-combatants were considerably lower (3%). The proportion of ex-combatants with a current or past spouse who is or was a combatant was fairly even across all demographics except for sex. Female ex-combatants were vastly more likely to currently have, or at one point have had, a spouse who was a combatant (53%) compared to male ex-combatants (9.1%). There are two dynamics which likely play some role in these findings: (i) in conflict where the proportion of females to males is relatively low it may be that female combatants marry at a higher rate than male combatants and (ii) upon return to the community female ex-combatants may face higher barriers (e.g. stigma) to marriage with non ex-combatants (see below).

Across the GLR countries, ex-combatants’ attitudes towards marrying another ex-combatant varied considerably – in DRC as low as 25% would consider marrying another ex-combatant, and as high as 54.2% in Uganda. However, on average 32.2% of ex-combatants across the

¹⁸ Burundi is excluded from findings on ex-combatant divorce due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁹ Burundi is excluded from findings on combatant status of spouse due to lack of directly comparable data.

GLR countries would consider marrying another ex-combatant.²⁰ Concurrent to the rate at which ex-combatants marry other ex-combatants outlined above, attitudes towards marrying ex-combatants in the future display a distinctly gendered dynamic – 50.2% of female ex-combatants across the GLR countries would consider marrying an ex-combatant versus 29.8% of males.

When asked to explain negative attitudes towards marrying another ex-combatant respondents most commonly cited the misbehavior of ex-combatants (22.7%) or stigma related to the perceived criminality of ex-combatants (16.7%).²¹ Uganda was the only GLR country that departed from this trend – as stigma was only cited by 3.1% of ex-combatants and instead risk associated with living with ex-combatants (12.5%) was cited most commonly. Of female ex-combatants that would not consider marrying an ex-combatant, 28.4% cited stigma due to their perceived criminality as an explanation, compared to 15.6% of male ex-combatants.

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants most commonly saw themselves as the household head (52.8%) – responsible for household food and finances – followed by those who saw themselves and their spouse as responsible (19%) and those who saw only their spouse as responsible (6.7%).²² Across demographic lines there are clear trends: (i) female ex-combatants are less than half as likely as male ex-combatants to cite themselves as the household head (25.4% vs. 57%); (ii) female ex-combatants are vastly more likely to cite solely their spouse as the household head than male ex-combatants (21.9% vs. 4.4%); and (iii) both disabled ex-combatants and those aged 18-30 are far more likely to cite their parents and grandparents than non-disabled and other age demographic ex-combatants (14% of disabled vs. 5.7% of non-disabled, and 15.3% of those aged 18-30 vs. 1.3% of those 31-40 and 0.5% of those over 40).

²⁰ Burundi is excluded from findings on attitudes towards marrying an ex-combatant due to lack of directly comparable data.

²¹ Burundi is excluded from findings on explanations of attitudes towards marrying an ex-combatant due to lack of directly comparable data.

²² In Burundi, DRC, and RoC inquiry about household head as constituted by who was primarily responsible for household finance and food was asked in one question, whereas in Uganda these were two separate questions (finance and food respectively). However, due to the high correlation between the two answers in Uganda (over 80%) they were recoded as one question for direct comparability with the other GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from findings on household food and finance responsibility due to lack of directly comparable data.

7.1.3 Literacy, Education, and Vocational Training

Levels of literacy, educational achievement, and vocational training are important indicators of ex-combatants’ basic life chances and their ability to engage with educational and vocational structures, to the extent they exist, in the different GLR country contexts and to leverage the dividends of this engagement towards further economic and social opportunities – in the end solidifying their footing in the community.

Table 5: Ex-Combatant Literacy

	Literacy		
	Neither Read nor Write	Read Only	Read and Write
Male	17.30%	8.60%	74.10%
Female	36.90%	6.30%	56.80%
Age 18-30	22.60%	7.80%	69.60%
Age 31-40	15.60%	8.20%	76.10%
Age Over 40	20.60%	8.40%	70.90%
Disabled	27.40%	10.20%	62.40%
Not Disabled	19.40%	8.10%	72.60%
Burundi	11.90%	4.20%	83.90%
DRC	13.10%	8.50%	78.50%
Republic of Congo	18.70%	13.10%	68.30%
Uganda	37.00%	7.40%	55.60%
GLR Average	20.10%	8.30%	71.60%

While literacy was generally high across the ex-combatant samples in the GLR countries (71.6 % could read and write), female ex-combatants had the lowest literacy rate (56.8%) and were most likely to be completely illiterate (36.9%) compared to any other crosscutting demographic (17.3% of males for example).²³ Disabled ex-combatants and ex-combatants age 18-30 also scored notably lower on literacy. Across the GLR countries these three categories (female, disabled and age 18-30) of ex-combatants were consistently poor performers on literacy, though they closely switch places for worst performer within the individual GLR countries. These trends are displayed in *Table 5*.

Regarding educational achievement there was very little change across all demographic groups between level of educational achievement at demobilization and at the time of sampling. The largest portion of all ex-combatants had some primary level of education (33.6%) at the time of demobilization and at the time of sampling (34.2%), followed by some

²³ Rwanda is excluded from findings on literacy due to lack of directly comparable data.

secondary education (26.3% at demobilization and 23.4% at sampling).²⁴ However, as is visible in *Table 6*, there is considerable variation in the individual GLR countries as far as the levels of ex-combatant educational achievement. Generally speaking, ex-combatants in Burundi and Uganda had educational achievement levels skewed more towards partial or complete primary education, while those in DRC and RoC were more skewed towards partial or complete secondary education.

Table 6: Ex-Combatant Educational Achievement Levels

	Education Level at Demobilization								
	None	Islamic or religious	Some primary	Completed primary	Some secondary	Completed secondary	Some higher education	Completed higher education	Professional
Male	7.7%	1.5%	32.2%	20.3%	27.8%	7.9%	1.1%	.6%	.9%
Female	15.6%	4.9%	41.2%	12.2%	18.6%	6.1%	.8%	.2%	.5%
Age 18-30	9.4%	1.0%	39.4%	20.6%	25.2%	3.2%	.9%	.0%	.2%
Age 31-40	6.0%	1.7%	28.2%	19.7%	30.7%	11.5%	1.2%	.6%	.4%
Age Over 40	10.4%	4.3%	28.2%	15.2%	25.0%	11.7%	1.4%	1.5%	2.3%
Disabled	12.5%	2.4%	42.2%	21.6%	16.7%	2.5%	1.6%	.3%	.3%
Not Disabled	8.6%	2.0%	32.8%	18.8%	27.3%	8.1%	1.0%	.6%	.8%
Burundi	8.4%	2.5%	27.2%	34.8%	24.0%	2.0%	.9%	.1%	.2%
DRC	8.5%	.2%	21.4%	14.0%	38.2%	12.9%	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%
RoC	3.9%	0.0%	12.8%	20.7%	26.3%	31.8%	1.1%	0.0%	3.4%
Uganda	11.3%	3.9%	58.0%	7.9%	16.7%	1.5%	.7%	0.0%	0.0%
GLR Average	8.9%	2.0%	33.6%	19.0%	26.3%	7.6%	1.1%	.5%	.8%
	Education Level at Sampling								
Male	7.7%	2.0%	32.8%	19.5%	24.8%	5.7%	1.3%	.9%	5.4%
Female	17.4%	6.0%	42.1%	9.6%	16.2%	2.7%	.9%	.6%	4.6%
Age 18-30	7.9%	1.1%	35.3%	19.2%	26.5%	5.3%	1.2%	.4%	3.3%
Age 31-40	6.2%	2.6%	34.4%	21.1%	19.9%	5.4%	1.9%	1.1%	7.3%
Age Over 40	15.7%	6.6%	33.3%	12.8%	18.4%	4.3%	.8%	1.7%	6.4%
Disabled	13.9%	2.8%	40.2%	19.1%	16.0%	2.1%	1.1%	1.0%	3.8%
Not Disabled	8.6%	2.6%	33.5%	17.8%	24.4%	5.6%	1.3%	.8%	5.4%
Burundi	8.4%	2.5%	26.8%	33.8%	24.5%	2.8%	.9%	.2%	.2%
DRC	3.0%	.4%	4.7%	2.8%	32.4%	17.6%	2.6%	2.3%	34.3%
RoC	5.1%	0.0%	6.8%	5.1%	23.7%	33.9%	3.4%	1.7%	20.3%
Uganda	12.4%	3.7%	53.5%	7.7%	19.6%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%
GLR Average	9.2%	2.6%	34.2%	17.9%	23.4%	5.2%	1.2%	.8%	5.3%

Again, while there was generally very little change in ex-combatants' educational achievement levels in the time between demobilization and sampling (which as discussed above was on average 4.05 years) DRC and RoC stand out in that ex-combatants across all levels of educational achievement at the time of demobilization were absorbed substantially into professional level achievement at the time of sampling (visible in *Table 6*), though this

²⁴ Rwanda is excluded from findings on educational achievement at demobilization and the time of sampling due to lack of directly comparable data.

was especially true for male ex-combatants in DRC.²⁵ Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants educational achievement levels were skewed lower than their male counterparts at demobilization and the time of sampling. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were also more clearly represented in slightly lower levels of educational achievement than their older counterparts as were disabled in relation to non-disabled.

In line with the very low levels of mobility in ex-combatants' levels of educational achievement between demobilization and sampling, only 15.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries reported that they were continuing education since demobilization.²⁶ DRC, where 30.2% of ex-combatants were continuing education, was the only GLR country that stood out significantly from this trend. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were the most likely (18.8%) demographic group across the GLR countries to be continuing education since demobilization. Of those who were continuing education since demobilization across the GLR countries, the most notable pathways were: (i) pursuing professional qualifications (34.8%), or (ii) pursuing normal academic qualifications (34.1%).

Across the GLR countries the majority of ex-combatants (58.1%) did not partake any form of vocational training as part of the reintegration process. This is not to suggest that vocational training was not available as all reintegration programs in the GLR offer, or in some cases serve as a referral to, some form of vocational training.²⁷ However, as visible in *Table 7* below, there is considerable variation between the respective GLR countries. Notably in DRC, where vocational training was a large component of reintegration programming, ex-combatants had indeed received vocational training at a higher rate. Rwanda also displayed higher rates of vocational training – though it is unclear whether this is due to reintegration programming.²⁸ By contrast in Uganda, where reintegration services merely served as a

²⁵ Movement into professional level educational achievement is likely related to vocational training provided as a part of reintegration programming. Vocational training is a component of most reintegration programs in the GLR countries, however they were an especially large component in DRC specifically – where vocational training was given to ex-combatants and community members together in combination with the formation of related economic associations.

²⁶ Uganda is excluded from findings on rates and varieties of continuing education due to lack of directly comparable data.

²⁷ Burundi is excluded from findings on vocational training received due to lack of directly comparable data.

²⁸ In Rwanda entrepreneurship training, with the end result of a business plan and small grant were a core part of reintegration programming. It is unclear however if this programmatic component is higher for Rwanda's higher vocational training rates

referral to existing vocational programs for the general population, there was considerably lower reported participation.

While at a cross-country level it appears as though there is a slight positive relationship between age and the likelihood of receiving vocational training, this is only truly evident in DRC. Female ex-combatants, however, are slightly more likely to receive vocational training compared to male ex-combatants (47.3% vs. 41.2%), with the exception of RoC where they pair only slightly lower (18% vs. 20.6%).

Table 7: Ex-Combatants’ Participation in Skills & Vocational Training

	Participated in Skills or Vocational Training	
	Yes	No
Male	41.20%	58.80%
Female	47.30%	52.70%
Age 18-30	39.90%	60.10%
Age 31-40	42.40%	57.60%
Age Over 40	44.30%	55.70%
Disabled	47.10%	52.90%
Not Disabled	41.40%	58.60%
DRC	66.10%	33.90%
Republic of Congo	20.20%	79.80%
Rwanda	76.40%	23.60%
Uganda	32.60%	67.40%
GLR Average	41.90%	58.10%

Of those ex-combatants who had received skills or vocational training, the majority (62.7%) were utilizing these skills and training.²⁹ Female ex-combatants were using skills and training slightly less than male ex-combatants (61.3% vs. 63%). In addition ex-combatants were using their skills and training progressively more across age demographics (53.9% for ages 18-30, 56.8% for ages 31-40, and 76.3% for those over 40). Disabled ex-combatants utilized their skills and training at a lesser frequency (54.5%) than their non-disabled counterparts (63.8%).³⁰ Of those ex-combatants who were not using their skills and vocational training the most common explanations were: (i) 29.4% lost necessary tools and have no money for new ones, (ii) 21.6% lack of capital, and (iii) 10.9% lack of facilities for carrying out the vocation and skills they were trained in.

²⁹ Burundi is excluded from findings on use of vocational training due to lack of directly comparable data.

³⁰ Though unclear, it is possible that this trend is an indication of inadequate targeting of disabled ex-combatants for skilling and training specific to their unique needs and abilities.

7.1.4 Summary

Conflict represents an immense social disruption that often results in the disintegration of families, communities, and the broader fabric of society. The process of DDR is aimed at reconnecting the fractured pieces of these social entities so that collective norms and processes can be re-solidified. For ex-combatants facing this transition from conflict to peace by returning to families, gaining economic independence and participating in their communities represent the core challenges of reintegration. While there are few that do not feel the effects of conflict across the GLR countries, it is noteworthy that ex-combatants face a range of distinct challenges in the process of reintegration.

A large proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries were mobilized into conflict under the age of 18 (who were on average only early adolescents around 13 years old) and spent a number of their formative years as adults socialized in a context of violence. One way to view this is that a significant proportion of ex-combatants have missed the opportunity of the socialization of adult norms and behavior during normal peacetime, setting them with a steep learning curve upon return for socializing to these norms and values that they may have never learned in the first place – due to their absence from traditional family and community structures during their formative adult years in conflict. Further study into the specific modes of mobilization, for example abduction, may add considerable explanatory power to the specific challenges the ex-combatants who were mobilized at a young age face. While the evidence presented on the age at mobilization is not conclusive, this line of inquiry deserves further attention in future studies.

Ex-combatants across the GLR countries, with the exception of Rwanda, are married less frequently than community members. However, ex-combatants generally show a positive trajectory towards marriage and cohabitation over time. It appears that across the GLR, ex-combatants' largest obstacle in reintegrating into, or in most cases building the familial unit is making up for the time lost by participation in conflict, especially for younger ex-combatants.

Ex-combatants' levels of educational achievement and literacy are skewed slightly lower than community members' – with lower levels of partial secondary, secondary, partial tertiary, or complete tertiary level achievement. While educational mobility was very low in general, it appears as though time lost while in conflict is a significant barrier to educational achievement – especially for younger ex-combatants who are a step behind their older peers, but are more aggressive about closing this gap through continuing education since demobilization.

7.1.4.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

As discussed above, while younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) tend to be a step behind their older peers as far as access to marriage and educational achievement, this appears to be a product of the time lost while in conflict. In addition, though younger ex-combatants tend to be a step behind, they share the same general positive trajectory as their older peers. Female ex-combatants, however, show a widening gap in relation to male ex-combatants – who themselves generally have a positive trajectory in terms of education and marriage.

In assessing trends in marriage across the GLR countries we can summarize several key points regarding female ex-combatants: (i) female ex-combatants are less likely than male ex-combatants to be married or cohabitate; (ii) the gap in marriage and cohabitation rates between male and female ex-combatants has grown over time from prior to demobilization to the time of sampling; and (iii) female ex-combatants are the most likely group to be divorced, widowed, or separated. The weight of female ex-combatants' disadvantage in these regards is exaggerated further when compared to female community members' marriage rates – who themselves rank lower in marriage rates than male community members, though still notably higher than female ex-combatants (31.7% of female ex-combatants are married versus 38.1% of female community members). Essentially while male ex-combatants are making steady progress towards parity with community members in terms of marriage, female ex-combatants' progress is extremely shallow.

Female ex-combatants also have the lowest prospects for marriage in the future, as attitudinal indicators reveal that male ex-combatants are much less likely to be willing to marry another ex-combatant than female ex-combatant (29.8% vs. 50.2%). When analyzed against the back drop of community members' ranking on the same attitudinal indicator (25.7% of male community members and 25% of female community members would consider marrying an ex-combatant) we can see that female ex-combatants have a considerably smaller pool of individuals who are attitudinally open to marrying them compared to male ex-combatants.

Collectively these findings cement the fact that in the GLR countries female ex-combatants are not only the least likely group across all demographics (ex-combatants and community members alike) to be married and have a family, but also the group that faces the largest barriers to accessing marriage in the future – placing them outside of the primary unit of reintegration and at substantial risk for marginalization and social isolation.

As an additional note, female ex-combatants lag behind male ex-combatants with lower levels of literacy, and educational achievement – also lagging behind the female community members on both measures as well. As with those aged 18-30, female ex-combatants are slightly more aggressive than their male counterparts (16.5% vs. 15.1%) in pursuing further education to close this gap.

7.1.4.2 Unique Country Trends

Rwanda stands out from the rest of the GLR countries as the only country where ex-combatants appear to be more frequently married than community members – and to a considerable extent (77.4% versus 46.9%). However, there are reasons to be skeptical to these figures. In the Rwandan sample female ex-combatants (a group that consistently displayed the lowest marriage rates across the other GLR countries) were severely under represented (only 2.5% or n= 13 of the total 517 Rwandan ex-combatants) compared to female community members (31.2% or n=159 or the total community member sample). In addition, those ex-combatants aged 18-30 (who across all other GLR countries were the least likely age demographic to be married) were more than twice as represented in the

community member sample (57% or n=290) as in the ex-combatant sample (22.6% or n=132). In effect, these facets of the demographic representations in the ex-combatant and community member samples may have inflated the rate at which it appears that ex-combatants marry, and deflated the rate at which community members appear to marry.

However, there are further contextual details to consider in terms of marriage in the case of Rwanda. In Rwanda males are required to have access to adequate housing in order to get married. However, the formal regulations for what qualifies as adequate housing in Rwanda are somewhat narrowly defined under the policy of *imidugudu* – a large scale body of housing policy aimed at consolidating dispersed land and housing in an overall effort toward villagization. The result has been inflation in adequate housing prices and in turn a severe crisis in the availability of adequate housing overall that in effect is locking many Rwandans out of official marriage – though they may cohabit without formalized marital status.³¹ This dynamic may further deflate the rate of marriage in Rwanda for community members.

In contrast to community members, most ex-combatants are returning to Rwanda from Eastern DRC, where they have been away for an average of nine years. In this time some ex-combatants have married and when returning to Rwanda bring their spouse with them. The legal status of these marriages in Rwanda is unclear, however it is possible that some ex-combatants unwittingly navigate past the formal barriers to marriage that community members face – in turn accounting for their slightly higher marriage rates. While it is likely that the interaction of housing policy, marriage, and dynamics of return are key in understanding why ex-combatants marry more than community members in Rwanda, this exact narrative must be treated as conjecture. In the future a more focused inquiry into the dynamics of ex-combatant and community member marriage in Rwanda could prove prudent. For if indeed ex-combatants have been more successful than community members in accessing pathways to marriage in Rwanda the details of this finding could hold considerable explanatory value in analyzing other cases and, not least, in developing reintegration programming in the future.

³¹ This narrative of the interrelated nature of housing policy and marriage in Rwanda is well documented in Sommers (2012).

RoC, where marriage rates for both ex-combatants and community members alike were drastically lower than in other GLR countries (5.6% of ex-combatants and 18.5% of community members at the time of sampling were married versus 60.2% and 64.3% on average of the remaining respective ex-combatants and community members), stood out as well. What is notable in RoC is that while marriage rates are much lower than average across the GLR countries, a much higher proportion of both ex-combatants and community members are cohabitating, but are not married, than on average across the GLR countries (75.3% of ex-combatants and 53.5% of community members in RoC were cohabitation versus 8.9% and 4.9% on average of the remaining respective ex-combatants and community members across the GLR).

It appears that while community members do access marriage at a higher rate than ex-combatants in RoC, community members also face considerable barriers to accessing marriage themselves. Instead the most significant marital status for both community members and ex-combatants alike is cohabitation. As ex-combatants' levels of cohabitation in RoC increase from 47.1% prior to demobilization, to 60.1% at demobilization, and 75.3% at sampling, it would appear as though this is the primary pathway to accessing the familial unit. Further study to explore the dynamics of formal and informal marriage in RoC would prove illuminating – especially if formal marriage, largely understood as the primary pathway to accessing the familial unit, is not necessary for reintegration in the RoC context. It should also be noted that without a clear explanation or triangulation for RoC's departure in terms of marriage rates the data should also be treated carefully. It is possible that there are unbeknownst errors in data capture or coding that have produced these findings.

Lastly, in Uganda ex-combatants are considerably more likely than average across the GLR countries to report willingness to marrying an ex-combatant in the future. Though there is no direct explanation it is possible that the specific dynamics of combatant mobilization in Uganda may play a role in this trend. In Uganda abduction was a well-known tactic of mobilization, especially by the LRA. Though abductees may have committed violent acts against their communities, often forcibly, there is evidence that ex-combatants are simultaneously understood as victims and perpetrators by community members – a factor that has reportedly contributed to a general willingness to accept returning ex-combatants

back into communities.³² This dynamic, combined with the extensive use of traditional reconciliation ceremonies (not necessarily part of reintegration programming), may contribute to community members in Uganda's openness to marriage with ex-combatants. Futures studies could flag this conjecture for further analysis.

7.2 Housing, Land, Livestock and Food Security

The following is an examination of the core dimensions of: (i) the types of dwellings that ex-combatants live in and related issues such as ownership and tenure; (ii) access to land for agricultural production and (iii) its connection to food security.

7.2.1 Dwelling, Living Conditions and Land Security

In examining who ex-combatants live with across the GLR countries the three most common categories are: (i) with the same family as before conflict (29.2%), (ii) with a family but different to that from before conflict (24.3%), and (iii) with a partner (19.9%). Two countries across the GLR stood out from this general trend. First in RoC the majority ex-combatants reported living with a partner (43.6%) at a proportion more than double the cross-country average. Second, in Rwanda the majority of ex-combatants reported living with a family that was different from the one before conflict (57.7%) at a proportion more than double the cross-country average.

As is visible in *Table 8* below, female ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a family either the same or different to the one before conflict than male ex-combatants – though less likely to be living with a partner or a family that consisted of a partner and children. It is also noteworthy that disabled ex-combatants were the least likely demographic group to be living with a partner – at a proportion less than half the cross-country average.

³² See for example: Finnegan (2010).

Table 8: Ex-combatant Household Membership³³

	Who Do You Live With?						
	Alone	With partner	With same family as before the conflict	With family but different to that from before the conflict	With Friends	Family (unidentified) / Partner and children	Other
Male	5.00%	20.00%	28.40%	23.80%	3.50%	17.70%	1.50%
Female	3.30%	18.90%	35.20%	27.60%	2.20%	12.00%	0.80%
Age 18-30	5.70%	20.20%	24.70%	17.20%	4.00%	26.60%	1.50%
Age 31-40	4.80%	20.10%	25.40%	31.10%	2.00%	15.10%	1.60%
Age Over 40	3.40%	20.20%	41.10%	27.10%	1.30%	5.70%	1.10%
Disabled	5.80%	8.40%	38.30%	32.60%	1.80%	12.40%	0.70%
Not Disabled	4.70%	21.20%	28.10%	23.40%	3.50%	17.70%	1.50%
Burundi	4.50%	11.50%	0.00%	0.00%	3.20%	78.90%	1.80%
DRC	5.60%	22.40%	41.70%	21.50%	8.20%	0.00%	0.60%
RoC	8.20%	43.60%	16.60%	25.70%	1.70%	0.90%	3.30%
Rwanda	4.40%	XXX%	32.80%	57.70%	3.60%	0.00%	1.60%
Uganda	1.20%	16.20%	56.00%	26.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
GLR Average	4.80%	19.90%	29.20%	24.30%	3.30%	17.00%	1.50%

Regarding housing types, there were diverse compositions across the GLR countries; however at a cross-country level ex-combatants were most commonly living in: (i) a house (48.2%); or (ii) in a hut or tent (30.8%). Only Uganda stood out significantly from this trend, with the majority of ex-combatants (77.6%) living in a hut or tent. Across demographic categories there was fairly even membership to types of housing categories. Though, female ex-combatants were notably less likely to live in a house compared to male ex-combatants (41.8% vs. 49.1%) and more likely to live in a hut or tent (43.7% vs. 29%).

There were varying rates of housing ownership across the GLR countries. Generally speaking self-ownership was the most common across the GLR countries (41%), followed by family ownership (17.8%). However, in RoC family member ownership was most common (29.7%) followed by self-ownership (24.7%).

As is visible in *Table 9*, housing ownership rates were consistently lower for female ex-combatants than male ex-combatants across the GLR countries; 22.8% of female ex-combatants owned their land versus 43.7% of male ex-combatants – though Rwanda is an exception from this trend where 63.9% of female ex-combatants owned their land versus 39.1% of male ex-combatants. In contrast female ex-combatants were more likely to cite

³³ In *Table 8* the use of XXX indicates that respondents in Rwanda were not given the option to respond that they live with a partner or spouse – the responses that would have been in the field are likely absorbed into the categories of those who live with a family either the same or different from the one before conflict.

that their housing was owned by their spouse (17.6% vs. 1.7%) or by family that they live with (13.7% vs. 6.8%) when compared to male ex-combatants. Concerning age dynamics of housing ownership, there was a positive correlation visible between age and rate of housing ownership. Inversely, as age increased ex-combatants were less likely to rely on their relatives or family.

Table 9: Ex-Combatant Housing Ownership

	Who Owns the Housing You Currently Live In?						
	I own it	Spouse, partner	Joint owners	Family I live with such as son, mother, parents	My friend	My relatives, family	Other
Male	43.70%	1.70%	4.20%	6.80%	2.10%	18.10%	23.40%
Female	22.80%	17.60%	3.00%	13.70%	0.60%	16.30%	25.90%
Age 18-30	31.10%	4.30%	3.20%	11.40%	1.90%	26.90%	21.10%
Age 31-40	44.20%	3.10%	4.70%	4.40%	2.60%	13.00%	27.90%
Age Over 40	55.10%	3.80%	4.70%	4.90%	1.10%	8.30%	22.10%
Disabled	40.40%	5.30%	3.10%	15.00%	3.40%	14.20%	18.60%
Not Disabled	41.20%	3.60%	4.20%	6.80%	1.80%	18.30%	24.20%
Burundi	51.00%	2.00%	0.40%	0.00%	1.00%	21.70%	23.90%
DRC	28.60%	3.80%	4.40%	10.20%	2.40%	17.00%	33.70%
RoC	24.70%	3.50%	11.30%	1.80%	2.00%	29.70%	27.00%
Rwanda	39.80%	1.40%	0.00%	12.70%	5.40%	13.80%	26.80%
Uganda	59.80%	7.40%	3.20%	15.20%	0.00%	5.90%	8.60%
GLR Average	41.00%	3.70%	4.10%	7.70%	2.00%	17.80%	23.70%

When housing ownership was cross-tabulated against marital status a clear trend emerged. Of those ex-combatants who reported self-ownership of their housing, 68.4% were married and 16.9% were cohabitating – only 5.8% of those who reported self-ownership were single / never married. Inversely, when we look at the marital status of those who reported family ownership of their housing, 52.2% of those who reported their housing as owned by family they live with and 39.8% of those who reported family ownership were single / never married. Marriage rates show a clear correlation to housing ownership. This evidence supports the idea that marriage is a key pathway to housing, land access and security.

Ex-combatants had a standard distribution of perceptions of their current living situation relative to perceptions at the time of demobilization across all the GLR countries – 21.8% of ex-combatants saw their current living situation as better than at the time of demobilization, 49% saw it as the same, 26.2% saw it as worse, and only 2.9% pointed out that they did not

have housing at the time of demobilization.³⁴ Across demographic categories these perceptions were remarkably even as well.

When examining ex-combatants' perceptions of their own living situation compared to their neighbors, the majority saw themselves as well off, or worse off.³⁵ Only 10.9% of ex-combatants saw their neighbors as having a better living situation, 47.8% saw it as the same, and 40.8% saw it as worse. There was some notable variation in ex-combatants' perceptions of their living situation relative to their neighbors within specific GLR countries. In Uganda and Rwanda ex-combatants were more likely to have seen their living situation as worse than their neighbors (53.7% and 52.6% respectively) than in DRC and RoC (31.4% and 29.1% respectively). Looking at specific demographic differences it is apparent that disabled ex-combatants more commonly saw their situation as worse than their neighbors (59.6%), than non-disabled ex-combatants (38.3%).

7.2.2 Land Access and Food Security

Gaining access to land for agricultural production is seen as a key pathway to both economic mobility and food security for ex-combatants. However, comparing land ownership across, and even within, the GLR countries can prove challenging. In many areas land ownership structures vary considerably and thus across the context of findings. For example, in many areas land ownership is organized around clans and infrequently owned on a private basis. However, land tenure can be very secure because of the clan structure despite the absence of deeds or titles. Though there is no systematic capture of the types of ownership structures across the GLR countries, these must be kept in mind when viewing the findings in this section.

Land access for cultivation purposes was universally high across GLR countries and within crosscutting demographic categories, with 92.6% of ex-combatants having access to land for cultivation purposes. In Uganda a more in-depth questioning of the tenure status of the land ex-combatants used for cultivation showed ex-combatants aged 18-31 were more likely to

³⁴ Rwanda is excluded from findings on perceptions of current living situation compared to at the time of demobilization due to lack of data directly comparable data.

³⁵ Burundi is excluded from findings on perceptions of current living situation compared to neighbors due to lack of data.

have a title for the land they cultivated (58.6%) compared to those 31-40 (29%) and those over 40 (30%). However these older age demographic groups were more likely than their younger counterparts to use communally owned land: 40% of those aged over 40, 28% of those aged 31-40, and 16.6% of those 18-31. Disabled ex-combatants also more frequently accessed communally owned land than non-disabled counterparts (35.7% vs. 26.5%). Though there is no comparable data for the other GLR countries these findings from Uganda may lend some nuance to the land ownership dynamics across demographic lines.

Of the ex-combatants who did not have any access to land for cultivation at all in the DRC and RoC, lack of interest (29.9%) and lack of capital (27.2%) were the most common explanations.³⁶ Other notable trends were that female ex-combatants more commonly cited fear of conflict (35.7%) than male ex-combatants (13.5%). Also, disabled ex-combatants more commonly cited distance / living in the city (28.6%) as an explanation for their lack of access to land for cultivation than their non-disabled counterparts (8.1%).

In examining changes in ex-combatants' access to arable land over a two-year period it was found that a significant proportion of ex-combatants (38%) had experienced an increase in their access to arable land over the last two years.³⁷ Despite this general trend, the GLR countries vary considerably on this point – see *Table 10* below. On the one hand, in DRC and RoC the majority ex-combatants had seen an increase in their access to land and, on the other hand, in Burundi and Uganda the majority had not seen an increase in their access to land.³⁸ On average female ex-combatants had less often experienced an increase in their access to land (26.5%) than male ex-combatants (39.8%) – though Uganda was the only country where this trend was not displayed (12.4% of female ex-combatants having an increase vs. 9.7% of males). Similarly, disabled ex-combatants also tended to less often have experienced increases in their access to arable land (22.3%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (39.4%).

³⁶ DRC and RoC are the only GLR countries with data available on reasons for lack of access to arable land.

³⁷ Rwanda is excluded from findings on changes in access to arable land due to lack of directly comparable data.

³⁸ With specific reference to Uganda, a more finely grained scale reveals that 10.4% had more land access, 63.4% had the same level of access, and 26.3% had less access.

Table 10: Ex-Combatant Change in Access to Arable Land

	Change in Access to Arable Land	
	More Access	Same or Less Access
Male	39.80%	60.20%
Female	26.50%	73.50%
Age 18-30	34.70%	65.30%
Age 31-40	43.50%	56.50%
Age Over 40	35.50%	64.50%
Disabled	22.30%	77.70%
Not Disabled	39.40%	60.60%
Burundi	30.40%	69.60%
DRC	63.50%	36.50%
Republic of Congo	72.20%	27.80%
Uganda	10.40%	89.60%
GLR Average	38.00%	62.00%

There is a diverse range of findings across the GLR countries when looking at ex-combatants' explanations for gains in access to land for cultivation.³⁹ In general it appears as though capital gained through strong agricultural yields has served as ex-combatants' primary pathway to increased access to land for cultivation across the GLR countries. Looking to DRC, RoC, and Uganda we can observe that 42.2% of ex-combatants explained their increased access to land as a result of a combination of factors: (i) capital accrued from bountiful agricultural yields and (ii) the desire to produce more agriculturally for both subsistence and commercial purposes. Likewise, when explaining unchanged or decreased access to land for agricultural production in DRC and RoC 48.3% of ex-combatants cited lack of capital or resources as their primary barrier to land access mobility.

While capital, especially that acquired through strong agricultural production, appears to be an important explanation for ex-combatants' upward land access mobility across the GLR countries, two other explanations also deserve attention: (i) inheritance dynamics and (ii) marriage. These two pathways to land mobility appear especially relevant to female ex-combatants and young ex-combatants (age 18-30).

In DRC and RoC 28.7% of ex-combatants (40.3% in DRC alone) cited inheritance as their pathway to increased land access. This was especially true for younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30), of which 32.8% cited inheritance. Further, while inheritance was only cited by 19.3% of ex-combatants in Uganda as their explanation for upward land access mobility, 53.5%

³⁹ Burundi and Rwanda are excluded from findings regarding explanations for access to more or less arable land due to lack of directly comparable data.

cited regulated division of their land, such as inheritance, sharing and dividing, as the reason for their decreased access to land for cultivation. Female ex-combatants were significantly less likely than male ex-combatants (19.7% vs. 29.6%) to cite inheritance as a pathway to increased land access – which could suggest a lack of access to inheritance structures. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were the most likely age demographic to cite inheritance (32.3%) as their pathway to increased land access.

In terms of marriage, while in Uganda only 12.9% of ex-combatants cited marriage as a pathway to increased land access an examination of demographic subgroups reveals that only 3.4% of male ex-combatants cited marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to 36.4% of female ex-combatants. In addition, 38.5% of those aged 18-30 cited marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to 0.0% of those aged 31-40 or over 40. Though findings are scattered across the GLR countries, collectively they form a mosaic that suggests that capital is a primary enabler of ex-combatant land access mobility. For young ex-combatants and female-combatants, the two demographic subgroups least likely to see increases in land access, inheritance and marriage also appear to play a distinct role.

Livestock ownership excluding poultry was at 35.7% across the GLR countries, though generally higher in Burundi (40.2%) and Uganda (52.7%).⁴⁰ Age showed a positive relationship to the likelihood of owning livestock across the GLR countries – 33.5% of those aged 18-30, 35.1% of those aged 31-40 and 42.2% of those over 40. Increases in livestock in the last two years were cited by 54.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR with a similar distribution across demographic lines. Of those ex-combatants who had no livestock, poverty and lack of resources was the most common explanation (56.7%) followed by insecurity due to conflict (11.8%).

Beyond access to land for cultivation and the ownership of livestock, another important indicator of food security is the level of household hunger and nutrition – presented in *Table 11*. Across the GLR countries 13% of ex-combatants explained that people in their household always go hungry, 37.3% they often went hungry, 28.7% that they seldom went hungry and

⁴⁰ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding livestock ownership due to lack of directly comparable data.

16.1% that they never went hungry.⁴¹ The exception to this distribution is Uganda, where the majority seldom went hungry (45.3%). In general rates of household hunger were very even across demographic lines.

Table 11: Ex-combatant Household Hunger

	How Frequently Do People in Your Household Go Hungry?			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Male	13.50%	37.20%	27.80%	21.60%
Female	10.00%	38.10%	33.90%	18.00%
Age 18-30	12.50%	40.80%	26.40%	20.30%
Age 31-40	12.60%	37.80%	27.90%	21.70%
Age Over 40	14.50%	32.40%	32.30%	20.80%
Disabled	9.80%	38.10%	33.60%	18.50%
Not Disabled	13.20%	37.20%	28.30%	21.30%
Burundi	11.60%	49.10%	20.70%	18.60%
DRC	21.00%	35.50%	24.50%	19.00%
Republic of Congo	16.70%	43.20%	24.00%	16.10%
Uganda	2.70%	21.60%	45.30%	30.40%
GLR Average	13.00%	37.30%	28.70%	21.00%

In regards to household nutrition 24.6% of ex-combatants said that in the last two years nutrition had improved, 43.8% that nutrition was unchanged and the remaining 31.6% that nutrition had worsened.⁴² Again, the only exception is Uganda, in which the proportion of ex-combatants with improvements in household nutrition was greater (36.9%). Of those ex-combatants for which household nutrition had gotten worse in the last two years disabled ex-combatants (39.2%) were more commonly represented compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (31%).

7.2.3 Summary

Ex-combatants display a very high level of access to housing and land for cultivation across the GLR countries. The majorities of ex-combatants across the GLR countries are living in permanent housing, with a family or spouse and see their living situation as equal to their neighbors – and in this sense have reached considerable parity with community members. Assessing the security of their housing tenure, however, is more challenging. The variety of housing ownership structures that exist across, and within, the GLR countries create unique contexts to land tenure security. Owing to a lack of systematic capture of land ownership structures a direct comparison is not possible here. However, what we can note is that lack

⁴¹ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding household hunger due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁴² Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding household nutrition due to lack of directly comparable data.

of housing and land title does not necessarily indicate a lack of tenure security – there are other structures such as clans that can insure land tenure.

While at a cross-country level ex-combatants have exhibited a significant level of upward mobility in terms of their access to land for cultivation there remains a divergence between DRC and RoC, on the one hand, which showed very high rates of increased access to arable land and Burundi and Uganda, on the other, which displayed much lower rates of increased access to arable land. Accounting for this divergence is puzzling. While the absolute availability of land is an important dimension of increased land access (for example in Rwanda land scarcity is a well identified issue, while in DRC there are large tracts of uninhabited land) it is likely that the local dynamics of negotiating access to land through various pathways is equally if not more important component (for example in DRC ex-combatants and community members alike must navigate between both customary and statutory land access regimes that can stand in direct contradiction to each other).⁴³ As gaining access to land is a key pathway to ex-combatants' economic stability, food security, and contribution to the community then further investigation of this divergence could prove important for future programming.

While access to arable land and livestock ownership are generally considered important indicators of the food security of ex-combatants, it appears as though there is little correlation between these indicators and ex-combatants' levels of household hunger and nutritional improvement. While ex-combatants' access to arable land was very high across the GLR countries, nearly on par with community members, they were significantly more likely to face hunger and nutrition problems. Future inquiry into the sources and nature of household hunger and nutrition problems to nuance these findings could prove insightful.

7.2.3.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

Female ex-combatants face a unique set of challenges in regards to access to arable land. Female ex-combatants across the GLR are less likely than male ex-combatants to see

⁴³ Some scholars have posited that local – national contradictions in land access and ownership structures have played a role in shaping new power structures in effect shaping and sustaining insecurity in some parts of the GLR. See for example: Huggins and Clover (2005).

increases in their access to land for cultivation (26.5% vs. 39.8%) – the low level of female ex-combatants' land access mobility is even more stark when they are compared to female community members (45.4%), who are themselves on par with male community members. Scattered evidence suggests that, as with male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants view capital as their primary pathway to increased land access. However, as female ex-combatants are the least likely group to see increases in their access to land this could suggest that they also face considerable barriers in access to capital. There is evidence to suggest that female ex-combatants experience additional barriers to land access mobility, especially in terms of (i) inheritance dynamics and (ii) marriage.

Female ex-combatants less frequently cite inheritance as a pathway to land access mobility than male ex-combatants and female community members – who are on par with male community members. This could suggest that female ex-combatants face challenges in accessing land inheritance structures that are open to not only community members, but male ex-combatants as well. Lack of access to capital and inheritance structures for female ex-combatants is accentuated further when contextualized against marriage dynamics. Female ex-combatants in Uganda are more than ten times as likely to cite marriage as their pathway to increased land access compared to males – however (as discussed in §7.1.2) female ex-combatants remain the least marrying demographic group with the weakest prospects for marriage in the future. Collectively this evidence suggests that female ex-combatants face a diverse range of barriers to land access. Future study to confirm and nuance these findings could prove beneficial for developing gender focused reintegration programming.

Young ex-combatants (aged 18-30) tend to be a step behind their elder peers in terms of many housing, land access, and food security indicators. Young ex-combatants are less likely to own their housing, less likely to have livestock, and less likely to see increases in their access to land. However it appears that these disadvantages, as with marriage and education, may be a product of their years lost in conflict – as they now struggle to make parity with elder ex-combatants and show a clear trajectory of improvement – most notably in terms of accessing marriage, and in turn the familial unit, and access to land for

agricultural production, which is tied to the primary economic pathway for ex-combatants across the GLR: small scale agriculture.

Supporting the findings that disabled ex-combatants are slightly more likely to be married, so too are they slightly more likely to be living in household with a family. It appears that the majority of disabled ex-combatants fall in line with their non-disabled peers in terms of housing, access to land, and livestock. However, few those who do fall behind do so at varying levels – likely commensurate to their particular level of disability. Overall, disabled ex-combatants saw similar levels of access to land for cultivation, but fewer increases in their land access in the years prior to sampling.

7.2.3.2 Unique Country Trends

While across the GLR countries ex-combatants were most likely to be living with the same family as prior to conflict, Rwanda and RoC stand out from this trend. In Rwanda ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a family, but one different from prior to conflict. Have ex-combatants in Rwanda faced challenges in reintegrating into the same familial unit as prior to conflict? While there is no clear evidence in this study, it is possible that this may in part be a product of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the prolonged period of time that ex-combatants have been away from communities since the first and second Congo Wars. By contrast, in RoC ex-combatants were more likely to be living with a spouse (though unmarried, as detailed in §7.1.2). Have ex-combatants in RoC been more successful in accessing the familial unit, even if it is not officiated in marriage? As accessing the familial unit is understood as a key pathway to reintegration, further investigation into these diverging trends could prove instrumental.

7.3. Economic Issues

Attaining a level of economic stability through employment, access to credit and participation in economic associations are seen as key elements to the economic prospects of ex-combatants and essential for peace and development. As such, the analysis here is presented in five main parts: (i) an examination of ex-combatants' employment statuses and

general outlooks on employment; (ii) an examination of the barriers that non-economically active ex-combatants face to gaining a stable economic status; (iii) an examination of female ex-combatants' specific economic issues; (iv) an examination of ex-combatants' levels of income, savings, and access to credit as indicators of their general economic stability and ability to leverage economic opportunities; and (v) an examination of ex-combatants' level of engagement with economic associations as an extended support / opportunity network.

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize the GLR countries, attaining economic reintegration (parity with community members) and economic stability may not necessarily be the same thing. Thus, to truly identify the economic challenges that are specific to ex-combatants, we must understand ex-combatants economic prospects in relation to the wider community. As such, this section should be read in conjunction with §8.3 on economic issues in the Community Dynamics Annex of this study.

7.3.1 Economic Status and History

Concerning employment status, at a cross-country level prior to conflict ex-combatants were most commonly studying or training (37.6%), self-employed in agriculture (26.3%), or unemployed (12.9%).⁴⁴ At the time of demobilization the number of ex-combatants studying or training had dropped to 2.2%. Those who had previously been studying or training prior to conflict were effectively absorbed into the categories of self-employed in agriculture (which grew to 33.3%), unemployment (which grew to 31.1%), and employed working in the public sector (which grew from 3.1% prior to the conflict to 11% at demobilization. At the time of sampling unemployment had shrunk to 21.3% and the number of ex-combatants working in the public sector had shrunk to 1.7%. These changes in ex-combatant employment status continued to be absorbed into the categories of self-employed in agriculture which grew to 36.7% and other self-employed in non-agricultural services categories which had grown to 10.4% from the time of demobilization (see *Table 12* below) – RoC is an exception to this trend towards self-employment in agriculture with retail instead being the primary pathway.

⁴⁴ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding employment status prior to demobilization and at demobilization and Burundi is excluded from findings regarding employment at demobilization due to lack of directly comparable data.

Though levels of employment varied from country to country, with each GLR country ex-combatants followed the same arc in their employment trajectory – a spike of unemployment at the time of demobilization, to a drop in unemployment at the time of sampling that was slightly worse than pre-conflict levels. This unemployment trend coupled with a continual growth in self-employment in agriculture, services, and retail.

In examining the demographic trends in employment status across the GLR countries at these three time points we can observe some trends. Female ex-combatants are slightly more frequently unemployed than male ex-combatants prior to conflict and at demobilization, though slightly less so at the time of sampling. Though Rwanda, where 54.5% of female versus 38.2% of male ex-combatants were unemployed at the time of sampling, stood apart in this regard. Younger ex-combatants (age 18-31) are most frequently studying compared to other age groups at all time points. Older ex-combatants (over the age of 40) are most frequently in the self-employed agriculture group at all time points. Disabled ex-combatants were more frequently unemployed at the time of demobilization and the time of sampling compared to non-disabled ex-combatants. These trends are visible in *Table 12* below.

Table 12: Ex-Combatant Economic Status at Three Time Points⁴⁵

	GLR Ex-Combatant Employment at Three Time Points												
	Unemployed	Employed working for employer. agriculture	Employed working for employer. private sector	Employed working for employer. public sector	Self-employed agriculture	Self-employed non agriculture –services	Self-employed non agriculture –retail	Self-employed non agriculture – manufacturing	Hustle or involved in or reliant on the informal economy	Supplementing income through subsistence activities	Studying or Training	Housewife or Working in the home	Retired. but not economically active
	Employment Status Prior Conflict												
Male	12.80%	3.90%	5.60%	3.40%	26.20%	6.10%	3.20%	0.60%	0.10%	0.00%	37.20%	0.70%	0.00%
Female	13.00%	2.30%	2.50%	1.30%	26.90%	4.00%	2.90%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	40.20%	5.30%	0.00%
Age 18-30	12.20%	3.30%	3.90%	0.80%	16.90%	3.80%	2.10%	0.30%	0.00%	0.00%	55.00%	1.80%	0.00%
Age 31-40	14.10%	4.90%	6.50%	3.20%	28.80%	7.10%	4.50%	0.70%	0.30%	0.00%	29.20%	0.80%	0.00%
Age Over 40	10.70%	3.20%	6.60%	7.40%	43.00%	8.80%	4.20%	1.10%	0.30%	0.30%	13.10%	1.40%	0.00%
Disabled	7.80%	3.60%	3.30%	1.90%	32.00%	4.10%	2.40%	0.20%	0.80%	0.80%	40.30%	2.90%	0.00%
Not Disabled	13.30%	3.70%	5.30%	3.20%	25.80%	6.00%	3.30%	0.60%	0.10%	0.00%	37.50%	1.30%	0.00%
Burundi	7.10%	2.50%	5.90%	1.80%	26.60%	7.60%	4.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	42.80%	1.20%	0.00%
DRC	26.50%	2.30%	5.30%	2.90%	9.60%	7.00%	5.00%	1.40%	0.00%	0.00%	37.70%	2.20%	0.00%
RoC	8.60%	25.40%	15.10%	9.20%	41.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Uganda	6.10%	0.20%	1.50%	2.90%	38.60%	4.40%	1.50%	0.00%	0.50%	0.20%	42.80%	1.20%	0.00%
GLR Average	12.90%	3.70%	5.20%	3.10%	26.30%	5.80%	3.20%	0.60%	0.10%	0.10%	37.60%	1.40%	0.00%
	Employment Status at Demobilization												
Male	30.30%	1.60%	5.00%	12.30%	32.70%	6.40%	4.00%	0.50%	0.20%	0.00%	5.40%	0.90%	0.60%
Female	34.10%	0.40%	2.10%	5.90%	35.70%	5.70%	2.60%	0.60%	1.30%	0.00%	4.10%	7.60%	0.00%
Age 18-30	43.00%	0.60%	4.70%	8.20%	21.80%	4.80%	2.80%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%	9.40%	4.10%	0.20%
Age 31-40	29.30%	1.20%	3.40%	10.60%	34.20%	8.20%	6.00%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%	4.20%	1.30%	0.60%
Age Over 40	16.40%	2.40%	3.10%	13.60%	49.20%	7.20%	3.40%	0.50%	1.10%	0.00%	1.40%	1.10%	0.60%
Disabled	42.30%	0.50%	1.30%	5.20%	35.80%	2.60%	0.50%	0.30%	2.30%	0.00%	3.80%	2.60%	2.80%
Not Disabled	29.60%	1.40%	4.80%	11.70%	33.10%	6.70%	4.10%	0.60%	0.10%	0.00%	5.30%	2.20%	0.20%
DRC	32.20%	2.20%	7.70%	21.30%	12.20%	8.40%	6.90%	1.10%	0.00%	0.00%	4.80%	2.80%	0.40%
RoC	28.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.30%	42.90%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.30%	0.00%	0.00%
Uganda	30.00%	0.50%	1.20%	0.70%	54.80%	3.70%	0.50%	0.00%	0.70%	0.00%	5.50%	1.70%	0.50%
GLR Average	31.10%	1.40%	4.50%	11.00%	33.30%	6.30%	3.70%	0.60%	0.40%	0.00%	5.20%	2.20%	0.50%
	Employment Status at Current												
Male	21.70%	4.50%	6.90%	1.70%	35.80%	10.60%	7.00%	1.40%	0.50%	1.70%	6.70%	0.80%	0.60%
Female	18.20%	2.10%	1.20%	1.80%	42.50%	9.10%	7.10%	1.50%	1.00%	0.50%	4.50%	10.10%	0.60%
Age 18-30	19.40%	3.10%	7.50%	1.10%	33.60%	10.60%	7.90%	1.00%	0.60%	1.20%	10.40%	3.50%	0.00%
Age 31-40	23.30%	5.70%	5.50%	2.00%	35.80%	10.50%	8.60%	1.70%	0.20%	2.30%	3.10%	1.10%	0.30%
Age Over 40	20.00%	4.50%	4.80%	2.60%	45.90%	10.50%	3.80%	1.90%	1.10%	1.30%	0.90%	0.80%	1.90%
Disabled	29.20%	5.10%	3.70%	1.00%	38.00%	5.40%	5.20%	1.90%	1.10%	2.50%	3.30%	2.20%	1.50%
Not Disabled	20.10%	4.10%	6.50%	1.80%	36.60%	11.10%	7.30%	1.40%	0.50%	1.40%	6.90%	2.00%	0.40%
Burundi	13.70%	4.10%	11.00%	2.30%	34.50%	12.20%	13.60%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.70%	1.60%	0.20%
DRC	28.40%	3.60%	5.90%	1.70%	20.40%	16.40%	7.80%	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%	9.10%	3.50%	0.60%
RoC	12.50%	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Rwanda	38.70%	10.40%	4.10%	1.10%	22.30%	3.60%	2.50%	2.20%	1.60%	6.30%	5.80%	1.10%	0.30%
Uganda	9.20%	0.50%	2.70%	1.70%	66.20%	6.70%	2.70%	0.20%	1.00%	1.20%	5.00%	1.70%	1.00%
GLR Average	21.30%	4.20%	6.10%	1.70%	36.70%	10.40%	7.00%	1.40%	0.60%	1.50%	6.40%	2.10%	0.60%

⁴⁵ The use of the phrase “at three time points” indicates that respondents were surveyed at one time point with questions regarding three different time points.

Of those ex-combatants who were unemployed at the time of sampling the explanations most commonly given were lack of work opportunities (61.2%) followed by financial problems (12.2%).⁴⁶ Uganda departed from this cross-country trend and instead health and disability (46.9%) was most commonly cited as the reason for not working, followed by financial problems (21.9%).

Within demographic categories female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to perceive their unemployment as a result of a lack of opportunity (44.1%) and slightly more likely to view it as a result of financial problems (21.3%) or lack of skills (14.5%) than male ex-combatants (63.8%, 10.9% and 7.6% respectively). Disabled ex-combatants were much more likely to perceive health and disability constraints (58.4%) as their primary reason for unemployment compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (3.2%).

On average across the GLR countries 31.7% of ex-combatants relied on more than one income earning activity.⁴⁷ RoC, where 93.6% of ex-combatants relied on more than one income generating activity, departed dramatically from this cross-country trend. Female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to rely on multiple income generating activities (27.1%) compared to male ex-combatants (32.5%). Again, RoC is the exception to the gendered trend for multiple income sources as 100% of female ex-combatants relied on multiple income sources as compared to 92.8% of males. Disabled ex-combatants were slightly less likely to rely on multiple income generating activities (25.6%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (32.1%).

On average across the GLR countries, 40.6% of ex-combatants returned to their pre-conflict employment / type of work. On average younger ex-combatants were less likely to return to their previous field of work or employment: 28.9% of those aged 18-31 versus 40.1% of those 31-40 and 56.4% of those over 40. Viewed in the context of age at mobilization into conflict, though approximate, it is perhaps understandable that younger ex-combatants do not return to the same employment type – indeed, as 64% of ex-combatants aged 18-30 were under the age of 18 at the time of mobilization they may not yet have had an

⁴⁶ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding reasons for unemployment due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁴⁷ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding multiple incomes sources due to lack of directly comparable data.

established employment type. Further, those ex-combatants aged 18-30 were also slightly more likely to be studying or training at the time of sampling, likely returning to study interrupted by mobilization (10.4% vs. 3.1% of those aged 31-40 and 0.9% of those aged over 40).

When asked to explain why they had chosen to return to their previous line of work after conflict in DRC and RoC ex-combatants most commonly cited three key explanations: (i) lack of other opportunities (51.8%); followed by (ii) that it was a reliable job (18.6%); and (iii) out of economic necessity to take care of the family (16.4%).⁴⁸

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants communicated that they on average would be very willing to move to another part of their own country for a better job (75.4%) – though significantly lower in Uganda (40.7%).⁴⁹ Though there is no cross-country data for comparison on explanations for ex-combatants' attitudes towards migration, looking at Uganda alone may provide some initial insights. The most common explanation for willingness to migrate in Uganda was that ex-combatants were willing to move for financial reasons and the prospect of improving their standard of living (58.4%). A smaller proportion of ex-combatants (15.5%) was bored of their environment and wanted a life change. In Uganda of those ex-combatants who were not willing to move for a better job the most common explanation (29.6%) was that they had a lack of education or qualifications followed by having family responsibilities that prevent them from moving (26.6%). Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants were considerably less likely to be willing to migrate for a job than male ex-combatants (57.6% vs. 78.4%) – though there is no clear explanation for why.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Questions regarding ex-combatants reasons for returning to the same job as prior to conflict were only asked in DRC and RoC.

⁴⁹ This lower willingness to migrate among ex-combatants in Uganda may be related to their overall higher levels of social capital compared to other GLR countries – discussed more in depth in §7.4. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding willingness to migrate for work due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁵⁰ In Uganda both male and female ex-combatants both identify lack of education / qualifications and family responsibilities as the primary reasons for unwillingness to migrate at almost identical levels. Uganda is the only GLR country in which this question was asked.

Across the GLR countries, 64.6% of ex-combatants perceived that they have a harder time finding a job than community members.⁵¹ It appears as though there is a division between Burundi and Uganda on the one hand, where ex-combatants frequently perceived that they have a harder time than community members, and DRC and RoC on the other, where this frequency was still significant but considerably lower than in their neighbors to the east. These findings here are presented in *Table 13* above. Age showed a negative relationship to the likelihood of thinking that ex-combatants have a harder time finding employment.

Table 13: Ex-Combatant Perception of Relative Difficulty of Finding Employment

	Do you think ex-combatants find it harder than others to get a job?	
	Yes	No
Male	65.20%	34.80%
Female	61.20%	38.80%
Age 18-30	71.50%	28.50%
Age 31-40	63.00%	37.00%
Age Over 40	56.50%	43.50%
Disabled	72.90%	27.10%
Not Disabled	64.00%	36.00%
Burundi	83.60%	16.40%
DRC	50.30%	49.70%
Republic of Congo	42.70%	57.30%
Uganda	78.70%	21.30%
GLR Average	64.60%	35.40%

Table 14: Ex-combatant Stigma / Distrust as a Barrier to Gaining Employment

Stigma / Distrust is the Reason Ex-Combatants Find it Difficult to Gain Employment					
	Burundi	DRC	RoC	Uganda	GLR Total
Male	59.1%	43.9%	88.5%	18.5%	52.5%
Female	53.9%	40.0%	100.0%	14.3%	52.5%
Age 18-30	60.8%	39.3%	91.9%	9.5%	50.4%
Age 31-40	54.3%	46.5%	88.0%	26.3%	53.8%
Age Over 40	53.5%	45.2%	86.0%	20.4%	51.3%
Disabled	41.8%	42.3%	90.0%	14.8%	48.1%
Not Disabled	60.0%	43.4%	88.7%	18.1%	52.6%
Country Average	58.7%	43.4%	88.9%	17.6%	52.2%

Of those ex-combatants who thought that ex-combatants find it more difficult to find a job than community members there were diverse explanations across the GLR countries however, the common thread through all countries was stigma or distrust towards ex-combatants at varying levels – though in Uganda the most common explanation was ex-combatants’ low education levels (59.7%).⁵² A table of the proportion of ex-combatants from each GLR country that cited stigma or distrust of ex-combatants as the reason why they find

⁵¹ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of relative challenges of finding a job due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁵² Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding explanations for why ex-combatants find it more difficult to find a job due to lack of directly comparable data.

it more difficult than non-ex-combatants to find a job is presented in *Table 14*. On average across the GLR countries, 52.2% of ex-combatants saw stigma / distrust as a barrier to employment – though this was higher in RoC (88.9%) and lower in Uganda (17.6%).⁵³

Concerning outlook for economic prospects in the future, across the GLR countries 73.7% of ex-combatants perceived that their economic situation would improve in the near future. Across demographic lines the perceptions of ex-combatants about their economic prospects in the future were remarkably even. However, across and within the GLR countries, disabled ex-combatants perceived slightly weaker economic outlooks (66.5% versus 74.3% at a total sample level).

When asked to explain the main reasons for if they perceived their economic situation improving in the future ex-combatants across the GLR countries gave a wide range of responses.⁵⁴ Very generally speaking, we can say that in Uganda ex-combatants with both positive and negative outlooks for the future saw this as tied to their ability to participate and produce in agriculture. In contrast, in Burundi, DRC and RoC ex-combatants more commonly expressed a range of explanations for positive and negative outlooks more closely tied to their attainment of employment and capital. Across all countries disabled ex-combatants saw health as a key barrier to their economic future.

Looking specifically across Burundi, DRC and RoC we can observe that on average ex-combatants work 9.34 months of the year in paid employment – a proportion roughly reflected across all three countries.⁵⁵ However in contrast, when looking at the number of months that ex-combatants spend participating in unpaid labor, for example subsistence farming or labor in trade for food or housing, there is a division that emerges. In DRC and RoC the majority of ex-combatants spend on average 3.97 months in unpaid labor through

⁵³ The analysis throughout the two annexes (§7 & §8) suggest that stigma and distrust are considerably less prominent in Uganda – it is possible that this is related to the dynamics of ex-combatant return in Uganda – where ex-combatants who were abducted return to communities and are seen as both victims and perpetrators. In some communities this dynamic can play a role in greater overall acceptance of ex-combatants in Uganda. In addition, the extensive use of traditional reconciliation ceremonies in Uganda, though not a part of reintegration programming, may play a role in explaining this stark contrast against RoC.

⁵⁴ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding reasons for outlook on future economic situation due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁵⁵ Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from findings regarding annual time spent working for pay and without pay due to lack of directly comparable data.

the year. However in Burundi the ex-combatants work 10.93 months a year in unpaid labor; in fact the vast majority (78.4%) spend 12 months of the year working in unpaid labor. By cross tabulating months of the year spent in paid versus unpaid labor we find that 83.8% of those who spend 12 months of the year in unpaid labor (heavily represented in Burundi) do this in addition to working 12 months of the year for paid labor. Of those who work for paid labor for 9 months of the year (heavily represented in DRC and RoC), 96.2% do so in addition to working 9 months of the year for unpaid labor. These trends are likely indicative of regional and seasonal farming and employment practices.

7.3.2 Non-Economically Active Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

When non-economically active ex-combatants across the GLR countries are asked how they get by when they are not working the most common responses are: (i) 29.3% reply that they rely on their family cash contributions; (ii) 18.6% have to borrow money; and (iii) 12.8% say they just find a way to cope.⁵⁶ Looking within gender demographics we can see that female ex-combatants more commonly rely on family cash contributions (49.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (26.4%). Younger ex-combatants (age 18-30) are also more likely to rely on family cash contributions (37.1% vs. 22.1% of those 31-40 and 26.8% of those over 40).

At a cross-country level of those ex-combatants that are not economically active, 33.2% of them feel that being an ex-combatant contributes to them not working. However, a closer examination of these perceptions within individual GLR countries show a sharp split between Burundi and Uganda in which 70.9% and 66.7%, respectively, felt that their ex-combatant status contributed to their unemployment, versus DRC and RoC where only 22% and 21.1% respectively. Future investigation into the reason for this divergence in ex-combatants' perception of ex-combatant status playing a role in unemployment would add considerable explanatory value in future studies.⁵⁷ Across and within the GLR countries male ex-combatants and younger ex-combatants more commonly see their ex-combatant status as contributing to their unemployment. The extent of these trends can be seen in *Table 15*.

⁵⁶ These are only the three most common explanations across the GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from findings on how non-economically active ex-combatants get by due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁵⁷ To further complicate these findings on the role that ex-combatant status plays in gaining employment for those who are non-economically active, they stand in contrast to the similar findings on the role that stigma / distrust plays in gaining employment presented in *Table 14*.

Table 15: Ex-combatant Status Contributes to Unemployment

	Do you feel that being an ex-combatant contributes to you not working?	
	Yes	No
Male	34.50%	65.50%
Female	25.00%	75.00%
Age 18-30	38.90%	61.10%
Age 31-40	32.10%	67.90%
Age Over 40	27.60%	72.40%
Disabled	43.50%	56.50%
Not Disabled	31.90%	68.10%
Burundi	70.90%	29.10%
DRC	22.00%	78.00%
Republic of Congo	21.10%	78.90%
Uganda	66.70%	33.30%
GLR Average	33.20%	66.80%

Attempting to account for the sharp split between Burundi and Uganda, on the one hand, and DRC and RoC, on the other, in the perception of ex-combatant status playing a contributing role in the unemployment of non-economically active x-combatants is challenging. In Burundi the most common explanation for why ex-combatant status contributes to unemployment is unspecified political problems (44.6%) followed by stigma and distrust in ex-combatants (34.7%). In Uganda, lack of skills and education are the most common explanations (43.5%), followed by poor health (26.1%) and stigma/ distrust in ex-combatants (21.7%). By contrast, in DRC and RoC stigma accounts for the vast majority of explanations for why ex-combatant status contributes to unemployment (80.2% in DRC and 79.6% in RoC). In summary, in DRC and RoC where the likelihood of perceiving ex-combatant status as contributing to unemployment was dramatically lower than in other GLR countries – the perception that stigma and distrust in ex-combatants was the reason why ex-combatant status contributed unemployment was dramatically higher. While the relationship between perceptions of stigma and the perception of ex-combatant status playing a contributing role to being non-economically active is unclear here, stigma should at the very least be flagged as an important dimension.

At a cross-country level there is a very even split in the perceptions of non-economically active ex-combatants on their future prospects of gaining employment – 50.4% saying that they had a good chance of finding a job in the future, 2.4% saying they had a neither good or bad chance, and 48.6% saying that they had a poor chance. Disabled ex-combatants consistently expressed a less positive outlook towards future employment – 25.4% of

disabled ex-combatants across the GLR countries having a positive outlook versus 54.3% of non-disabled ex-combatants. While there is no data to directly compare across GLR countries, it is notable that in Uganda 100% of disabled ex-combatants explained their positive outlook on gaining employment in the future on improved health and/or healing.

7.3.3 Female Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

Of female ex-combatants who were not economically active 36.5% feel that they are discriminated against as a female – though in Burundi this number was significantly higher (66%) and in Uganda significantly lower (16.7%).⁵⁸ Similarly, of female ex-combatants who are economically active 24.5% feel they are discriminated against as a female in the workplace. In both instances female ex-combatants between the ages of 18 and 30 are the most likely age demographic to perceive discrimination (44.7% of those unemployed and 23.2% of those employed). In addition, in both of these instances 34.8% perceive their status as not just a female, but a female ex-combatant is related to the discrimination they encounter.

While there is no data for direct comparison across GLR countries as to who female ex-combatants see as the main people discriminating against them, Uganda can offer some leads for further investigation. In Uganda 50% of unemployed female ex-combatants see female employers or bosses as the main group discriminating against them, the other 50% see everyone as discriminating against them. Of those female ex-combatants who were employed 30% saw female co-workers as the main group discriminating against them, followed by 15.4% who saw all employers as the main group discriminating against them, 15.4% who saw male co-workers discriminating against them, and 15.4% who saw everybody discriminating against them. What is notable is that, at least in the case of Uganda, in both instances of female ex-combatants who are employed and those who are unemployed, the group most commonly perceived as discriminating against them is other females – be they employers or co-workers. This point could be related to female

⁵⁸ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of discrimination among both economically active and non-active female ex-combatants due to lack of directly comparable data.

community members' overall higher levels of fear, and perhaps in turn discrimination, surrounding the return of ex-combatants discussed in §8.5.2.

7.3.4 Disabled Ex-Combatants on Employment Issues

Of disabled ex-combatants who are not economically active 62.4% feel they are discriminated against as a disabled person and 37.6% feel they are not.⁵⁹ Of those disabled ex-combatants who are economically active the proportions of those who feel they are discriminated against is almost perfectly inverse, with 34.2% saying that they perceived being discriminated against and 62.5% saying they did not. When asked if discrimination was related to their ex-combatant status 51.1% of disabled ex-combatants perceive that this discrimination has to do specifically with them being a disabled ex-combatant rather than merely disabled. Female disabled ex-combatants were less likely to perceive discrimination linked to their ex-combatant status, 37.5% versus 58.7%.

Again, as with the case of female ex-combatants on employment issues, there is no data to directly compare across the GLR countries as to who disabled ex-combatants see as the main groups discriminating against them. However, again looking at data from Uganda can offer some initial insights. In Uganda 80% of non-economically active disabled ex-combatants who perceived discrimination see all employers or bosses as discriminating against them, with the remaining 20% seeing everyone as discriminating against them. Of those economically active ex-combatants who perceived discrimination 40% saw the discrimination as coming primarily from all employers or bosses, 20% from male co-workers, 20% from all co-workers, and 20% from everybody. Confirming these trends across the GLR countries would require further triangulation.

7.3.5 Income, Savings and Access to Credit

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize most of the Great Lakes Region, ex-combatants' economic statuses are a good starting point for understanding

⁵⁹ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding perceptions of discrimination among both economically active and non-active disabled ex-combatants due to lack of directly comparable data.

basic individual and household economic stability. However, a deeper examination of ex-combatants’ income, savings and access to credit can begin to reveal some about their ability, or inability, to move beyond mere subsistence by leveraging economic opportunities.

Table 16: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Status

	Are you the sole, or only, breadwinner or do others in your household also earn an income?	
	Sole	Others Assist
Male	53.00%	47.00%
Female	29.10%	70.90%
Age 18-30	41.10%	58.90%
Age 31-40	56.10%	43.90%
Age Over 40	56.70%	43.30%
Disabled	42.40%	57.60%
Not Disabled	50.80%	49.20%
Burundi	42.90%	57.10%
DRC	71.60%	28.40%
Republic of Congo	63.80%	36.20%
Rwanda	79.60%	20.40%
Uganda	40.40%	59.60%
GLR Average	49.60%	50.40%

Across the GLR countries 49.6% of ex-combatants identified as the sole breadwinner of their household with the remaining 50.4% saying that their household relied on multiple incomes. As is visible in *Table 16*, in Rwanda and DRC ex-combatants are notably more likely to identify themselves as the sole breadwinner (79.6% and 71.6% respectively) – generally an indicator of household income instability. Across the GLR countries female ex-combatants were dramatically less likely to identify as the sole breadwinner (29.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (53%). In some GLR countries this disparity between male and female ex-combatants was even more accentuated – for example in Rwanda 100% of female ex-combatants said their household relied on multiple incomes compared to 19.6% of male ex-combatants.

Of those ex-combatants who identify themselves as the sole breadwinner in their household across the GLR countries 39.3% say that they usually have to borrow money to meet their monthly household expenses, 22.4% say that they usually break even, 20.4% rely on family money transfers, 13.5% usually have to use past savings, and only 4.4% have money left over.⁶⁰ As displayed in *Table 17*, these trends were remarkably durable within each of the GLR countries with the exception of RoC in which a similar proportion of ex-combatants

⁶⁰ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding sole household breadwinners due to lack of directly comparable data.

(41.2%) had to borrow to meet monthly expenses, but in contrast to the cross-country trend 41.2% of ex-combatants usually had money left over.⁶¹

Table 17: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Meeting Monthly Expenses

	At the end of each month, do you meet your household expenses?				
	Usually have money left over	Usually break even	Usually have to use past savings	Rely on family money transfers	Usually have to borrow
Male	4.80%	21.50%	14.60%	19.10%	40.10%
Female	2.80%	27.20%	7.80%	27.20%	35.10%
Age 18-30	3.60%	17.60%	14.10%	27.80%	36.90%
Age 31-40	5.20%	22.30%	17.30%	12.40%	42.80%
Age Over 40	5.10%	30.80%	8.70%	15.40%	40.00%
Disabled	5.10%	28.90%	9.30%	22.60%	34.10%
Not Disabled	4.30%	21.50%	14.10%	20.10%	40.00%
Burundi	1.40%	13.90%	20.50%	18.90%	45.30%
DRC	6.80%	22.60%	20.40%	14.60%	35.70%
Republic of Congo	41.20%	0.00%	11.80%	5.90%	41.20%
Uganda	2.50%	32.70%	6.50%	24.20%	34.10%
GLR Average	4.40%	22.40%	13.50%	20.40%	39.30%

Across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants were more likely to rely on family money transfers (27.2%) when compared to male ex-combatants (19.1%), and less likely to use past savings to meet monthly expenses (7.8%) when compared to male ex-combatants (14.6%). Younger ex-combatants were also more likely to rely on family money transfers than their elder peers (27.8% vs. 12.4% of those 31-40 and 15.4% of those over 40).

Of those ex-combatants who were sole breadwinners and did not earn enough to meet monthly household expenses across the GLR countries, they were on average short by 41% of their income.⁶² DRC and, to a larger extent, RoC sat below this cross-country average, with average sole breadwinner income shortages of 23% and 7% respectively. Across demographic lines these disabled ex-combatants had notably higher income shortages on average (52%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (40%). Of those ex-combatants who were sole breadwinners and did meet monthly household expenses there was a clear

⁶¹ Also notable in the RoC figures is that no ex-combatants report that they usually break even. Considering that 41.2% report having a surplus it seems unlikely that none would break even. Thus, figures on sole breadwinner ex-combatants meeting monthly expenses from RoC should be treated with some caution. There may be unknown data capture or coding errors at play.

⁶² Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding monthly income deficits due to lack of directly comparable data.

trend in which ex-combatants had a surplus on average of 22%.⁶³ However, as is visible in *Table 18*, in RoC income surpluses were on average only 5%.

Table 18: Ex-Combatant Sole Breadwinner Average Monthly Income Surpluses and Deficits

	Average Monthly Income Shortage	Average Monthly Income Surplus
Male	40%	22%
Female	45%	21%
Age 18-30	42%	22%
Age 31-40	39%	22%
Age Over 40	41%	22%
Disabled	52%	23%
Not Disabled	40%	22%
Burundi	40%	26%
DRC	23%	24%
Republic of Congo	7%	5%
Uganda	50%	31%
GLR Average	41%	22%

Of those 49.6% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries who say that their household relies on multiple incomes, there was an average contribution of 46% of their total household income. As is visible in *Table 19*, Rwanda and DRC stand out with smaller average non-sole breadwinner household income contributions (35% and 37% respectively). Generally speaking female ex-combatants and younger ex-combatants contributed less on average of total household income (39% and 42% respectively).

Table 19: Ex-Combatant Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contributions

	Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contribution Percentage
Male	47%
Female	39%
Age 18-30	42%
Age 31-40	51%
Age Over 40	48%
Disabled	41%
Not Disabled	47%
Burundi	50%
DRC	37%
Republic of Congo	48%
Rwanda	35%
Uganda	43%
GLR Average	46%

Since reintegration programming 31.7% of ex-combatants have had to borrow money to help meet their daily needs.⁶⁴ Across age, gender and disability demographics all groups lay

⁶³ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding monthly income surpluses due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁶⁴ Due to the varying contexts of reintegration programming across the GLR countries this question should be treated as a broad indicator of the rate at which ex-combatants need to borrow money after the bulk of immediate reintegration assistance (including reinsertion) has passed. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding money borrowing due to lack of directly comparable data.

very closely to the total sample trend. In Burundi, DRC and RoC, of those who did borrow 34.6% borrowed from a friend, 28% borrowed from family, 11.7% borrowed from community leaders – only 4% borrowed from some form of formal credit institution. Ex-combatants aged 18-30 were most likely to borrow from family (34.8%) compared to those 31-40 (22.7%) and those over 40 (19.7%).

In terms of the use of funds borrowed since reintegration programming packages there were three key uses: (i) subsistence; (ii) business investment; and (iii) familial support. 34.6% of ex-combatants identified their *first* use of borrowed funds as mere subsistence, 22.5% as business investments, and 18.9% as assistance for their family.⁶⁵ Similarly, 27.8% of ex-combatants identified their *second* use of borrowed funds as to assist their family, 24.7% as subsistence, and 11.3% as a business investment. As a *third* use of borrowed funds 17.1% used funds as subsistence, 15.1% as assistance to their family, and 10.9% as business investments. The drops in these categories were absorbed into, among others, education for children (10.1%) and medical expenses (7.6%) – especially among disabled ex-combatants. These spending patterns for borrowed money overlap strongly with the spending patterns of reinsertion payments in §7.5.1 – indicating a key set of immediate costs those ex-combatants across the GLR countries face.

Only 6.7% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries have ever applied for micro-credit from a financial institution. This figure is reflected in all GLR countries except for Uganda and Rwanda where higher proportions of ex-combatants (18.4% and 13% respectively) had at some point applied for micro-credit. Ex-combatants over the age of 40 were the most likely age demographic to have applied for micro-credit (11%) when compared to those aged 31-40 (6.5%) and those aged 18-40 (4.6%). This trend is further accentuated in the cases of Uganda (27.9% vs. 13.6% and 9.8%) and Rwanda (18.6% vs. 11.5% and 10.3%) where the overall proportion of ex-combatants who had at some point applied for micro-credit was significantly higher.

⁶⁵ Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from findings on the most common uses of reinsertion payments due to lack of directly comparable data.

Of those ex-combatants who had applied for micro-credit at some point, 76.6% had had a successful application. The only GLR country that did not reflect this average was RoC in which only 28.6% of micro-credit applications were successful – the explanation for this is unclear. Female ex-combatants more commonly had successful micro credit applications (86.9%) than male ex-combatants (78.5%). There were no other consistent demographic trends across the GLR countries.

7.3.6 Economic Associations

Across the GLR countries 37.3% of ex-combatants were currently involved in some form of micro-economic activity.⁶⁶ Burundi departed most significantly from this trend with 78.6% of ex-combatants being involved in a micro-economic activity. In Uganda and Burundi female ex-combatants (39.4% and 100% respectively) were more likely to be currently participating in some form of micro-economic activity than male ex-combatants (32.5% and 76.9% respectively). In contrast, in DRC and RoC female ex-combatants (22.2% and 0.0% respectively) were less likely to be involved in some form of micro-economic activity (46.2% and 80% respectively).

Since receiving reinsertion packages, 72.2% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries have never been a member of an economic association, 21.9% are currently members, and 5.9% have previously been members but are not currently.⁶⁷ Across all GLR countries ex-combatants aged 18-30 were least frequently currently a member of an economic association (15.6%) compared to those aged 31-40 (23%) and those over 40 (29.1%). This could be an indication of older ex-combatants' generally longer economic track record with economic associations and access to credit. Looking to Rwanda and Uganda we can see that local savings and credit associations and farmers associations are the varieties of economic associations that ex-combatants are members of.

⁶⁶ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding current participation in micro-economic activities due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁶⁷ Burundi is excluded from findings regarding membership in economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.

Table 20: Ex-Combatant Economic Association Membership

	Since reinsertion, have you ever been a member of an Economic Association?		
	Yes, have been a member previously, but not now	Yes, am currently a member now	No, have never been a member of an economic association
Male	6.10%	21.60%	72.40%
Female	4.60%	24.40%	71.00%
Age 18-30	4.20%	15.60%	80.30%
Age 31-40	6.50%	23.00%	70.50%
Age Over 40	7.20%	29.10%	63.80%
Disabled	7.10%	24.60%	68.40%
Not Disabled	5.80%	21.60%	72.60%
DRC	2.30%	19.70%	78.00%
Republic of Congo	7.90%	12.10%	80.00%
Rwanda	13.00%	36.60%	50.40%
Uganda	2.70%	21.80%	75.50%
GLR Average	5.90%	21.90%	72.20%

Across the GLR countries the most common benefits that ex-combatants identified receiving as a member of their economic associations were economic networking (34.2%) followed by social networking (21.1%) and financial support (17.9%).⁶⁸ Ex-combatants in Uganda were the least likely to cite social and economic networking as the primary benefit of economic associations (3.1% and 4.6% respectively) and more likely to cite financial support as the primary benefit (42.4%). Female ex-combatants across the GLR countries were more likely to identify economic networking (42.5%) and less likely to identify social networking (12.1%) than male ex-combatants (33% and 22.4% respectively).

Of those ex-combatants across the GLR countries who were members of an economic association, there were varying compositions of ex-combatant versus non-ex-combatant membership in the given economic association.⁶⁹ As is visible in *Table 21* below, at a cross-country level there was a typical bell curve distribution between categories of economic association membership composition. However, closer inspection within countries shows that there are diverging trends. What is noteworthy is that the level at which ex-combatants move into economic associations with only other ex-combatants is low – suggesting that the

⁶⁸ Burundi is excluded from findings regarding the benefits of economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁶⁹ Burundi is excluded from findings regarding the membership composition of economic associations due to lack of directly comparable data.

majority of those ex-combatants who do join an economic association have the benefit of social interaction with community members, building social and economic networks, in addition to the economic benefits of associations.

Table 21: Ex-Combatant Economic Association Members Breakdown

	Who are the members that comprise your economic association?				
	Only ex-combatants	Mixed, but mostly ex-combatants	Mixed with both ex-combatants and community members	Mixed, but mostly community members	Community members, no ex-combatants
DRC	18.0%	57.1%	0.0%	24.9%	0.0%
RoC	8.9%	26.8%	0.0%	62.5%	1.8%
Rwanda	12.6%	32.3%	3.9%	51.2%	0.0%
Uganda	6.7%	2.2%	91.1%	0.0%	0.0%
GLR Average	11.8%	29.2%	28.3%	30.5%	.2%

7.3.7 Summary

Across the GLR countries the general economic trajectory of ex-combatants is positive. The number of ex-combatants who are unemployed is shrinking – these ex-combatants are most commonly being absorbed into self-employment in agriculture, followed by self-employment in non-agricultural business. In line with this positive trajectory, ex-combatants generally have a positive outlook on their economic situation in the future; 76.3% saying that they expected their situation to improve in the future. When ex-combatants explain this positive outlook they generally cite improved agricultural production and improved access to capital and credit – two explanations that can be tied to ex-combatants’ main paths of economic reintegration: self-employment in agriculture and small business. This signals that ex-combatants’ perceptions of their future economic situation and the pathways to attaining it are rooted in their collective trajectory towards self-employment in agriculture or small business.

This generally positive economic trajectory has seen ex-combatants reach near parity, but slightly weaker across all indicators, in levels of economic stability compared to community members. Ex-combatants are more likely to be unemployed, less likely to meet their household expenses, and more likely to borrow from family than formal economic institutions to close this income gap than community members. Ex-combatants are considerably less likely to participate in micro-economic activities or belong to economic associations than community members – an indication of their considerably shortened

economic track record and the time lost while in conflict for establishing themselves in formal economic institutions.

Regarding ex-combatants' perceptions of the barriers they face to gaining productive economic status, the majority of ex-combatants cite lack of opportunity, signaling that they generally identify the barriers to economic improvement as contextualized in larger development challenges that affect the entire community. Simultaneously, ex-combatants perceive themselves as a disadvantaged group that have a harder time finding a job and are subject to stigma and distrust in the community. By contrast, community members are much more likely to cite lack of access to credit and lack of skills as key barriers to their economic stability.

It appears that ex-combatants understand the dual dimensions of the barriers they face to gaining a productive economic status – the larger context of severe development challenges that characterize the GLR countries, and the context of being an ex-combatant in this development setting – facing challenges with stigma and distrust in the community. Indeed, ex-combatants are far more likely to identify the social networking value of economic interactions, bringing about the slow set of social interactions that erode stigma and facilitate social reintegration, than community members. However, in this it appears that with weaker economic track records ex-combatants also fail to recognize capital and credit barriers to economic prosperity to the same extent as community members.

In summary, ex-combatants' economic trajectories are generally positive though in absolute terms they are disadvantaged to community members. The barriers to reaching true parity with community members revolve around: (i) closing literacy, education and skill gaps with community members; (ii) establishing an economic track record; (iii) accessing credit and other financial institutions; and (iv) eroding stigma and distrust through the slow process of confrontation that social reintegration entails.

7.3.7.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

In this analysis of the economic dimensions of reintegration, female ex-combatants continue to stand out as a key vulnerable group. Female ex-combatants are more likely to be unemployed than male ex-combatants and more likely to see lack of skills as among their core barriers to reaching economic stability – this aligns with earlier analysis revealing that female ex-combatants have significantly lower literacy and educational achievement levels compared to male ex-combatants. Female ex-combatants and community members alike report significant levels discrimination on the basis of gender as a barrier to gaining employment, though female ex-combatants report this at twice the rate of community members. This may suggest that stigma associated with ex-combatant status may have an amplifying effect on already entrenched gender inequalities present in the community. Interestingly while female community members that experienced gender-based discrimination identified it as coming primarily from males, female ex-combatants identified female community members as the main sources of discrimination. This point may be related to female community members' overall higher levels of fear surrounding the return of ex-combatants to their community discussed in §8.5.2 of the community dynamics annex of this study. Collectively, these issues represent a clear set of challenges for female ex-combatants in achieving economic reintegration.

Health is a key barrier to economic reintegration for disabled ex-combatants who are the most likely demographic group, of ex-combatants and community members alike, to be unemployed at the time of sampling across the GLR countries. Accordingly disabled ex-combatants are the least likely demographic group to have a positive outlook on their economic future. In addition disabled ex-combatants who are unemployed report high levels of discrimination in seeking employment on the basis of their disability (twice the proportion of females that perceive discrimination). However – those who are employed perceive discrimination on the basis of their disability at half the rate (on par with females). This may suggest that while there is clearly discrimination in terms of gender and disability, there is an amplifying effect that overall levels of stigma and distrust in the community have on these dynamics.

7.3.7.2 Unique Country Trends

In terms of economic reintegration ex-combatants in the Republic of Congo display a number of unique trends – though they do not necessarily depart from the dominant narrative of economic reintegration for ex-combatants across the GLR. Most notably perhaps is that while self-employment in agriculture is still an important economic pathway for ex-combatants in RoC, self-employment in non-agricultural services is the dominant economic path. It is possible that migration to the urban capital of Brazzaville among ex-combatants has removed agriculture as a viable economic activity – lending some explanation to this trend of economic status tending away from the self-employment in agriculture.

7.4 Social Capital

Examining the social dynamics of ex-combatant reintegration requires the exploration of a range of concepts including: (i) social networks, (ii) trust, (iii) social cohesion, (iv) social inclusion, and (v) empowerment. Collectively these various concepts come together to represent social capital, essentially the idea that social networks have value, both tangible and intangible, for individuals and communities and are a key indicator of the overall social health of ex-combatants – and in turn their ability to leverage this social capital towards social and economic outcomes. Examining social capital can allow us some insights into the process of social reintegration that ex-combatants go through upon return to their communities. However, when looking at the complex social dynamics that ex-combatants experience we cannot draw meaningful insights without contextualizing these social dimensions with that of the community at large. Thus for optimal analytical value this section of the report should be read in conjunction with §8.4 on social capital in the community dynamics annex of this study.

7.4.1 Networks and Sociability

Across the GLR countries ex-combatants and community members are unlikely to be in many social groups – though community members are in slightly more. On average ex-combatants

were in 0.46 social groups, while community members were in 0.63.⁷⁰ Uganda stood apart from this overall GLR trend – community members averaging 0.93 social groups. Age showed a positive relationship to the average number of social groups among ex-combatants and community members alike, however this trend was much more pronounced among ex-combatants – in which young (18-30) ex-combatants have the lowest average number of social groups across all demographic groups (0.37).

Across the GLR countries, 38.5% of ex-combatants said that the current number of social groups to which they are a member is greater than that of one year ago, 50.8% said the number is the same as one year prior and 10.7% said that their current number of social groups is less than it was one year ago. These proportions were reflected well within the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda, in which 85.3% said that their number of social groups had stayed the same in the last year. Across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants less frequently saw an increase in their number of social groups (23.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (41.4%). Similarly, disabled ex-combatants less frequently saw an increase in their number of social groups (24.4%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (40.1%).

Of ex-combatants, 32.6% were on a management or organizing committee for a local group or organization. Female ex-combatants were significantly less likely to be on a management committee (25.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (34%). Ex-combatants over the age of 40 are most frequently on management or organizing committees (37.4%) compared to those 31-40 (36.8%) and those 18-30 (24.3%). The fact that older ex-combatants (over 40) have the most social groups on average and are most frequently on management committees is a broad indication of their social footing in the community. Inversely it flags younger ex-combatants as lagging behind in building a social foundation in the community.

Generally speaking a large proportion of ex-combatants across the GLR countries had contact with their families (91.3%). However, DRC is a clear standout in this trend of high familial contact – only 62.1% reported having contact with their families. What is even more

⁷⁰ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding social networks due to lack of data.

notable though is that DRC is the only GLR country in which ex-combatants have dramatically more contact with their families than community members have with their own families (62.1% vs. 31%).

Of those ex-combatants who did have contact with their families, 67% across the GLR countries had daily contact with their family, 12.4% had weekly contact, 10.2% had monthly contact, and the remainder had less frequent contact.⁷¹ As visible in *Table 22*, Uganda stands out most clearly from the cross-country trend in this instance, as 92.7% of ex-combatants in Uganda who had contact with their family had daily contact with their family. In general female ex-combatants had slightly higher levels of daily contact than male ex-combatants (76.5% vs. 64.9%). The only standout along gender demographic lines is in RoC, in which only 11.1% of female ex-combatants had daily contact with their family and 45.5% had contact with their family less frequently than monthly – as compared to male ex-combatants of whom 30.4% had daily contact and 22.2% had contact less frequently than monthly. Disabled ex-combatants were more likely to have daily contact with their families (88.2%) than non-disabled ex-combatants (64.7%). In all, ex-combatants across the GLR countries had daily contact with their families slightly more frequently than community members (67% vs. 63.9%).

Table 22: Ex-Combatant Frequency of Familial Contact

	Frequency of contact between community member and immediate family these days						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Half yearly	Once a year	Occasionally	Never
Male	64.90%	13.10%	11.60%	1.20%	1.00%	7.70%	0.40%
Female	76.50%	9.70%	4.20%	1.40%	1.50%	6.20%	0.50%
Age 18-30	71.00%	10.00%	8.80%	1.50%	2.00%	5.90%	0.80%
Age 31-40	59.90%	13.40%	13.60%	1.60%	0.30%	10.50%	0.60%
Age Over 40	71.90%	13.20%	7.80%	0.30%	1.00%	5.80%	0.00%
Disabled	88.20%	6.80%	1.10%	0.00%	0.00%	3.90%	0.00%
Not Disabled	64.70%	13.20%	11.20%	1.40%	1.30%	7.90%	0.40%
DRC	35.30%	20.00%	23.50%	1.10%	2.20%	17.90%	0.00%
RoC	28.90%	24.30%	22.10%	3.00%	2.50%	18.00%	1.40%
Uganda	92.70%	4.80%	1.80%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	0.00%
GLR Average	67.00%	12.40%	10.20%	1.20%	1.10%	7.50%	0.50%

Across the GLR countries 27.2% of ex-combatants thought that contact with their family could be more frequent and 72.8% felt that their current level of contact with their family was the most they would prefer (see *Table 23*). In DRC, where ex-combatants had the lowest

⁷¹ Rwanda and Burundi are absent from findings on levels and frequency of familial contact, as well as preferred levels of familial contact, due to lack of directly comparable data.

actual levels of familial contact, ex-combatants were dramatically more likely than average to think that their frequency of familial contact could be more – even though those who did have contact had it at a similar level to other GLR countries.

Interestingly, ex-combatants across the GLR were more likely to think the level of contact that they had with their families was the maximum they would want than community members (72.8% vs.29.3%). Additionally, although in RoC female ex-combatants had notably lower contact with their families than male ex-combatants (as outlined above), they actually less frequently expressed that they thought they could have more frequent contact with their family (41.9%) than their male ex-combatant counterparts (48.4%).

In DRC and RoC, the GLR countries where ex-combatants most frequently thought they could have more contact with their families, 30.9% of those who thought they could see their family more frequently cited the distance of travel as the main reason they do not see their family more often, 20.4% cited lack of time, and 17.1% cited the cost of travel – flagging the geographic spread of families as a dimension to reintegration in these countries.

Table 23: Ex-Combatant Desired Level of Familial Contact

	Is the current level of contact the maximum you wish or could it be more frequent?	
	Maximum	Could be more frequent
Male	71.00%	29.00%
Female	80.40%	19.60%
Age 18-30	71.10%	28.90%
Age 31-40	69.10%	30.90%
Age Over 40	83.40%	16.60%
Disabled	83.00%	17.00%
Not Disabled	71.40%	28.60%
DRC	36.70%	63.30%
Republic of Congo	52.30%	47.70%
Uganda	92.80%	7.20%
GLR Average	72.80%	27.20%

Across the GLR countries, 49.1% of all ex-combatants had lots of friends, 30% had a few, good friends and 20.9% did not have many friends.⁷² This trend is well reflected within the GLR countries with the exception of Rwanda – where 23% had lots of friends, 44.2% had a few good friends and 32.8% did not have many friends. On average female ex-combatants slightly less frequently had lots of friends (44.3%) and more frequently had a few good

⁷² Burundi is excluded from findings regarding number of friends due to lack of directly comparable data.

friends (33.4%) or not many friends (22.3%) than male ex-combatants (49.9%, 29.5% and 20.6% respectively). Rwanda is the exception to this gender demographic trend in which female ex-combatants slightly more frequently than male ex-combatants had lots of friends (27.3%) or a few good friends (54.5%) than male ex-combatants (22.9% and 43.9% respectively).

Across the GLR countries there were clear and consistent trends in terms of the age, gender, ex-combatant status and educational background of the friends of ex-combatants.⁷³ The majority of ex-combatants across the GLR countries were likely to have friends within the same age and gender categories, but less likely to have friends who were ex-combatants or shared the same education level. These trends are displayed in *Table 24*.

What is perhaps most noteworthy in these findings is that ex-combatants’ friend groups appear to be fairly diversified, especially in terms of having friends who are ex-combatants. Indeed, only 26.7% of ex-combatants say that most of their friends are fellow ex-combatants, 23.6% say some, 36.4% say few and 13.3% say none. This suggests that ex-combatants are not becoming an isolated social group – only socializing with each other.

Table 24: Ex-Combatant Friend Group Demographics Summary.

	Most friends are the same age	Most friends are the same gender	Most friends are ex-combatants	Most friends have the same education level
Male	52.3%	65.4%	27.7%	24.0%
Female	53.5%	63.6%	21.2%	21.7%
Age 18-30	55.3%	67.0%	23.9%	25.5%
Age 31-40	50.3%	63.7%	28.7%	19.4%
Age Over 40	49.0%	63.2%	26.7%	23.7%
Disabled	50.5%	61.2%	21.0%	26.6%
Not Disabled	52.6%	65.4%	27.1%	23.4%
GLR Average	52.5%	65.1%	26.7%	23.6%

Across the GLR countries, when asked who they would turn to for help if they were to encounter an economic problem 39.7% of ex-combatants responded that they would turn to

⁷³ Burundi is excluded here from findings regarding the proportion of other ex-combatants in ex-combatants’ social groups due to lack of data. Rwanda is excluded from findings on age, gender, and ex-combatant makeup of ex-combatant’s social groups due to lack of data. However, the case of ex-combatant status of ex-combatants’ social groups Rwanda is excluded from direct comparison due to a scaling issue in the data. In Rwanda 68.9% said that some of their friends were ex-combatants, 22.9% said that most of them were ex-combatants, 7.6% said none were ex-combatants and only 0.5% said that all their friends were ex-combatants.

their family; 30.9% responded that they would turn to a friend; 13.5% would turn to no one; and 10% would rely on a range of business, communal, or formal financial resources.

Generally across the GLR countries older ex-combatants were more likely to rely on friends for economic help than younger ex-combatants – who were, themselves, more likely to rely on family than older ex-combatants. This lends evidence to the idea that, in general, ex-combatants' primary pathway to economic assistance is through their families and extended social circles as opposed to formal institutional pathways. Indeed, while as a whole ex-combatants would turn to similar sources as their community member counterparts for economic help, community members were slightly more likely (7.5% vs. 3.3%) to rely on formal institutions.

7.4.2 Trust and Solidarity

Drawing from Rwanda and Uganda we can see that ex-combatants have generally high levels of trust in their communities.⁷⁴ Of the respondents, 58% said that they trust people in their community to a great extent, 31.2% said to neither a great nor small extent, and the remaining 10.8% said they trusted those in their community to a small extent. In Rwanda and Uganda female ex-combatants generally trusted less than male ex-combatants (18.5% vs. 9.5% trusted those in their community to a small extent). Age displayed a positive correlation to high trust in others in the community (47% of those 18-30, 62% of those 31-40, and 64.3% of those over 40). Overall ex-combatants displayed a similar level of trust, though slightly weaker than community members.

Across the GLR countries, 18.3% of ex-combatants felt that if they were to disagree with what everyone else in their area agreed on, they would not at all feel free to speak out, 60.2% felt that they would definitely feel free to speak out and 19.5% felt that they would only feel free to speak out on certain matters.⁷⁵ This trend was visible within each of the GLR countries; only in Uganda was willingness to speak out slightly higher – 9.6% feeling they would not speak out, 71.3% feeling they would definitely speak out and 19.1% feeling that

⁷⁴ This specific question regarding the overall extent of community trust was asked to ex-combatants only in Rwanda and Uganda.

⁷⁵ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding willingness to speak out due to lack of directly comparable data.

they would only speak out on specific matters. Community members were slightly more likely to feel they could definitely speak out.

Across the GLR countries, 52% of ex-combatants felt that in the last year / two years the level of trust between people in the area that they lived in had improved, 38.3% felt that trust had stayed the same and the remaining 9.7% felt that trust had deteriorated (displayed in *Table 25*).⁷⁶ Female ex-combatants less frequently thought that trust had improved (42.3%) than male ex-combatants (53.4%). Disabled ex-combatants also slightly less frequently felt that trust had improved (45.8%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (52.7%). Community members were less likely to see trust as improved than ex-combatants (43.4% vs. 52%) but more likely to think it had stayed the same (47.9% vs. 38.3%).

Table 25: Ex-Combatant Perceptions of Change in Trust

	In the past year/ past two years has the level of trust in your area got better, worse, or stayed about the same?		
	Better	Same	Worse
Male	53.40%	36.90%	9.80%
Female	42.30%	48.50%	9.20%
Age 18-30	51.50%	37.90%	10.50%
Age 31-40	54.30%	36.30%	9.40%
Age Over 40	50.70%	40.40%	8.80%
Disabled	45.80%	43.60%	10.60%
Not Disabled	52.70%	37.70%	9.60%
Burundi	62.70%	24.00%	13.20%
DRC	23.30%	67.70%	9.00%
Republic of Congo	73.70%	19.70%	6.60%
Rwanda	59.30%	28.00%	12.70%
Uganda	43.60%	48.60%	7.70%
GLR Average	52.00%	38.30%	9.70%

When those ex-combatants who felt that trust had improved were asked to explain why they thought it had improved the most common responses were: (i) 25.4% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries felt that peace in general was the reason for improved trust; and (ii) 22.5% thought communal living and growing understanding were the reasons for improved trust.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ In Uganda and Rwanda this question was asked with reference to the last year, where as in DRC and RoC it was asked in reference to the last two years. This creates some issues with periodization and comparability. These figures should be treated with caution. Interestingly, though the question refers to a longer period of time in DRC, this does not appear to translate to greater perceptions of improved trust among community members. In the case of DRC this may be the product of continuing insecurity.

⁷⁷ It is unclear whether ex-combatants being charged for their behavior is in formal or informal charging / accountability. Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding drivers of improved or depreciating levels of trust due to lack of directly comparable data.

It is important to note that while these trends give a general picture of the perceived drivers of trust across the GLR countries, within each country there were unique trends as well that deserve further investigation – for example in Burundi the charging of ex-combatants for their behavior was seen as the main driver of improvements in trust by 56% of the ex-combatants sample.⁷⁸ One demographic trend that does endure across the GLR countries is that those ex-combatants aged 18-30 most frequently see the charging of ex-combatants for their behavior as the central driver of improved trust – 32.2% of those 18-30 compared to 15.8% of those 31-40 and 5% of those over the age of 40.

When those ex-combatants who felt that trust had gotten worse were asked to explain why they thought trust had deteriorated, 27.8% cited dishonest people and 21.9% cited political problems or distrust in authorities. While the internal proportions of these two driving factors behind worsening perceptions of trust among ex-combatants varied within the individual GLR countries they were consistently the two most common explanations.

7.4.3 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

When asked about the level of diversity in the area in which they live ex-combatants displayed a spread of responses across the GLR countries almost identical to community members.⁷⁹ 35.2% of ex-combatants described the people in the area in which they live in as characterized by many differences (diverse), 24% characterized them as having neither a great or small extent of differences, and 40.8% said there were few differences between people (not diverse). As visible in *Table 26*, Rwanda stood out from this trend – 61.4% saw high diversity, 17.8% average, and 20.8% low diversity.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Further information regarding trends within each of the countries can be found in each of the individual survey reports from the GLR countries.

⁷⁹ Here the perception of diversity is constituted by the perception of unspecified differences among people in the community. Another way to phrase this would be the level of “differentness” that ex-combatants perceive in their community.

⁸⁰ It is possible that the perception of differences (or diversity) can have a varying range of meanings across the contexts of different GLR countries. For example DRC is a country with rich diversity along cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups. However, the difficulty of movement in eastern DRC means that many such socio-linguistic groups live in isolation from each other. The community members may accurately perceive low diversity in their community, though at a national level diversity may be high. In contrast, the perception of differences (or diversity) may be high in Rwanda due to the centrality of the Hutu / Tutsi divide in the social history of the country and conflict there. Deciphering the role of perceived differences across the different GLR countries is a challenging task with few clear answers.

Table 26: Ex-Combatant Perceptions of Community Diversity

	To what extent do differences between people characterize your community?		
	To a great extent, i.e. lots of differences between people	Neither great nor small extent	To a small extent, i.e. few differences between people
Male	36.20%	24.00%	39.80%
Female	29.10%	23.80%	47.10%
Age 18-30	35.20%	25.60%	39.20%
Age 31-40	37.60%	23.20%	39.20%
Age Over 40	32.30%	21.70%	46.10%
Disabled	36.50%	21.60%	42.00%
Not Disabled	35.10%	24.30%	40.60%
Burundi	30.30%	25.20%	44.50%
DRC	42.40%	37.10%	20.50%
Republic of Congo	28.80%	21.30%	49.90%
Rwanda	61.40%	17.80%	20.80%
Uganda	20.90%	16.40%	62.70%
GLR Average	35.30%	24.00%	40.80%

When asked whether or not the differences between people (level of diversity) were a source of problems such as disagreement, arguments, and disputes there were split results. In DRC and RoC, a low portion of ex-combatants saw differences between people (diversity) as a problem (13.7% and 13.6%, respectively), whereas in Burundi and Uganda these differences were much more likely to be perceived as the source of problems (72.7% and 55.4%, respectively). A similar split was seen in the community member sample. In DRC and RoC, when questioned further as to the type of problems that these differences can cause, 27.8% of ex-combatants said that envy, slander, and taunts were the most common problems, 17.8% said misunderstandings were the main problem, and 10.8% said that mistrust was the result of differences (diversity) between people in the area they live. Unfortunately there is no data available from Burundi and Uganda on the types of problems associated with diversity.

When questioned as to the level of togetherness that ex-combatants feel with other people (unspecified who) in the area they live the response across the GLR countries was generally a high level of togetherness / closeness that was on par with community members. 76.6% felt close with others, 16.6% felt neither close nor distant and 6.8% felt distant from others in the area they lived – this trend was well reflected within the individual GLR countries – though in DRC, ex-combatants were slightly less likely to report high levels of togetherness (63.1%). Across demographic dimensions only age stood out – which showed a slight positive relationship to the likelihood of feeling close to the community (75.3% of those 18-30, 77.6% of those 31-40, and 79.3% of those over 40).

Across the GLR countries, 69.3% of ex-combatants had at some point in the past year worked with others in the place where they live to do something for the benefit of the community. Burundi and Rwanda stand out with even higher levels of working with the community – 79.3% in Burundi and 90.8% in Rwanda.⁸¹ Female ex-combatants less frequently took part in community projects (57.5%) when compared to male ex-combatants (71%) across the GLR countries – again, with the exception of Rwanda where female participation in community projects in the last year was absolute (100%), exceeding male ex-combatants (90.5%).

When ex-combatants were asked whether there were any penalties for those who did not participate in community activities, 33.3% responded that penalties were very likely, 23.9% that they were somewhat likely, 16.9% that they were neither unlikely nor likely, 7% that they were somewhat unlikely, 14.3% that they were very unlikely and 4.7% that total social exclusion would be the result.⁸²

7.4.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is an important indicator of overall levels of social capital and is understood as a result of individuals' levels of social connection and their ability to leverage the benefits of these connections in the community and the larger context of society. Collectively, the extent of these benefits, and in turn the functions that they fulfill for individuals, play a role in the psychosocial concept of empowerment – the individual or collective ability to affect change in one's life. In exploring issues around empowerment this study builds on survey data regarding: (i) the extent to which ex-combatants feel generally happy; (ii) the extent to which they perceive that they can make important decisions; (iii) the extent to which they have control over decisions in their daily life; (iv) the extent to which they feel valued by the community; and (v) the extent to which they engage in collective political action.

⁸¹ In the case of Rwanda, higher levels of working for the benefit of the community is very likely a result of the institutionalized practice of *Umuganda* – a practice dating back to Rwanda's colonial era in which on the last Saturday of every month all able bodied adults participate in unpaid communal labor – with enforced penalties for non-participation. In Burundi this trend is likely related to the similar policy of *Travaux Communautaires*.

⁸² Rwanda and Uganda are excluded from these findings due to lack of directly comparable data.

Across the GLR countries when asked about their level of happiness 57.2% of all ex-combatants said that they were generally happy, 23.7% were neither happy nor unhappy, and 19.1% were generally unhappy. In this regard ex-combatants were considerably less likely to report themselves as happy than community members (57.2% vs. 71.8%). This trend was well displayed with the individual GLR countries with the exception of Burundi in which the spread of responses from ex-combatants was much more even (31.6% happy, 39.7% neither happy nor unhappy, and 28.7% unhappy). Generally speaking, female ex-combatants were slightly less happy across the GLR countries than male ex-combatants in terms of happiness within the GLR countries with the exception of Rwanda where female ex-combatants were considerably more happy (90.9%) compared to male ex-combatants (61.6%). Across the GLR countries there was a slight positive relationship between age and happiness – 54% of those aged 18-30, 58.1% of those 31-40, and 60.7% of those over 40 identified as happy.

Table 27: Ex-Combatant Empowerment (Power, Ability, Control)

	Do you feel that you have the power to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?		
	Large extent	Medium extent	Small extent
Male	62.50%	24.60%	12.90%
Female	44.10%	32.80%	23.10%
Age 18-30	59.80%	23.20%	16.90%
Age 31-40	66.10%	25.00%	9.00%
Age Over 40	56.50%	29.90%	13.60%
Disabled	49.00%	26.40%	24.60%
Not Disabled	61.00%	25.50%	13.50%
GLR Average	59.90%	25.70%	14.40%
	Do you feel that you have the ability to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?		
	Able to change life	Neither able nor unable	Unable to change life
Male	84.80%	10.40%	4.80%
Female	73.00%	15.80%	11.30%
Age 18-30	80.70%	13.30%	6.00%
Age 31-40	85.40%	10.80%	3.80%
Age Over 40	84.30%	8.20%	7.50%
Disabled	68.80%	14.90%	16.30%
Not Disabled	84.00%	11.00%	5.00%
GLR Average	82.90%	11.20%	5.90%
	How much control do you feel you have over decisions that affect your everyday activities?		
	Lots of Control	Neither a lot nor a little control	Little Control
Male	73.40%	18.40%	8.20%
Female	55.00%	28.90%	16.00%
Age 18-30	68.90%	20.20%	10.90%
Age 31-40	76.60%	16.80%	6.50%
Age Over 40	70.30%	22.00%	7.70%
Disabled	63.50%	21.10%	15.50%
Not Disabled	72.10%	19.50%	8.50%
GLR Total	71.10%	19.70%	9.20%

When questioned about the extent to which they felt that they had the power to make important decisions that change the course of their lives 59.9% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries responded that they felt that they had this power to a large extent, 25.7% to neither a large nor small extent, and 14.4% to a small extent.⁸³ This trend was consistently displayed within all of the GLR countries. In examining demographic subgroups both female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants showed considerably lower perceptions of power in shaping their lives (see *Table 27*). Overall, 44.1% of female ex-combatants compared to 62.5% of male ex-combatants felt they had the power to make important decisions in their lives to a large extent. Similarly, 49% of disabled ex-combatants compared to 61% of non-disabled ex-combatants felt they had the power to make important decisions in their lives to a large extent.

While in the case of female ex-combatants the disparity with males was absorbed into both the categories “neither to a large nor small extent” and “to a small extent,” however in the case of disabled ex-combatants this difference with non-disabled ex-combatants was almost absolutely absorbed into the category “to a small extent” (28.1% of disabled vs. 16.1% of non-disabled). This may perhaps suggest that there is a more polarizing dynamic to the nature of empowerment for disabled ex-combatants than female ex-combatants, or any other demographic subgroup for that matter.

Ex-combatants were asked the extent to which they felt they had the ability to make important decisions that change their lives.⁸⁴ Across the GLR countries, 82.9% felt they were able to change their lives, 11.2% felt that they were neither able nor unable, and 5.9% felt that they were unable to make important decisions to change their lives. As with sense of power to change their lives, female and disabled ex-combatants less frequently reported having the ability to change their lives (73% and 68.8% respectively).

When questioned as to the extent to which ex-combatants felt they had control over decisions that affect their everyday activities, 71.1% of all ex-combatants across the GLR

⁸³ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ability to make large decisions due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁸⁴ Rwanda and Burundi are absent from findings on ability to make important decisions in life due to lack of directly comparable data.

countries expressed that they felt that they had a high level of control, 19.7% felt that they had neither a little nor a lot of control, and 9.2% felt that they had little control over decisions.⁸⁵ This decreasing trend is present in all the GLR countries, however the peak is slightly shifted in Uganda where the curve is slightly different (52.1%, 31.4%, 16.5%). Female ex-combatants were consistently less likely to feel they had lots of control over decisions in their lives (55%) when compared to male ex-combatants (73.4%). Disabled ex-combatants also were consistently less likely to feel they had a high level of control over decisions in their lives (63.5%) when compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (70.3%). Overall ex-combatants felt slightly higher levels of empowerment than community members in all three (power, ability, and control) measures.⁸⁶

Table 28: Ex-Combatant Perception of Individual Impact on Community

	Do you personally have a positive or negative impact on the place that you live?		
	Positive impact	Neither positive nor negative impact	Negative impact
Male	59.90%	27.20%	12.90%
Female	56.60%	29.90%	13.50%
Age 18-30	52.40%	33.30%	14.30%
Age 31-40	64.40%	24.30%	11.20%
Age Over 40	67.80%	21.00%	11.20%
Disabled	74.10%	18.80%	7.20%
Not Disabled	57.80%	28.60%	13.70%
Burundi	41.50%	42.80%	15.70%
DRC	38.80%	37.90%	23.40%
Republic of Congo	47.10%	32.60%	20.30%
Rwanda	99.20%	0.00%	0.80%
Uganda	82.10%	16.50%	1.50%
GLR Average	59.50%	27.50%	13.00%

When asked to gage the impact that they have on the place they live, 59.5% of ex-combatants across the GLR countries feel that they have a positive impact, 27.57% feel that they have neither a positive nor negative impact, and 13% feel that they have a negative impact.⁸⁷ This trend is well reflected in Burundi, DRC and RoC – however, in Uganda and Rwanda perceptions of positive impact were much more frequent (82.1% of ex-combatants in Uganda perceived that they had a positive impact and 99.2% of those in Rwanda) – see *Table 28*. Across age demographics lines there was a positive relationship visible between

⁸⁵ This question regarding community members’ levels of control over everyday decisions has been recoded from a five point scale to a three point scale for increased comparability to the other two measures of empowerment (power and ability) presented here.
⁸⁶ The analytical distinction between senses of empowerment in terms of power vs. ability is not clear. Interpreting any meaning to the disparity in levels of power and ability is therefore problematic and these data should be treated as a broad indicator of a positive sense of empowerment rather than as exact measures of different components of empowerment.
⁸⁷ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants’ perceived impact on their community due to lack of directly comparable data.

age and ex-combatants perception of having a positive impact on the area in which they lived – 52.4% of those aged 18-30, 64.4% of those 31-40, and 67.8% of those over 40.

Across the GLR countries, 72.1% of all ex-combatants felt that people in the area in which they live valued them, the remaining 27.9% did not feel valued. Uganda was the only country that departed slightly from the cross-country trend, displaying higher levels of perceived value among ex-combatants (94.6%). Female ex-combatants were slightly less likely to feel valued (62.3%) compared to male ex-combatants (73.6%).

Table 29: Ex-Combatant Frequency of Public Gathering to Express Concerns

	In the past year, how often have you joined other people to express concerns to officials or local leaders on issues benefiting the community?			
	Never	Once	A few times, five or less	Many times, more than five
Male	40.80%	12.70%	18.30%	28.30%
Female	58.80%	12.80%	16.80%	11.60%
Age 18-30	46.10%	13.10%	18.00%	22.70%
Age 31-40	38.80%	10.70%	17.20%	33.30%
Age Over 40	40.90%	14.20%	20.30%	24.60%
Disabled	37.00%	7.40%	15.90%	39.70%
Not Disabled	43.70%	13.30%	18.40%	24.70%
Burundi	25.60%	9.20%	30.70%	34.50%
DRC	64.10%	15.50%	12.80%	7.60%
Republic of Congo	62.30%	17.00%	14.50%	6.10%
Rwanda	1.90%	0.30%	6.80%	91.00%
Uganda	49.60%	17.90%	22.10%	10.30%
GLR Average	43.00%	12.70%	18.10%	26.30%

Regarding collective political action, ex-combatants were asked how often they had joined with other people to express concerns to government officials or local leaders on issues concerning the community. Across the GLR countries 43% of all ex-combatants said that they had never done so in the last year, 12.7% that they had once, 18.1% that they had a few times (five or less), and 26.3% that they had many times (more than five times) – levels very similar to community members. Burundi to some extent, and Rwanda to a greater extent, broke from this trend and displayed higher levels of collective political action (visible in *Table 29*). In Burundi, 34.5% of ex-combatants had joined to address local leaders many times (more than 5) and 30.7% had a few times (less than five). In Rwanda, 91% of ex-combatants had joined to address local leaders many times in the last year.⁸⁸ Across the GLR countries

⁸⁸ This high rate of public gathering to express concerns in Rwanda is likely another effect of Umuganda. While the main purpose of Umuganda is community work it also serves as a platform for leaders to communicate important news on a national and local level as well as for individuals and communities to express concerns and plan for future Umuganda. Further, every community has an ex-combatant representative who is responsible for relaying specific communication.

female ex-combatants were less likely to have gathered for collective political action than male ex-combatants, though at a very similar level to female community members— 58.8% of female ex-combatants having never gathered and 11.6% having gathered many times versus 40.8% and 28.3.2% respectively of male ex-combatants.

When asked to what extent local government and leaders take into account the concerns voiced by their community when they make decisions, 17.6% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries felt that local leaders took them into account a lot, 41.2% felt their voices were taken into account a little, and 41.2% felt that their concerns were not taken into account at all – nearly identical levels to those expressed by community members.⁸⁹ Across gender and disability dimensions, ex-combatants’ responses were approximately even. However concerning age, older ex-combatants (aged over 40) were the most likely age demographic group (54.7%) to feel that their concerns were not taken into account, while younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) were most likely of age demographic groups to feel that they were taken into account a lot (19.2%). This is likely related to older ex-combatants overall higher levels of social capital.

7.4.5 Social Change

When asked about their outlook on the likelihood of their overall situation improving in the future, responses were quite polarized between those who thought that things would improve in a few years and those that thought that their situation would deteriorate in the future.⁹⁰ Overall, only 1.2% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries thought that their situation would improve within some weeks, 5.2% thought it would improve in some months, 43.7% thought that it would hopefully improve in some years, 8.7% thought that their situation would not improve in the future but stay the same, and 41.2% expressed that they thought that their situation would deteriorate in the future. The only GLR country that stepped away from this trend was Uganda in which 71.7% of ex-combatants were hopeful

⁸⁹ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants’ perceptions of whether leaders take their voices into account due to lack of directly comparable data.

⁹⁰ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants’ outlook on their future situation due to lack of directly comparable data.

that their situation would improve within a few years.⁹¹ In general, these findings suggest that ex-combatants across the GLR countries have a good understanding of the time horizons of social change, but that a significant proportion remains pessimistic for the future. Overall, ex-combatants had slightly less optimistic outlooks compared to community members.

Interestingly, ex-combatants' outlook on their economic situation (see §7.1.1) was considerably better (73.7% reported seeing their economic situation improving in the future) than their overall outlook (a total of 58.8% reporting expected improvement at various time scales). This evidence tacitly supports the idea that while ex-combatants can make improvements relatively quickly in economic terms, the diverse set of challenges that exist in the social sphere are slower to resolve.

When asked about whether or not they were satisfied with their life in general up until then, 30.6% of all ex-combatants across the GLR countries said they were satisfied, 7.5% that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 61.9% were dissatisfied.⁹² This trend of the overwhelming majority of ex-combatants expressing dissatisfaction with their life was consistent in all the GLR countries except for Uganda where the spread of responses was much more even – 33.2% were satisfied, 30.7% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 36.1% were dissatisfied. These findings are perhaps not surprising, considering the heavy toll conflict can take on the lives of individuals. However, these effects are not isolated to ex-combatants – community member displayed a similar range of responses about life satisfaction. However, these findings stand in contrast to those on overall happiness (see §7.4.4) in which nearly 60% of ex-combatants indicated that they were generally happy. Understanding the interplay between ex-combatants levels of happiness and their overall life satisfaction is a challenging task with no clear explanation in study.

⁹¹ While there is no direct evidence for explaining why in this case ex-combatants in Uganda have more optimistic outlooks for their future, it is possible that this is linked to the relative stability of Northern Uganda and the overall pace of improvement away from a context of widespread displacement due to conflict and humanitarian intervention.

⁹² Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding life satisfaction due to lack of directly comparable data.

Table 30: Ex-Combatant Social Change Ladder – One Year Ago and Today

Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom, the first step, stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step, stand the richest - On which step were you one year ago in relation to:	One Year Ago						
	FOOD?	HOUSING?	CLOTHING?	FINANCES?	SCHOOL FEES?	HEALTH?	LEISURE?
Male	3.17	2.97	3.20	2.70	3.39	3.23	3.33
Female	2.95	2.76	3.00	2.55	3.39	3.25	3.08
Age 18-30	3.02	2.89	3.09	2.57	3.25	3.09	3.17
Age 31-40	3.23	2.99	3.28	2.82	3.46	3.34	3.36
Age Over 40	3.18	2.93	3.17	2.62	3.54	3.37	3.43
Disabled	2.73	2.62	2.71	2.33	3.28	2.90	2.99
Not Disabled	3.18	2.97	3.22	2.71	3.40	3.26	3.32
Burundi	3.22	3.03	3.42	2.79	2.94	3.08	2.92
DRC	3.45	3.39	3.65	2.91	3.81	3.30	3.79
Republic of Congo	3.28	3.05	3.14	2.95	3.42	3.33	3.18
Uganda	2.60	2.28	2.47	2.06	XXX	XXX	XXX
GLR Average	3.14	2.94	3.17	2.68	3.39	3.24	3.30
Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom, the first step, stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step, stand the richest - On which step are you on today relation to:	Today						
	FOOD?	HOUSING?	CLOTHING?	FINANCES?	SCHOOL FEES?	HEALTH?	LEISURE?
Male	3.30	3.15	3.34	2.77	3.51	3.36	3.41
Female	2.99	2.80	3.25	2.62	3.38	3.32	3.07
Age 18-30	3.13	3.08	3.28	2.68	3.37	3.24	3.26
Age 31-40	3.40	3.15	3.41	2.90	3.56	3.42	3.43
Age Over 40	3.18	2.97	3.25	2.62	3.56	3.39	3.43
Disabled	2.76	2.64	2.77	2.34	3.30	3.01	2.95
Not Disabled	3.31	3.14	3.38	2.79	3.51	3.38	3.40
Burundi	3.40	3.25	3.56	2.88	3.04	3.20	2.98
DRC	3.38	3.46	3.61	2.84	3.82	3.34	3.79
Republic of Congo	3.51	3.22	3.38	3.14	3.65	3.54	3.35
Uganda	2.75	2.48	2.75	2.14	XXX	XXX	XXX
GLR Average	3.26	3.10	3.33	2.75	3.50	3.36	3.37

Ex-combatants were questioned using a 10-step ladder response prompt. Their responses are tabulated below in *Table 12* by mean score.⁹³ The lower the mean score is the closer the ex-combatant is to the bottom rung of the ladder – where the poorest people tend to be. Generally speaking, across and within the GLR countries ex-combatants consistently identified themselves in the poorest half of society (between steps 2 and 4).

When looking across the GLR countries as a whole, there is a slight improvement in mean scores in all question categories from one year ago to the time of sampling. This trend is almost completely consistent within the individual GLR countries with the only exception being DRC – in which there was a slight decrease in mean scores from one year ago and time

⁹³ Rwanda is excluded from findings regarding ex-combatants' perceptions of change within specific categories due to lack of directly comparable data.

of sampling in the categories of finance, clothing and food. When focusing on demographic subgroups, however, there are less consistent results. Three demographic subgroups stand out in particular: female ex-combatants, ex-combatants aged 31-40, and disabled ex-combatants. Though female ex-combatants saw near unanimous improvements across all categories, leisure being the only exception, they consistently ranked a rung lower than male ex-combatants. Those aged 31-40 rank higher or equal than other age demographics across all categories. Similar to the trend of female ex-combatants, disabled ex-combatants saw improvements across all categories, leisure being the only exception. However disabled ex-combatants ranked consistently lower than non-disabled ex-combatants.

7.4.6 Summary

The social-fabric of communities endures great detriment in the course of violent conflict. Indeed, it is no wonder that ex-combatants and community members alike struggle to mend their damaged social footing. However, consistent with analysis presented throughout much of this study, ex-combatants experience a range of additional challenges in the process of social reintegration that collectively entail their disadvantage to community members. While collectively ex-combatants display a positive trajectory in terms of social reintegration, rebuilding social capital, and connecting into the social fabric of the community, the angle of this trajectory is considerably more shallow than in other dimensions of reintegration, such as economic – i.e. though ex-combatants are catching up to community members in terms of social indicators, the rate at which they are doing so is considerably slower than in other dimensions of reintegration. This evidence supports the idea that social reintegration is a slow process of social confrontation and atonement with no shortcuts. Though trust with community members may improve quickly, as outlined in §8.5, ex-combatants still struggle to recover from the damage done to their social networks, solidarity with the community, their cohesion and inclusion in the community, as well as their overall sense of empowerment and positive social change.

Ex-combatants have fewer social groups than community members and slightly less familial contact than community members overall. Though, ex-combatants who do have contact with their families have it much more frequently than community members indicating their

heavy reliance on their immediate family for social support. Accordingly ex-combatants are more likely to turn to their family for economic help than friends or community / formal institutions. In terms of ex-combatants' friend base there is a clear split in the GLR countries. In Uganda and Rwanda, on the one hand, ex-combatants have fewer friends than community members and thus an extremely focused social support network relying heavily on the family. However, by contrast, in DRC and RoC ex-combatants had larger friend bases than community members, indicating a good extended social support network – despite the clear presence of a range of social limitations in relation to community members. Collectively these findings indicate the extent to which ex-combatants' social networks are more limited than those of community members and in turn the extent to which the functions of those social networks are limited as well – i.e. the psychosocial and economic value of social and familial networks.

Despite the challenges that ex-combatants face in the process of rebuilding interpersonal social ties within the community, they are generally well integrated and have a very similar understanding of the dynamics of their community. Ex-combatants and community members alike have generally high levels of trust – though ex-combatants perceive larger improvements in trust. The frequency at which ex-combatants work for the improvement of the community and feel an overall sense of togetherness is similar to community members.

Ex-combatants generally feel similar if not stronger senses of empowerment to affect changes in the direction of their lives and control their everyday circumstance than community members. This is further evidenced in ex-combatants' similar level of political engagement in community issues to community members. However, it is interesting to see that higher senses of empowerment among ex-combatants does not necessarily translate to higher levels of overall happiness or better perceptions of impact on the community. Indeed ex-combatants across the GLR countries report being much less happy than community members and are less likely to view themselves as having a positive impact on the community. It is possible that ex-combatants' overall happiness and senses of self-worth may be more tied to the personal psychological trauma ex-combatants carry with them in the wake of conflict than their absolute conditions (which while worse than community members in absolute terms, do display a clear positive trajectory) at the time of sampling. If

this is so, it would lend considerable support to the idea of social reintegration as a slow, long-term process of interpersonal exchange and in turn intrapersonal betterment.

Despite ex-combatants' lower levels of happiness and sense of positive impact on the community, their outlook on the future and understanding of the temporal dynamics of social change are similar to community members. Ex-combatants and community members alike understand that positive change in their overall situation will happen on the scale of years – not weeks or months. This makes sense, as both community members and ex-combatants have seen slight improvement in their overall conditions in the past years / since demobilization, ex-combatants less so in absolute terms, but still consistently identify themselves in the worst off half of society.

7.4.6.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

When examining social reintegration female ex-combatants continue to represent the most clearly and consistently vulnerable demographic group among ex-combatants. Female ex-combatants have fewer and less diverse social networks, tending to rely even more exclusively on their immediate family than the rest of ex-combatants – who do so to a greater extent than community members. In this sense, female ex-combatants face the highest risk of social isolation and marginalization across the GLR countries. This weak social capital in terms of the number and diversity of social groups corresponds to lower levels of trust, lower perceptions of improvement in trust, dramatically weaker senses of empowerment, and lower perceptions of their overall situation than the rest of ex-combatants.

Despite the clear and consistent range of vulnerabilities that female ex-combatants exhibit, their overall levels of happiness, life satisfaction and general outlook for the future are on par if not better than the rest of ex-combatants. Developing a clear understanding of the social and psychological coping strategies that female ex-combatants have developed to maintain even, if not more positive, senses of self worth, worth in the community, and outlook for the future – effectively mitigating against their heightened vulnerability across

almost all social indicators – could prove relevant the development of future programming for female ex-combatants and male ex-combatants alike.

Disabled ex-combatants exhibit a complex range of disadvantages in terms of social capital. In general disabled ex-combatants report far lower levels of personal empowerment and control of their lives. However, this is counterbalanced against their unexpectedly higher levels of political engagement in the community and stronger sense of positive impact on the community in comparison to non-disabled ex-combatants. In terms of social change disabled ex-combatants perceive a positive trajectory of social change over time across a broad range of categories. However despite this perceived positive trajectory, disabled ex-combatants consistently rank themselves a step below non-disabled ex-combatants.

7.4.6.2 Unique Country Trends

Despite the many ways in which the individual GLR countries come together to represent a consistent collective narrative of the process of reintegration, there are also many ways in which they diverge – especially in terms of social reintegration. Here we can highlight a selection of unique country trends focused in DRC that represents an alternate narrative of reintegration than the one consistent across the other GLR countries.

When examining the many dimensions of social reintegration across the GLR countries, DRC stands out most consistently and sharply. As presented above, the dominant narrative of social reintegration reflected across the GLR countries was one where ex-combatants had high levels contact with the family, though slightly less than community members, but stunted development in terms of social networks, friends, and connections to the broader community – in turn correlating to lower levels of happiness and perceptions of worth in the community. In DRC however, we see a distinctly different narrative emerge.

Ex-combatants and community members alike in DRC have dramatically lower levels of familial contact than other GLR countries. DRC stands out even further in this regard because it is the only GLR country where ex-combatants are more likely to have contact with their family than community members – twice as much so. Further, those ex-combatants who do

have contact with their families have it at a much lower frequency (split between daily, weekly and monthly contact) than in other GLR countries where daily contact was the norm (this divergence is also visible in RoC). As such, it makes sense when ex-combatants in DRC are the most likely to say that their contact with their family could be more frequent.

When pared with findings on marriage rates in §7.1.2, what emerges is an image of ex-combatants in DRC who are isolated from their immediate family though are on par with other GLR countries in terms of building new familial connections (marriage / cohabitation). However, as mentioned, when ex-combatants in DRC are compared to community members in DRC in terms of contact with the immediate family, community members are half as likely to be in contact with their immediate family. This is a perplexing trend to explain. While ex-combatants in DRC have weaker family networks than ex-combatants in other GLR countries, they are the only GLR country that has stronger familial connections than community members – which could simultaneously suggest that ex-combatants in DRC have been exceptionally successful in terms of rebuilding social capital relative to community members; and that community members in DRC are a key vulnerable group across the GLR countries in terms of social capital.

A hint to understanding the overall lower levels of familial contact in DRC is that of those few ex-combatants who did have familial contact and felt that this contact was the maximum that they would desire – the distance, time and cost of travel were all cited as reasons for not seeing their family more often. Indeed, the social geography of eastern DRC is particularly troubling. While countries across the GLR have experienced varying scales of war, and in turn levels of impact on society both economically and socially, the incessant insecurity in eastern DRC can perpetuate a series of dynamic forces that disperse pre-conflict social networks through displacement and migration. Persistent conflict and can trap individuals, due difficulty of travel due to zones continued insecurity. When these dynamic forces are coupled with static forces such as the mountainous topography of eastern DRC and heavy rains that can render roads impassable it is understandable that social networks are separated. Future study into this line of inquiry could prove valuable for explaining why ex-combatants and community members alike in DRC have considerably weaker familial and social networks than other GLR countries.

It appears that though ex-combatants in DRC have strong connections to their immediate family relative to community members this does not compensate for the overall lower levels of familial contact in absolute terms relative to other GLR countries in terms of overall social capital. Indeed ex-combatants in DRC are the most likely group among the GLR countries to turn to no one for economic help; have the weakest feeling of togetherness with the community; feel they have the least amount of power to make important decisions in their life; perceive the weakest ability to control their everyday activities; are the least likely to perceive that they make a positive impact on the community; are the least likely to gather to express political concerns; the least likely to feel their voice is taken into account by leaders; the most likely to think their overall situation will deteriorate in the future; and have the lowest level of life satisfaction across the GLR countries. In terms of social change, DRC is the only country where ex-combatants see drops in their perception of their situation relative to the rest of society in the last year in the categories of food, clothing, and finance – though beyond weak social capital ongoing insecurity in eastern DRC likely plays a role in this.

7.5 DDR Experiences

DDR processes across the GLR countries have taken place in a diverse range of contexts, as such the amount of validly comparable data on all phases of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration is limited. As such, offering a comprehensive comparison of across the GLR countries of ex-combatants' experiences of the process and dynamics of return, reception, demobilization, reinsertion, and reintegration is unfortunately not feasible in this study – primarily as a result of data validity challenges.⁹⁴ However, drawing from the select data we can offer comparative insights on: (i) ex-combatants' experiences of reinsertion process across the GLR countries, and (ii) a limited range of comparative insights regarding initial experiences with the community.

⁹⁴ Essentially, the contextual differences between the different programming components of the entire DDR process in the various GLR countries are at times great – thus the range of captured data on ex-combatants' experiences of these processes is equally diverse. A valid systematic comparison of the different data from each context is judged as infeasible here. The few areas discussed here are those few in which data overlapped in each of the GLR countries.

7.5.1 Reinsertion

In examining ex-combatants' attendance to a range of information sessions on various topics from general information to sessions on how to apply for credit or loans, and information on peace and reconciliation processes as part of the reinsertion phase of programming there were quite unique trends in each GLR country, though approximately even across all types of information sessions within each country.⁹⁵ As a general indication, 96.3% of ex-combatants attended a general presentation of information related to the reinsertion process in Burundi, 85.7% in DRC, 68.5% in RoC, and 39.2% in Uganda. Looking at demographic subgroups, female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants were noticeably less likely to have attended information sessions – 63.5% of all female ex-combatants versus 74.8% of all male ex-combatants, and 59.5% of all disabled ex-combatants versus 74.5% of all non-disabled ex-combatants. Within each GLR country the disparities between demographic subgroups were very similar to those at a cross-country level, though fitting to the overall attendance level with each country.

When asked whether or not they thought they had received enough information about the reinsertion package and its contents there was a clear correlation between the level of participation in information sessions within GLR countries and the perception of receiving sufficient information. In Burundi 81.4% of ex-combatants felt they received sufficient information regarding reinsertion, in DRC 65.2%, in RoC 45.8%, and in Uganda 19%. Further, it is perhaps not surprising then that female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants, the two demographic subgroups least likely to attend information sessions on reinsertion package and process, were the most likely to feel that they received insufficient information surrounding the reinsertion process and package – 44.4% of female ex-combatants versus 55.9% of male ex-combatants, and 41.7% of disabled ex-combatants versus 55.6% of non-disabled ex-combatants.

Not only did the level of attendance to information sessions about the reinsertion package and process correlate to the perceived level of information sufficiency among ex-

⁹⁵ Rwanda is excluded from all findings regarding the reinsertion process due to incompatible data. For a review of the key trends in Rwanda see the Rwanda comparative study report.

combatants, but also to the actual frequency at which they received reinsertion payments. The same descending trend can be observed again in Burundi, as 99.7% of ex-combatants received payments as a part of reinsertion, in DRC 88.3%, in RoC 56.2%, and in Uganda 35.6%.⁹⁶ Collectively these findings suggest that across the GLR countries attaining a sufficient level of information and sensitization regarding the reinsertion process is a key to reaping the benefits of reinsertion payments and support.

Female ex-combatants also showed a visible correlation between information and sensitization exposure and actual reception of reinsertion payments at a cross-country level, though they were less likely to receive reinsertion assistance than male ex-combatants overall - 62.9% of female ex-combatants versus 73.2% of male ex-combatants received reinsertion payments. Interestingly, disabled ex-combatants – though they attended information sessions on reinsertion less frequently and were less satisfied with the information they received – were nearly evenly as likely (68.4%) compared to non-disabled ex-combatants (72%) to receive reinsertion payments at a cross country level.

When those ex-combatants who did not receive reinsertion payments were asked why they thought that they had not received payments, a large number connected this to lack of information. In Uganda 44.4% of all ex-combatants identified lack of information at some level as the primary reason they did not receive a reinsertion payment. Female ex-combatants identified information more frequently than male ex-combatants in Uganda (55.1% vs. 43.7%). A similar trend along gender lines existed across Burundi, DRC and RoC, in which 35.5% of females identified information as the reason they did not receive reinsertion payments as compared to 13.7% of male ex-combatants.

Both ex-combatants who had received reinsertion payments and those who had not were questioned about their levels of satisfaction with those payments. Surprisingly, there was no

⁹⁶ The especially low reception of reinsertion payment in Uganda warrants some contextualization. Most ex-combatants in Uganda receive amnesty and reinsertion / reintegration assistance retroactively after returning to their communities. This "trickle in" model in the context of Uganda means that many ex-combatants demobilize informally and thus the bottleneck for information and sensitization that formal demobilization processes represent is largely absent – making information and sensitization a key programming challenge. In addition, this data does not necessarily mean that those ex-combatants that have not received reinsertion payments have not received amnesty – as of 2011 (the time of sampling) the UgDRP still had a considerable backlog of unpaid reinsertion assistance.

clear correlation between the rate at which ex-combatants received reinsertion payments and their satisfaction with those payments. Across the GLR countries, 32.3% of ex-combatants were satisfied with their reinsertion payments, 33.9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 33.9% were dissatisfied. This trend was well reflected across the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda where levels of satisfaction were more clearly polarized (41.3%, 14.3%, and 44.3%, respectively). With the exception of RoC, female ex-combatants were generally more satisfied with reinsertion payments than male ex-combatants (41.8% vs. 30.8% at a cross-country level), even though the rate at which they actually received reinsertion payments was lower.

Similarly, when questioned further to their overall level of satisfaction with the totality of the reinsertion package contents ex-combatants were generally satisfied. Across the GLR countries, 47.1% of ex-combatants said that they were satisfied, 29.2% said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 23.7% were dissatisfied. This trend towards general satisfaction is reflected within all of the GLR countries. Again, this is somewhat puzzling, as one would expect some correlation between overall satisfaction of reinsertion packages and the rate at which they are actually received. Female ex-combatants are more likely to be satisfied at a cross-country level (54.1%) when compared to male ex-combatants (46%) – this is reflected in all GLR countries with the exception of DRC. Examining age demographics reveals some interesting contrasts. In Uganda and Burundi, there is a clear trend that as age increases likelihood of satisfaction with the overall contents of the reinsertion package decreases. However this trend was reversed in DRC, as age increased likelihood of being satisfied increased as well.

A comprehensive analysis of the uses of reinsertion payments across the GLR countries is challenging, however we can extract several general observations here.⁹⁷ Generally speaking the most consistently cited use of reinsertion payments was meeting immediate food and subsistence needs, suggesting that perhaps food security is among the most pressing needs for ex-combatants at the time of demobilization. Assistance to family, parents, spouse or partner was also among the most common uses of the reinsertion payments. Additionally,

⁹⁷ The main barrier to a comprehensive analysis lay in the different scales used to capture data on the use of reinsertion payments across the GLR countries. Rwanda is excluded from general trends due to lack of data.

investment of some sort, for example for business or in livestock, ranked high among the uses of reinsertion payments.

7.5.2 Experiences of Return

Drawing from DRC, RoC, and Uganda we can see that the vast majority of ex-combatants (90.1%) report being welcomed home by their families immediately after demobilization.⁹⁸ This proportion was high in both DRC in Uganda, but notably lower (81.4%) in RoC. This finding supports analysis across this study that ex-combatants generally experience high levels of acceptance and support from their immediate families.

In accordance, after receiving reinsertion packages the majority (76.5%) of ex-combatants reported that they had no problems with their families, however again in RoC this percentage was slightly lower – 63% of ex-combatants had no problems with their family after reinsertion packages. In RoC female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants were especially more likely to encounter problems with their families – 48.1% of female ex-combatants having problems with their families after reinsertion payments versus 35.2% of male ex-combatants, and 53.6% of disabled ex-combatants versus 35.7% of non-disabled ex-combatants.

When those ex-combatants who did encounter problems with their families after receiving reinsertion packages were asked to explain the specific nature of these problems a distinct range of answers was given. Although there is little data that is comparable across the GLR countries on this we can look at Uganda for a precursory survey of the kinds of problems that ex-combatants may face. The range of explanations of the problems that ex-combatants face with their families after receiving reinsertion packages in Uganda often reflected a perceived sense of animosity from families and communities towards ex-combatants. Common explanations included: (i) family wanted to take reinsertion money (19%), (ii) accusation of unfairness of payments to ex-combatants (14.3%); (iii) undermined and

⁹⁸ Rwanda and Burundi are absent from all findings on immediate reintegration experiences with the family and community due to lack of directly comparable data.

ridiculed by community (9.5%); (iv) accused of seeking government handouts (9.5%); and (v) attacked by neighbor for being an ex-combatant (9.5%).

Drawing from data on DRC and RoC we can observe that in general ex-combatants feel that most people in their community treat them the same as they do everyone else – though this was slightly more so in DRC. This trend was reflected in reference to a range of different social categories, e.g. elders, male peers, female peers, work colleagues, people in authority, youth, and strangers. Younger ex-combatants (aged 18-30) were slightly less likely across almost all categories to feel that people in their community treated them the same as other non-ex-combatants in the community.

7.5.3 Summary

This limited examination of the DDR experiences of ex-combatants across the GLR countries reveals two key findings of substantial analytical value related to: (i) the importance of information and sensitization campaigns; and (ii) the considerably different levels of acceptance and welcome that ex-combatants perceive from family members versus the wider community upon initial return.

In terms of information sensitization, ex-combatants' levels of participation in various information sessions about the reinsertion and reintegration process has a clear correlation to ex-combatants' levels of satisfaction with the level of information they receive. This in itself is perhaps not surprising, but what is more so is that ex-combatants' levels of participation in information and sensitization sessions have an equally clear correlation to the actual rate at which ex-combatants receive reinsertion payments. Indeed, those ex-combatants who did not receive payment most commonly cited lack of information as the reason why. The majority of ex-combatants are using reinsertion funds for their intended purpose of meeting immediate subsistence needs. As such, it appears as though effective information and sensitization campaigns, reaching a large proportion of ex-combatants, can play a key role in assuring that ex-combatants do indeed receive reinsertion funds to meet their immediate subsistence needs upon return to their communities – mitigating the economic burden on the families and wider communities that must absorb them.

Throughout this study there has been considerable evidence to show that ex-combatants experience very high levels of acceptance and support from their immediate families upon return, in both social and economic dimensions. However, by contrast, there is also considerable evidence to suggest that they face only a relatively moderate level of acceptance from the broader community upon their immediate return. As outlined in §8.5.2 of the community dynamics portion of this survey, community members hold high levels of fear surrounding the return of ex-combatants and the range of negative behaviors associated with them before ex-combatants' return. However, community members' fear surrounding ex-combatants all but disappears in the time before their arrival in communities to the time of sampling (4.05 years on average across the GLR countries). These findings are part of a dispersed range of evidence that suggest that while the vast majority of ex-combatants are quick to reach acceptance and reintegrate into the family, they experience a slower, though positive, trajectory towards acceptance in the broader community.

7.5.3.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

In terms of the limited range of DDR experiences explored here, female ex-combatants and disabled ex-combatants experience a clear and continuous range of disadvantages. Female and disabled ex-combatants are the demographic groups that are least likely to attend all varieties of information sessions about the reinsertion and reintegration processes. In turn female and disabled ex-combatants are not only the groups least satisfied with the level of information that they received, but also the least likely groups to actually receive reinsertion payments – destabilizing their ability to meet their immediate subsistence needs.

7.5.3.2 Unique Country Trends

As outlined repeatedly in the analysis in this section, the varying levels of ex-combatants participation in information and sensitization sessions related to reinsertion and reintegration processes displayed a clear correlation to the rate at which ex-combatants actually received reinsertion funds and presumably affected their ability to meet immediate subsistence needs. With this we can ask: how were more ex-combatants exposed to information and sensitization in Burundi and fewer in Uganda (the rest of the GLR countries

falling in between)? What strategies were successful in some instances and unsuccessful in others? A more explicit understanding of the considerable variation in information and sensitization exposure across the GLR countries and its relationship to actual reinsertion payment reception and meeting of subsistence needs then would hold considerable programming value for the future.

7.6 Conclusions

This study has found that ex-combatants in the GLR countries have been largely successful in reintegrating with community members across numerous dimensions. While across the range of core social and economic indicators explored in this study ex-combatants collectively represent a disadvantaged group, they show a clear trajectory towards reaching economic and social parity with community members – in many cases having already reached equal footing or occasionally exceeding community members' performance across core indicators of reintegration processes. This study has found that among ex-combatants across the GLR countries, female ex-combatants and young ex-combatants (18-30) both male and female encounter a distinct range of additional challenges in reintegration processes and in this represent key vulnerable groups. While young ex-combatants lag behind their older peers, their overall trajectory is indeed positive. There is evidence to suggest that, however, for female ex-combatants across the GLR countries there is a consistent range of structural barriers that at the very least could slow down the processes of reintegration further, and at the very worst could leave them locked out of certain economic and social processes – at a high risk for economic marginalization and social isolation.

There is no one driver or determinant of reintegration. Instead reintegration is understood here as embodied by a diverse range of simultaneous and overlapping processes (e.g. social, psychological, political, economic) that dynamically interact with one another. In viewing the product of these multiple reintegration processes and their interaction we can grasp the overall trajectory of reintegration that ex-combatants hold in their return to and interaction with the community.

Violent conflict throughout the Great Lakes Region has damaged the social and economic fabric of society; disrupting economies, disintegrating families, and fragmenting social networks for ex-combatants and community members alike. Thus understanding the challenges of reintegration must in part be understood in the context of larger post-conflict peacebuilding and development processes. However the challenges that ex-combatants face in rebuilding and reintegrating into the damaged social and economic fabric of society are immediate and acute. It is ex-combatants' ability to re-enter and make functional the familial unit and larger social networks in the community, in turn the social and economic functions these social units play, that constitute evidence of successful reintegration processes.

With this in mind, it appears that ex-combatants have been successful in reintegrating into the family unit. Ex-combatants' families have been open and accepting, serving the core function of the social and economic support while ex-combatants gain footing. While families appear to have played an especially important role in the immediate return of ex-combatants, the process of confrontation and exchange with the broader community appears to have progressed much more slowly. Rebuilding social networks is not only essential for acceptance and participation in the community, but for economic opportunity. In this, ex-combatants lag behind community members in their broader social footing and economic security – remaining especially reliant on the familial unit.

It is with the support of the familial unit, and through their positive trajectory in terms of access to marriage, that ex-combatants have reached parity with community members in terms of housing, access to land, and upward mobility in land access. Though, ex-combatants continue to face challenges in terms of household hunger and nutrition.

Despite ex-combatants' positive trajectory, they perceive themselves as worse off than others in the community and see overcoming stigma and distrust in the community as the primary barrier to reintegrating with the community, followed by education and qualification barriers that may exist as a result of time lost in conflict. Community members corroborate ex-combatants' perceptions, explaining a range of fears and stigma associated with ex-combatants upon their immediate return that, however, dissipate quickly over time leaving key barriers to ex-combatants' reintegration as revolving around making up time for

missed education / skills qualification attainment and a broader social and economic track record in the community. Even with the diverse range of social and economic challenges that ex-combatants face, they have strong senses of empowerment to shape their situation going forward (with the exception of females).

7.6.1 Ex-Combatants and Economic Reintegration

This study has found that ex-combatants across the GLR countries show a positive trajectory towards gaining self-employment in agriculture or small business – though there is still considerable improvement that ex-combatants must make to reach parity with community members. The context of economic reintegration across the GLR countries is one of severe overall development challenges. As such, ex-combatants and community members alike identify their primary barrier to gaining employment as lack of opportunity in general. Ex-combatants, however, face a range of additional barriers related to: (i) closing literacy, education and skill gaps with community members; (ii) establishing an economic track record; in order to (iii) access credit and other financial institutions; and (iv) to erode stigma and distrust through the slow process of confrontation that social reintegration entails.

Collectively the unique barriers that ex-combatants face are a product of their overall stunted economic networks – leading to an overall higher exposure to economic insecurity and reliance on the familial unit compared to community members – who have more diversified economic networks and tend to be more integrated into formal and community based economic institutions.

7.6.2 Ex-Combatants and Social Reintegration

This study has found that ex-combatants across the GLR countries exhibit a positive, but shallow, trajectory of social reintegration. While ex-combatants are quick to reintegrate with their immediate family and to breakdown trust barriers with the wider community, their progress from there forward is slow – owing to their stunted social networks and track record in the community. In this sense the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants are strongly interrelated – their long-term success revolving around rebuilding

the networks that are instrumental to social and economic security. Mending the damaged social networks and in many cases building new ones from scratch, with the additional barriers of residual stigma and lack of social track record, is a slow process of confrontation and atonement.

Though ex-combatants have remarkably high levels of social empowerment, often surpassing community members, they understand that the process of social reintegration has no shortcuts and will take place in the scale of years. With this ex-combatants remain significantly less happy and with lower levels of self worth than community members – leaving them exposed to risk of marginalization and social isolation from the wider community.

7.6.3 Female Ex-Combatant Subgroup

Throughout the analysis of the reintegration processes of ex-combatants across the Great Lakes Region presented in this study female ex-combatants have stood out as the most clear and consistent vulnerable subgroup. While young ex-combatants (aged 18-30) and disabled ex-combatants display a range of disadvantages related to a lack of social and economic track record and to health, respectively, they do not depart significantly from the overall positive trajectory of ex-combatant reintegration in the Great Lakes Region. Female ex-combatants, however, encounter an extensive range of disadvantages that collectively paint a picture of the structural barriers they face in reintegration processes in terms of: (i) familial networks; (ii) economic networks; and (iii) broader social networks in the community. These structural barriers force a distinctly different trajectory of reintegration.

As discussed above, rebuilding damaged social and economic networks in the community is a key dimension to the overall process of reintegration. Like male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants have done well to reintegrate into their immediate families. However, unlike male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants have been largely unsuccessful in building new familial connections through marriage – remaining the least marrying demographic group across ex-combatants and community members alike. While male ex-combatants have seen a sharp rise in marriage rates since demobilization, female ex-combatants have shown a very

shallow, and ultimately marginal, trajectory of increased marriage. Attitudinal indicators reveal that female ex-combatants have the smallest proportion of the population, both ex-combatant and community member, that is open to marrying them due primarily to stigma related issues – lending some explanation for growing disparity in marriage rates between male and female ex-combatants. Both male and female ex-combatants experience stigma, however in the case of marriage it appears to likely be a key structural barrier to building new familial networks and in turn to accessing the social and economic resources that they represent.

As discussed above, the context of economic reintegration in the Great Lakes Region is one of severe development challenges. The primary pathway to economic stability for ex-combatants and community members alike is through self-employment in agriculture – this is even more so for female ex-combatants. As such, access to arable land is an important indicator of economic stability – in turn growth in access to arable land as an indicator of a positive economic trajectory. In this female ex-combatants lag behind male ex-combatants with slightly lower levels of both land access and improvement in access to land – which when combined indicate female ex-combatants’ shallower trajectory of economic improvement – despite their slightly lower unemployment rate. There appear to be three structural barriers to land access mobility for female ex-combatants: (i) capital; (ii) inheritance; and (iii) marriage.

First, both male and female ex-combatants alike identify access to capital as the largest barrier to increased land access. However, for female ex-combatants, who have considerably lower literacy and educational achievement levels, the challenges to accumulating capital through bountiful agricultural production are acute. Indeed, females clearly identify lack of education and skills as among their key barriers to economic stability. Second, the challenges to capital accumulation that female ex-combatants face are amplified when inheritance dynamics are taken into account. Females who do experience increases in land access are much less likely than male ex-combatants to cite inheritance – indicating that this is a pathway to land access, and in turn a positive economic trajectory, that females are not accessing at the same level. Thirdly, marriage is an important pathway to increased land access for male ex-combatants. However, as outlined above, female ex-combatants

experience a set of distinct structural barriers to accessing marriage. When these three dimensions interact, the result is a dynamic structural barrier that female ex-combatants face in terms of building a positive economic trajectory and the economic networks associated with them.

By effect of their structurally hindered familial and economic networks, female ex-combatants face challenges in building social capital and broader networks in the community. This weak social capital in the community has consequences for female ex-combatants in terms of lower levels of trust, lower perceptions of improvement in trust, dramatically weaker senses of empowerment, and lower perceptions of their overall situation than the rest of ex-combatants. These factors collectively interact to put females at risk of marginalization and isolation with the community – in turn potentially reinforcing the structural restraints that shape their weak familial and economic networks.

It is the dynamic interaction of the familial, economic and broader social structural dimensions that shape the overall shallower trajectory of reintegration for female ex-combatants across the GLR countries and constitute them as a distinctly disadvantaged group. Looking at the structural challenges that female ex-combatants face reveals much about the overlapping, interrelated, and simultaneous nature of reintegration processes – an insight that is not only relevant to female ex-combatants, but to all ex-combatants across the Great Lakes Region.

8 Community Dynamics Annex

8.1 Demographics

The following is a capture of the community member sample for this comparative study. The demographics presented here are not representative of the overall community member populations of each of the five GLR countries of study, but instead reflect a range of purposive sampling biases. For more information about the specific sampling methods and decisions in each of the GLR countries please see the individual survey studies in each of the five GLR countries.⁹⁹

The total unweighted sample of community members from across the five GLR countries amounts to 3,380 respondents which, when combined with the ex-combatant sample of 6,475 respondents, represents 34.3% of the total GLR sample. The total unweighted community member sample contributions from each of the five GLR countries are as follows: Burundi comprises 15.1% (n=510) of the total Community Member Sample, DRC 21.4% (n=722), RoC 43.1% (n=1456), Rwanda 15.1% (n=510), and Uganda 5.4% (n=182). However, in an effort to create valid cross-country analysis of community members across the GLR, and especially for comparison to the ex-combatant sample, which contains proportionally different sample contributions from the five GLR countries, the raw sample contributions from each country have been weighted evenly. Further, for reasons explained below the valid sample used for analysis in this study are often notably lower than the total sample of 3,380 community members.

Though Burundi does contribute 510 respondents to the total GLR Community Member sample no age, gender or disability details were collected for respondents as a part of the Third Beneficiary Assessment in 2011 – thus a systematic analysis of the Burundi portion of the total GLR community member sample along demographic lines is not possible. In addition, little data was collected in Burundi that is directly comparable to the rest of the GLR data anyways. In effect, with the exception of some short sections, data from Burundi

⁹⁹ For Burundi see World Bank (2011a); for RoC see World Bank (2011c); for Rwanda see World Bank (2012); and for Uganda see World Bank (2011d).

will be absent from the analysis here thus leaving the unweighted valid sample of community members at n=2870. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all cross country statistics from here forward refer to the valid sample excluding Burundi.

In addition, as discussed in more detail in the first annex (§7), integration of the full range of data from the Rwanda Survey has proved challenging in this study. The evolving format for the individual GLR country surveys has been a continual process of learning and iterative refinement. The Rwanda survey format is the starting point from which surveys evolved in RoC, Burundi, Uganda, and DRC. So, while data content in the Rwanda surveys is very much in line with the rest of the GLR countries, much of the specific question formatting is often different enough that a direct comparison of data is not feasible. Such instances are explained in footnotes.

Data along health and disability demographics also presents challenges in the total GLR community member sample. Health and disability data for community members were only collected in Rwanda and Uganda – absent from Burundi, DRC and RoC. However, even the data from Rwanda and Uganda is limited as only n=58 disabled community members were sampled (n=49 from Rwanda and n=9 from Uganda). Thus, drawing valid comparisons between these two samples of 49 and 9 disabled community members is judged as infeasible – furthermore, comparing these 58 disabled community members to the 454 disabled ex-combatants in the first annex (§7) of this study presents further issues for validity. For these reasons analysis of community members along the lines of disability will be absent from this section of the study.

Collectively the data restrictions present in this study of community members across the GLR countries mean that the task of this study is to present a mosaic of findings. Up close, the pieces of the picture are not always complete and data is not always congruent. However, there are clear data trends, nonetheless, that represent a distinct narrative of community dynamics across the GLR countries.

Table 31: Community Members - GLR Country Demographics

	Country				
	DRC	Republic of Congo	Rwanda	Uganda	GLR Total
Male	52.2%	54.8%	68.8%	68.7%	61.2%
Female	47.8%	45.2%	31.2%	31.3%	38.8%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age 18-30	34.2%	20.3%	57.0%	46.7%	40.0%
Age 31-40	26.7%	22.4%	25.9%	22.2%	24.3%
Age Over 40	39.1%	57.3%	17.1%	31.1%	35.7%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Across the GLR countries, 61.2% of community members were male while 38.8% were female. In DRC and RoC there was a fairly close split between male and female community members within the sample, while Rwanda and Uganda were closer to the cross-country average split in gender. *Table 31* above presents a cross-tabulated breakdown of age and gender demographics for the community member sample of each of the GLR countries.

Of the total sample of community members, 40% were between the ages of 18 and 30, 24.3% were between that ages of 31 and 40, and 35.7% were over the age of 40.¹⁰⁰ The within-country age splits of each of the GLR countries do not necessarily follow cross-country trend. As is visible in *Table 31* above, Rwanda and Uganda community members between the ages of 18 and 30 are most dominantly represented while in RoC those over 40 are most represented and DRC falls closer to the cross-country split.

The dimensions of the lives of community members explored in the following sections are key indicators of community dynamics and furthermore relate to the basic units and processes in society: the family unit, and the process of marriage, in the community. The value of this section of the study is not just as a control group for which ex-combatant progress can be studied, but also as a key measure of the overall levels of social and economic stability of the core units of reintegration across society in the Great Lakes Region.

¹⁰⁰ Across the total sample of community members from the GLR countries there were 26 respondents under the age of 18. For purposes of consistency in sample delimitation and comparative validity these 26 (3 from DRC and 23 from RoC) have been omitted from the sample for analysis here.

8.1.1 Marriage and Household

Marriage dynamics are an important indicator of community members’ basic social standing. Indeed, marriage dynamics can tell us much about community members’ ability to leverage familial, economic, and social networks towards the attainment of marriage and in turn their ability redouble their engagement in these social structures through marriage – all indicators of a strong footing in the community.

Across the GLR countries the most common groupings for marital status of community members are as follows: 48.6% are married, 16.9% are living with a partner but are not married, 22.3% are single and have never been married, 5.9% are separated or divorced, and the remaining 6.2% are widowed. These figures are very much an average as within each of the GLR countries community members displayed a more unique distribution of marital statuses (summarized in *Table 32* below). In DRC and Uganda “married” is the most common marital status for community members – at over 60% in both countries. While in Rwanda “married” is still the most common marital status, it is almost evenly split with “single / never married”. The country that differs most from the general trend is RoC, in which “living together” but not married is the most common marital status.

Table 32: Community Member Marital Status

	Marital Status at Sampling				
	Married	Living together	Divorced or Separated	Widowed	Single/Never married
Male	55.40%	16.20%	2.70%	2.00%	23.70%
Female	38.10%	18.00%	11.10%	12.80%	20.10%
Age 18-30	35.80%	13.50%	2.60%	0.30%	47.70%
Age 31-40	60.40%	19.10%	6.00%	3.30%	11.20%
Age Over 40	57.30%	17.10%	9.60%	14.40%	1.60%
DRC	66.10%	7.10%	7.30%	7.10%	12.50%
RoC	18.50%	53.50%	12.30%	10.90%	4.90%
Rwanda	46.90%	4.90%	0.40%	2.60%	45.30%
Uganda	62.60%	2.70%	3.80%	4.40%	26.40%
GLR Average	48.60%	16.90%	5.90%	6.20%	22.30%

Across the GLR countries female community members were less likely to be married than male community members (38.1% vs. 55.4%). In DRC and Uganda this trend was exaggerated and the gap between male and female community members with the marital status “married” was as much as 38 percentage points (in Uganda). At a cross-country level the lower representation of married female community members was effectively absorbed into

the categories of separated or divorced and widowed (11.1% and 12.8% respectively) which were much less common among male community members (2.7% and 2.0% respectively). These findings should flag divorce, separation, and widowhood as key dimensions to female community members' absolute disadvantage in marriage rates across the GLR countries compared to male community members.

There was a visible positive relationship between age and likelihood of being separated, divorced, or widowed. Of community members 18-30 years of age, 2.6% were separated or divorced and 0.3% were widowed, compared to 6% and 3.3% (respectively) of those aged 31-40, and 9.6% and 14.4% (respectively) of those aged over 40.

Drawing exclusively from Rwanda and Uganda we can observe that only 5.8% of community members had a spouse (married or unmarried) that was an ex-combatant, the remaining 94.2% having civilian spouses – though this does not necessarily imply that their spouse was a combatant / ex-combatant at the time of marriage.¹⁰¹ On average female community members were more likely to have an ex-combatant or combatant spouse (11.1%) compared to male community members (3.9%). This could serve as at least a partial explanation for female community members' higher levels of widowed marital status – while anecdotally this makes sense further study would be needed to confirm this relationship

Across the GLR countries 74.7% of community members report that they would not consider marrying an ex-combatant, with the remaining 25.2% saying that they would consider marrying an ex-combatant. This trend was generally reflected within the individual GLR countries with the exception of Uganda, where 56.8% of community members said that they would consider marrying an ex-combatant and 43.2% would not.¹⁰² Across demographic lines age showed a positive relationship with unwillingness to consider marrying an ex-combatant. Of those over 40 years of age, 85% were not willing to marry an ex-combatant, compared to 74% of those aged 31-40, and 66.7% of those aged 18-30. The most common

¹⁰¹ Rwanda and Uganda were the only GLR countries where surveys included questions on community members' spousal ex-combatant status.

¹⁰² It is possible that the greater openness in Uganda is related to the nature of mobilization and return in which many ex-combatants were abducted or forcibly recruited into conflict – upon return being simultaneously understood as victims and perpetrators. This dynamic plus the widespread employment of traditional reconciliation ceremonies in Northern Uganda (though not necessarily as a part of reintegration programming) may hold some explanatory weight.

explanations for why community members were unwilling to marry an ex-combatant revolved around various forms of stigma or fear.

Drawing exclusively from DRC and RoC, we can see that when community members observed other marriages in the community in which one member is an ex-combatant, 44.9% of community members perceived these marriages as having a harder time than those without an ex-combatant.¹⁰³ When asked to explain further as to why they thought these marriages were more difficult the most common explanations were as follows: (i) 35% of community members cited misunderstandings; (ii) 22% cited brutality and fighting; and (iii) 8.5% cited bad habits of ex-combatants acquired during combat (including drug use).

Across the GLR countries 43.6% of community members see themselves alone as responsible for the financial and food need of the family, 16.8% see their spouse or partner as responsible, and 25.5% see food and financial needs as the shared responsibility of both themselves and their spouse or partner. The remaining 14.1% indicated that household food and finance responsibility were dispersed among various other family members.¹⁰⁴ Male community members were significantly more likely to see household finance and food provision as solely their responsibility (56.6%) compared to female community members (21.8%). Inversely, female community members were dramatically more likely to see household finance and food provision as the sole responsibility of their spouse or partner (36.8%) compared to male community members (4.7%). This gendered trend was especially exaggerated in DRC (61.3 vs. 16.7% and 48.7 vs. 6.7 respectively).

As age increases community members are more likely to see themselves as solely responsible for household finance and food provision (32.7% of those age 18-30, 44.4% of those 31-40, and 51.5% of those over 40) and less likely to see their spouse or partner as solely responsible (22.7% of those age 18-30, 18.8% of those 31-40, and 10.3% of those over 40). It appears that this age-based trend may be primarily descriptive of female community members. When looking at age trends in community members' perceptions of household

¹⁰³ DRC and RoC were the only countries where community members were asked about their perception of marriages in which one person was an ex-combatant.

¹⁰⁴ Rwanda is excluded from findings on household finance and food responsibility due to lack of directly comparable data.

finance and food provision further subdivided by gender there are distinct trends. Male community members see themselves as primarily responsible for their household finance and food provision at even levels across all age categories (55.3% of those 18-30, 59.4% of those 31-40, and 55.8% of those over 40). In contrast, as age increases for females so too does the likelihood of seeing oneself as solely responsible for household finance and food (9.2% of those 18-30, 20.1% of those 31-40, and 40.2% of those over 40). As discussed above, as age increase so too does the likelihood of being separated, divorced, or widowed. As such, those female community members who are separated, divorced, or widowed are highly likely to see household finance and food provision as solely their responsibility (62.1% of those who are widowed and 70.1% of those who are separated or divorced). These findings should flag female-headed households as exposed to particular economic instability.¹⁰⁵

8.1.2 Literacy, Education, and Vocational Training

Levels of literacy, educational achievement, and vocational training are important indicators of community members’ basic ability to engage with educational and vocational structures, to the extent they exist in the different GLR country contexts, and further to leverage the dividends of this engagement towards further economic and social opportunities – in the end solidifying their footing in the community.

Table 33: Community Member Literacy

	Literacy		
	Neither Read nor Write	Read only	Read and write
Male	12.90%	4.10%	83.00%
Female	32.40%	5.20%	62.40%
Age 18-30	13.50%	3.50%	83.10%
Age 31-40	17.60%	5.50%	76.90%
Age Over 40	28.80%	4.30%	66.80%
DRC	16.30%	4.30%	79.40%
RoC	27.70%	7.30%	65.00%
Uganda	19.30%	2.20%	78.50%
GLR Average	21.10%	4.60%	74.30%

¹⁰⁵ A slightly exaggerated version of this age trend in female community members existed for female ex-combatants as well.

Literacy was generally high among community members across the GLR countries, and it was slightly higher than for ex-combatants; 74.3% of community members could both read and write, 4.6% could only read, and the remaining 21.1% were illiterate (compared to 71.6%, 8.3% and 20.1% respectively in ex-combatants).¹⁰⁶ Notably, RoC had the lowest literacy levels across the GLR countries. Female community members are notably less likely to be able to read and write (62.4%) compared to male community members (83%), and more likely to be illiterate (32.4% vs. 12.9%). After female community members, those aged over 40 are the second most likely group to be illiterate (28.8%). These trends are displayed in *Table 33*.

In regards to educational achievement, community members most commonly had either some secondary education (31%) or had completed secondary education (18.2); followed by some primary education (17.1%), completed primary education (11.2%), and no education (11.1%).¹⁰⁷ As is visible in *Table 34*, in Uganda education levels were skewed lower overall. Across demographic lines there are a few interesting trends to extract. Female community members are the most likely group to have no education (18.3% vs. 6.1% of male community members) followed by those aged over 40 (17.3% vs. 8.4% of those aged 31-40 and 5.6% of those aged 18-30). Further, both female community members and those over 40 had educational achievement levels skewed lower overall.

Table 34: Community Member Educational Achievement Levels

	Education Level at Sampling								
	None	Islamic or religious	Some primary	Completed primary	Some secondary	Completed secondary	Some higher education	Completed higher education	Professional
Male	6.10%	1.60%	16.00%	11.20%	33.90%	18.10%	4.40%	6.90%	1.70%
Female	18.30%	1.50%	18.70%	11.20%	26.90%	18.00%	1.80%	2.80%	0.90%
Age 18-30	5.60%	0.00%	17.50%	10.30%	39.20%	17.90%	3.30%	5.10%	1.10%
Age 31-40	8.40%	2.40%	15.30%	8.60%	32.90%	19.80%	4.70%	6.90%	0.90%
Age Over 40	17.30%	2.20%	18.00%	13.30%	22.80%	17.00%	2.70%	4.80%	1.90%
DRC	11.80%	0.40%	13.00%	8.00%	30.30%	22.60%	4.70%	6.80%	2.40%
RoC	14.60%	0.70%	12.90%	17.10%	20.00%	28.00%	3.00%	1.90%	1.80%
Uganda	7.30%	3.40%	25.10%	8.90%	41.90%	4.50%	2.20%	6.70%	0.00%
GLR Average	11.10%	1.50%	17.10%	11.20%	31.00%	18.20%	3.30%	5.20%	1.40%

¹⁰⁶ Rwanda is excluded from findings on literacy due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁰⁷ Rwanda is excluded from findings on education achievement levels due to lack of directly comparable data

Across the GLR, overall levels of educational achievement for community members were skewed higher than for ex-combatants – with higher levels of partial secondary education (31% vs. 23.4%), full secondary completion (18.2% vs. 5.2%), and partial or full higher education (8.5% vs. 2%). It is worth noting however that in DRC and RoC ex-combatants displayed much higher levels of professional educational achievement than community members (34.3% and 20.3% vs. 2.4% and 1.8% respectively).

Most community members reflected an understanding of the educational achievement gap between community members and ex-combatants – (58.4%) of community members reported that they believe that ex-combatants have lower levels of education than other people in the area in which they live.¹⁰⁸ Of the remaining community members, 40.3% believe that ex-combatants and civilians have the same level of education and only 1.3% perceives that ex-combatants have higher levels of education. In addition, 76.9% of community members said that the perceived difference in levels of education between community members and ex-combatants was a problem. When asked to explain further in Uganda community members most commonly pointed out that (i) ex-combatants wouldn't be able to gain employment and thus look after their families (33.9%) and that (ii) low literacy was a problem. In DRC and RoC the most common responses from community members as to why ex-combatants' lower education levels were a problem were: (i) Irresponsible behavior (36.9%) and (ii) misunderstandings that lead to arguments (31.4%).

Across the GLR countries, 20.8% of community members received vocational training in the last years.¹⁰⁹ Male community members more frequently (22.9%) received vocational training compared to female community members (17.6%). Age also showed a clear relationship to vocational training – the higher the age of community members the less likely they were to have received vocational training (26.2% of those aged 18-30, 24.7% of those aged 31-40, and 14.6% of those over the age of 40).

¹⁰⁸ Rwanda is excluded from findings on community members' relative perceptions of ex-combatants' education levels.

¹⁰⁹ In Uganda this question referred to in the last five years, while in DRC and RoC it referred to only the last year. It makes some sense then that Uganda displays the highest rate of community member vocational training across the GLR countries (29.6%). Rwanda is excluded from findings on vocational training due to lack of data.

Of those 20.8% of community members who had received vocational training, 78.3% said that they were currently using the vocational skills that they had been trained in.¹¹⁰ When the 21.7% of community members who were not using their vocational training were asked to explain further the most common reasons cited were: (i) lack of tools or work facilities (27%); (ii) still completing training; and (iii) no opportunity. Interestingly, while ex-combatants have received vocational training on average at twice the rate that community members do, in DRC as much four times the rate and in Uganda at a quite similar rate, they are still less likely to be utilizing that vocational training than community members (62.7% vs. 78.3%). This could be an indication that while ex-combatants display a positive trajectory in terms of closing education and skills gaps with community members, there may be additional barriers they face to reaching parity that, at least in part, may revolve around access to social and economic networks or possibly problems in reintegration programming design.¹¹¹

8.1.3 Summary

The analysis of community member demographics and core indicators presented in this section are useful not only as a backdrop against which to contextualize ex-combatant reintegration in the Great Lakes Region, but more generally as a baseline by which to understand the overall levels of societal stability and functionality of communities across the Great Lakes Region in the wake of violent conflict.

Across the indicators explored in this section, community members consistently perform better than ex-combatants. Community members are more likely to be married than ex-combatants – a fact that may help explain why community members are less likely than ex-combatants to see themselves alone as responsible for the food and finances of their household.

¹¹⁰ Regardless of having received vocational training or not, 38.8% of community members across the GLR countries reported that they were currently working in their “field of skills”. Male community members were slightly more likely to be working in their field (40.1%) when compared to female community members (35.7%).

¹¹¹ Example of problems with vocational training components of reintegration programming design can include, for example, that vocational training paths offered are not based on market analysis, in turn creating an oversupply of a particular set of skills in one area. This phenomenon is well documented in a number of DDR programming contexts. See for example: Jennings (2007).

Community members are married to ex-combatants at half the rate that ex-combatants are and attitudinally remain largely closed to the idea – citing stigma as core reason.¹¹² Indeed, when community members observe marriages in which one member is an ex-combatant they commonly describe these marriages as problematic. These findings have two core implications: (i) stigma is a core barrier to community member / ex-combatant intermarriage across the GLR countries and (ii) beyond actual marriage rates the pool of partners who are attitudinally open to marriage with ex-combatants is largest among other ex-combatants. If stigma shapes a portion of ex-combatants marriage pathway as to one with only other ex-combatants this could have consequences for these familial units' ability to interact with the community – in a sense possibly facing compounded stigma barriers. The evolving nature of community member and ex-combatant intermarriage should be flagged as a key issue for future studies in the GLR.

Community members across the GLR have education levels skewed significantly higher than ex-combatants – likely a result of ex-combatants' time lost while mobilized in conflict. Yet, community members are far less likely than ex-combatants to receive vocational training as a part of reintegration related programming. Despite this, however, community members are actually more likely to be currently utilizing their vocational training – suggesting that there may be additional barriers to utilizing vocational training for ex-combatants including programming flaws. Developing a stronger understanding of this dynamic should be flagged for future studies in the region.

8.1.3.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

In the demographics analyses of the community member sample for this study the most vulnerable sub-group that emerges, as with the ex-combatant sample, is that of females. Generally speaking, female community members have a similar range of disadvantages to male community members as female ex-combatants do to male ex-combatants. However, the general gap between community member and ex-combatant samples is such that female

¹¹² It is important to note that these findings do not differentiate between those community members who married combatants or ex-combatants and those who married a civilians who later became combatants / ex-combatants.

community members (and male community members for that matter) are almost always significantly better off than their ex-combatant counterparts.

Female community members are less likely to be married than male community members (who are themselves similarly likely to be married as male ex-combatants), though they are slightly more likely to be married than their female ex-combatant counterparts. Female community members are three times more likely than male community members to be separated or divorced and six times more likely to be widowed – though it is unknown whether the male or female initiated the divorce or separation. Regarding marriage to ex-combatants, female community members are three times more likely than their male counterparts to be married to an ex-combatant – though it is unknown whether these marriages pre-exist the combatant / ex-combatant status of their spouse. However, female ex-combatants are four times more likely than female community members to be married to an ex-combatant.

Similar to the ex-combatant sample, female community members had significantly lower literacy levels than male community members. Both male and female community members displayed slightly higher levels of literacy than ex-combatants – in accord, community members education levels were skewed higher overall than ex-combatants. However, female community members' educational achievement was skewed below that of male community members.

8.1.3.2 Unique Country Trends

There are several important marriage-related trends that stand out in individual GLR countries that merit further examination. Rwanda stands out as the only country where community members marry less frequently than ex-combatants. However, we can add considerable contextual detail here. In Rwanda males are required to have access to adequate housing in order to get married. However, the formal regulations for what qualifies as adequate housing in Rwanda are somewhat narrowly defined under the policy of *imidugudu* - a large scale body of housing policy aimed at consolidating dispersed housing in an overall effort toward villagization. The result has been inflation in adequate housing prices and in turn a severe crisis in the availability of adequate

housing overall that in effect is locking many Rwandans out of official marriage – though they may cohabit without formalized marital status.¹¹³

In contrast to community members, most ex-combatants are returning to Rwanda from Eastern DRC where they have been away for an average of nine years. In this time some ex-combatants have married and when returning to Rwanda bring their spouse with them. The legal status of these marriages in Rwanda is unclear, however it is possible that some ex-combatants unwittingly navigate past the formal barriers to marriage that community members face – in turn accounting for their slightly higher marriage rates. While it is likely that the interaction of housing policy, marriage, and dynamics of return are key in understanding why ex-combatants marry more than community members in Rwanda this exact narrative must be treated as conjecture. These topics should be flagged for future analysis on reintegration processes in Rwanda.

Republic of Congo also stands out with unique marriage trends. In RoC marriage rates among community members, and ex-combatants, are a fraction of those in other GLR countries. Instead, cohabitation with a spouse without formal marriage is the primary marital status – even when disaggregated across age and gender groups. These findings are confounding and go without clear explanation in this study. It is possible that: (i) there has been an unbeknownst error in data capture and coding that produces these findings or (ii) that there is an unknown regional dynamic affecting marriage for community members and ex-combatants alike in RoC. Future study on reintegration processes in RoC should flag marriage as an area of special interest to further triangulate or refute these findings.

Lastly, in Uganda community members are more than twice as likely as the GLR average to report willingness to marrying an ex-combatant in the future. Though there is no direct explanation it is possible that the specific dynamics of combatant mobilization in Uganda may play a role in this trend. In Uganda abduction was a well-known tactic of mobilization, especially by the LRA. Though abductees may have committed violent acts against their communities, often forcibly, there is evidence that ex-combatants are

¹¹³ This narrative of the interrelated nature of housing policy and marriage in Rwanda is well documented in Sommers (2012).

simultaneously understood as victims (due to abduction and forced recruiting) and perpetrators (due to the violence committed as soldiers) by community members – a factor that has reportedly contributed to a general willingness to accept returning ex-combatants back into communities.¹¹⁴ This dynamic may contribute to community members in Uganda’s openness to marriage with ex-combatants. Futures studies could flag this conjecture for further analysis.

8.2 Housing, Land, Livestock and Food Security

The context of communities in the Great Lakes Region is overwhelmingly one of severe development challenges where small-scale agriculture is instrumental to individual and familial well-being in terms of both economic security and food security. As such, understanding the pathways to land access among community members is a key contextual element for understanding the overall economic situation for community members in the Great Lakes Region and their capacity to absorb returning ex-combatants. The following is an examination of (i) the household characteristics of community members including issues of dwelling ownership and tenure; and (ii) the food security of community members including their levels of access to land for cultivation.

Across the GLR countries community members are most likely to live with: (i) the same family as before conflict (38.3%); (ii) with a family but different to that from before conflict (27.3%), or (iii) with a spouse or partner (21.5%). These three categories were the most common across all GLR countries, but varied some in their distribution from country to country. Uganda, where 51.7% of community members live with the same family; 25% live with a different family; and 22.2% live with a spouse or partner, displays the most exaggerated version of this cross-country trend. As is visible in *Table 35* below, Rwanda stands out as the only GLR country with a notable portion (15%) of community members who live with friends.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ See for example: Finnegan (2010).

¹¹⁵ This trend in Rwanda is possibly related to housing shortages as a product of *Imidigudu* and overall urban migration.

Table 35: Community Member Household Membership¹¹⁶

	Who Do You Live With?						
	Alone	With spouse / partner	With same family as before the conflict	With family but different to that from before the conflict	With friends	Family (unidentified)	Other
Male	5.60%	23.60%	38.50%	25.70%	5.20%	0.20%	1.10%
Female	7.30%	18.10%	38.20%	29.80%	3.30%	0.90%	2.40%
Age 18-30	6.70%	18.40%	37.30%	27.90%	8.60%	0.30%	0.80%
Age 31-40	3.60%	23.60%	34.80%	32.90%	3.20%	0.40%	1.60%
Age Over 40	7.20%	23.00%	43.10%	22.90%	1.10%	0.60%	2.10%
DRC	7.50%	29.40%	43.80%	17.50%	1.90%	0.00%	0.00%
RoC	10.00%	33.80%	20.80%	26.60%	0.60%	1.80%	6.40%
Rwanda	7.10%	XXX	37.00%	40.70%	15.00%	0.00%	0.20%
Uganda	0.60%	22.20%	51.70%	25.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%
GLR Average	6.30%	21.50%	38.30%	27.30%	4.50%	0.50%	1.70%

Female community members were slightly more likely to be living with a different family than the one before conflict (29.8%) and slightly more likely to live alone (7.3%) than their male counterparts (24.3% and 5.6% respectively). In addition, female community members were less likely to be living with a spouse or partner than male community members (18.1% vs. 23.6%).

In regards to housing, across the GLR countries community members were most commonly living in a house (42.3%), followed by a hut or tent (25.9%). This trend is generally reflected across the GLR countries with the clear exception of Uganda, where 67% live in a hut or tent, 18.1% live in a daub or wattle, and 14.3% live in a house.¹¹⁷ Rwanda also stands out in that 68% of community members live in a house and only 1.8% live in a hut or tent. Across the GLR (including Uganda) female community members are more likely to live in a house (50.2%) than male community members (37.2%). Marital status does not show a directly discernable relationship to housing type. Age also shows a clear positive relationship to living in a house – 27.7% of those community members aged 18-30 live in a house, 45.1% of those aged 31-40, and 55.1% of those over the age of 40.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ In *Table 35* the use of XXX indicates that respondents in Rwanda were not given the option to respond that they live with a partner or spouse – the responses that would have been in the field are likely absorbed into the categories of those who live with a family either the same or different from the one before conflict.

¹¹⁷ It is possible that the dominance of semi-permanent housing in Uganda is an indication of the overall development level in Northern Uganda. It is also possible that there is merely a reflection of traditional housing style preferences.

¹¹⁸ This age demographic trend is not reflected in Uganda – where hut / tent was the most common housing type across all demographics. For a more in depth discussion of community member housing types see World Bank (2011d).

Turning to patterns of ownership for housing among community members we can observe that most community members either: (i) own the property they live on (43.2%); (ii) their relatives or parents own the property they live on (20.5%); or (iii) their spouse / partner owns the property that they live on (9.3%). This trend was remarkably durable across the GLR countries, though in Uganda there were much higher levels of self-ownership (61.7%) and in Rwanda renting was on par with self-ownership (36.9%).¹¹⁹ Despite the differences in housing ownership among community members in Uganda and Rwanda there are very clear trends across gender and age demographics. As visible in *Table 36* Female community members are less than half as likely to own the property they live on compared to male community members (25.1% vs. 54.5%), and dramatically more likely to have their spouse / partner own the property they live on (20.9% vs. 2%).

Table 36: Community Member Housing Ownership

	Who Owns The Housing In Which You Currently Live?							
	I own it	Spouse, partner	Joint owners	Family I live with such as son, mother, parents	Non-family member	My friend	My relatives, family	Other
Male	54.50%	2.00%	4.30%	9.50%	0.00%	1.00%	8.40%	20.30%
Female	25.10%	20.90%	5.50%	11.80%	0.00%	1.10%	12.40%	23.00%
Age 18-30	23.20%	7.80%	2.90%	21.70%	0.00%	1.20%	12.70%	30.50%
Age 31-40	44.70%	10.30%	6.10%	4.10%	0.00%	0.50%	10.70%	23.60%
Age Over 40	64.60%	10.20%	5.90%	2.60%	0.00%	1.10%	5.70%	9.90%
DRC	37.50%	11.10%	7.60%	7.20%	0.00%	0.80%	12.60%	23.10%
RoC	38.20%	14.40%	6.90%	2.00%	0.00%	1.80%	19.20%	17.50%
Rwanda	35.30%	4.10%	0.00%	14.50%	0.00%	1.60%	4.10%	40.40%
Uganda	61.70%	7.80%	4.40%	17.80%	0.00%	0.00%	4.40%	3.90%
GLR Average	43.20%	9.30%	4.70%	10.40%	0.00%	1.00%	10.10%	21.30%

In regards to age demographics, as the age of community members increases the likelihood that relatives or family own their housing decreases (34.4% of those community members aged 18-30, 14.8% of those aged 31-40, and 8.3% of those over the age of 40) and the likelihood of self-ownership increases (23.2% of those aged 18-30, 44.7% of those aged 31-40, and 64.4% of those over the age of 40).

Community members across the GLR countries generally see themselves as equally as well off as their neighbors (57.3%), though 21.2% see themselves as worse off and 21.3% see

¹¹⁹ The higher rate of ownership in Uganda is likely a result of the lower barriers to owning the dominant housing type in Uganda: a hut or tent. Inversely, in Rwanda housing shortages as a product of *Imidugudu* have increased the barriers to housing ownership.

themselves as better off. All of the GLR countries reflect this trend of the bulk of community members seeing themselves as on equal footing to their neighbors. In most countries the distribution is skewed towards seeing themselves as slightly better off, though RoC is the only country where this skewing goes the other direction. Female community members were more likely to see themselves as worse off than their neighbors compared to male community members (25.2% vs. 18.6%).

In DRC and RoC, community members were asked how they perceived their living situation relative to two years prior. The majority of community members (65.9%) see their situation as the same, while 18.5% see it as better and 13.8% see it as worse. In Uganda the same question was asked, but instead of being asked about their current situation relative to two years ago, community members were asked to rate their current living situation relative to five years ago.¹²⁰ In the case of Uganda, 62.6% of community members saw their current living situation as better than five years prior, 16.8% saw it as the same, and 20.7% saw it as worse.¹²¹

8.2.1 Land Access and Food Security

Access to land for cultivation among community members across the GLR countries is generally high – 89.8% report that they have access to land.¹²² This figure is characteristic of all the GLR countries except for RoC in which access to land among community members was considerably lower (55.9%) in addition to being the only GLR country where land access among community members was lower than for ex-combatants (94.2%) – though the reason behind these findings are unclear. Female community members were slightly less likely to have access to land for cultivation than male community members (87.3% vs. 91.3%).

When those community members who did not have access to land for cultivation were asked to explain why in DRC and RoC the most common replies were: (i) all land was occupied (29.5%); (ii) fear for the return of conflict (19.7%); and (iii) bad memories

¹²⁰ This question about community members' perception of their current living situation relative to a previous point in time was not asked in Rwanda.

¹²¹ These findings are particularly subject to periodization issues and should be treated cautiously.

¹²² Rwanda is absent from findings related to land access, change in land access, and reasons for positive and negative changes in land access due to lack of directly comparable data.

associated with their land and they did not want to return (14.2%).¹²³ Female community members were less likely to cite land occupation as the reason for their lack of access to land for cultivation than male community members (21.5% vs. 37.6%), and more likely to cite fear of conflict (25% vs. 14.3%) and lack of capital (12.5% vs. 5.3%).

When community members who did have access to land for cultivation across the GLR countries were asked whether they had more than two years prior, 44.5% said that they did have more access. This level of increased access to land for cultivation is very much an averaged figure. There is a sharp split between DRC and RoC where increased land access was high (69.1% and 71.6% respectively), and Uganda in which only 15% reported increased access.¹²⁴ However, a closer inspection of community members in Uganda with a more finely grained scaled shows that while only 15% had increased access to land for cultivation, 49.4% had the same level of access as two years prior and 36.5% had less access.

Of those community members who had less access to land than two years prior across the GLR countries there were a range of explanations given. In Uganda the most common explanations were that there had been regulated division of land by their family (47.6%), followed by unregulated division of land such as grabbing, etc. (23.8%). In DRC and RoC lack of resources (25.8%), land infertility (20.8%), and land sale (20.8%) were the most common explanations.

Across the GLR countries when community members were asked to explain why they had more access to arable land for cultivation than two years prior there was a range of explanations. In Uganda the most common explanation was that a household member had purchased more land for investment (40%) – this answer was especially prominent for female community members (50%) compared to male community members (38.1%). In DRC and RoC, inheritance was also an important pathway to increased access to land for

¹²³ This question about why community members did not have access to land for cultivation was only asked in DRC and ROC.

¹²⁴ One possible explanation that has been put forth, anecdotally, for the relatively high increases in access to land in DRC and RoC is that access to land for cultivation in these countries has been so low to start with, due to displacement as a part of prolonged conflict and insecurity, that the consolidation of a relative peace in DRC and RoC has exposed a larger proportion of the population to the possibility of increases (effectively having started with no land access) than in other GLR countries where some land ownership may have persisted through conflict.

cultivation (29.1%), especially for female community members (33.4%) compared to males (26.7%).

Table 37: Community Member Explanations for Lack of Livestock

Explain the reason that your household does not have any livestock – excluding poultry	Country			
	DRC	Republic of Congo	Uganda	Subtotal
Insecurity due to conflict	12.0%	34.7%	3.6%	19.4%
Lack of access to suitable land	23.0%	26.6%	29.1%	25.4%
Ill health	16.6%	4.6%	5.5%	10.1%
No male adult to look after livestock	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	.3%
Experiences of crime (livestock stolen, etc.)	9.7%	31.8%	18.2%	19.7%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	.6%
Used for dowry	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	.6%
Poverty (insufficient resources, etc.)	28.8%	1.2%	32.7%	18.8%
Poor management	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	.3%
Not interested / Not a Breeder	7.8%	1.1%	0.0%	3.9%
Sale of livestock	.4%	0.0%	0.0%	.2%
Moves and migration	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	.8%

Across the GLR countries livestock ownership, excluding poultry, is generally low among community members (35.5%), with the exception of Uganda where livestock ownership is significantly higher (66.3%).¹²⁵ Despite these differences female community members were the least likely demographic group to own livestock (25.4%), especially when compared to male community members (42.7%).

When those who had no livestock were asked to explain further the four most common answers from community members across the GLR countries were as follows: (i) 25.4% cited lack of access to suitable land; (ii) 19.7% cited crime; (iii) 19.4% cited insecurity due to conflict (39.1% crime and insecurity collectively); and (iv) 18.8% cited poverty. While instructive of general trends, these cross-country figures do not fully depict the intricacies of the range of explanations given in each GLR country. For example, in DRC poverty was the most common explanation (28.8%) and livestock theft was less frequently cited (9.7%), while in RoC poverty was infrequently cited (1.9%) and livestock theft was much more frequent (31.8%). A summary of the range of explanations for lack of livestock among community members can be found above in *Table 37*.

¹²⁵ Rwanda is absent from findings on livestock ownership, change in livestock ownership over time, and reasons for positive and negative changes in livestock ownership over time due to lack of directly comparable data.

Looking to overall change in the quantity of livestock in the last two years, 54.2% of community members across the GLR countries had seen an increase in their overall quantity of livestock – 8.5% stayed the same and 37.3% saw a decrease in livestock. Female community members were less likely in general to see an increase in their livestock (46.3%) and more likely to see a decrease (42.9%) than their male community member counterparts (57.5% and 35% respectively).

The pervasive development challenges that characterize the GLR countries mean that food security is a key issue. As such, understanding the relationship between access to land for cultivation, in addition to livestock ownership and household hunger and nutrition, as core indicators of food security for community members, is important for understanding the overall development context of GLR countries.

Table 38: Community Member Household Hunger

	How Frequently Do People in Your Household Go Hungry?			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Male	8.20%	27.20%	35.30%	29.30%
Female	8.50%	30.90%	35.70%	24.90%
Age 18-30	6.70%	24.80%	38.10%	30.40%
Age 31-40	7.70%	27.20%	35.20%	29.90%
Age Over 40	9.80%	32.50%	33.10%	24.70%
DRC	11.60%	30.30%	27.00%	31.00%
RoC	12.40%	45.20%	27.60%	14.80%
Uganda	1.10%	11.60%	51.40%	35.90%
GLR Average	8.30%	28.80%	35.40%	27.50%

Across the GLR countries, 27.5% of community members reported that people in their household never went hungry, 35.4% seldom, 28.8% often, and 8.3% always.¹²⁶ Uganda stood out from these dominant trends – the entire distribution of community members being shifted towards less household hunger (35.9% never, 51.4% seldom, 11.6% often, and 11.1% always). Female community members across the GLR countries were slightly less likely to never go hungry than males (24.9% vs. 29.3%). Age showed a distinct relationship to household hunger - as age increases the likelihood of belonging to households where people always or often go hungry increases. In accordance, as age increases the likelihood of coming from a household that seldom or never goes hungry decreases (as visible in *Table 38*).

¹²⁶ Rwanda is absent from findings on household hunger and nutritional change due to lack of directly comparable data.

Household nutrition and nourishment has largely been unchanged (41.9%) for community members over the last two years. Of those who have seen a change in household nutrition, 32.5% have seen improvements and 25.6% have seen deterioration. Again, Uganda stood out from this trend with higher levels of nutritional improvement (55.2%), and less unchanged nutrition (19.9%) as well as deterioration of nutrition (24.9%). Across GLR countries female community members were slightly less likely to see improved nutrition and more likely to see worsening nutrition (28.8% and 28.3% respectively) when compared to male community members (35.2% and 23.6% respectively). Age showed a negative relationship to improved nutrition (38.6% of those 18-30 years of age, 37.9% of those 31-40 years of age, and 24.8% of those over 40 years of age) and, in accord, a positive relationship to worsening nutrition (20% of those 18-30 years of age, 20.5% of those 31-40 years of age, and 32.8% of those over 40 years of age).

8.2.2 Summary

Community members across the GLR countries display a range of unique trends in regards to their patterns of housing, property ownership, land access and livestock. Indeed, focused analysis reveals that there is much further variation along regional and factional lines within each individual GLR country. However, despite this variation there is a core set of trends that emerge. Community members are most likely to be living in some form of family structure – whether it is the same family that they lived with before conflict or a different one.

Community members are most likely to be living in a house that they or someone in their family owns. This is a very similar picture to that of ex-combatants across the GLR countries.

Access to land for cultivation is generally very high for community members as is the stability of this access – i.e. while there is variation from country to country as to increases in land access, there are relatively few community members who have seen decreases in land access since the years before sampling. Those who do see increased access to land do so most commonly through household land purchase with capital from high agricultural yields or through inheritance. In contrast to ex-combatants, few community members cited marriage as a key pathway to increased land access.

Livestock ownership across the GLR countries is generally low – though slightly higher than among ex-combatants. Community members cite lack of access to resources such as capital or suitable grazing land as a key reason for low livestock ownership in addition to overarching concerns about crime and general insecurity.

Food security remains an important concern for community members across the GLR countries. While community members generally face a significantly lower level of food insecurity compared to ex-combatants across the GLR countries, there is still a sizable portion that often or always experience household hunger. Collectively, country to country variation in levels of access to land for cultivation and livestock among community members appears to show little relationship to core indicators of food security – which may be as much related to the overall economic situation in each of the GLR countries (e.g. through inflated prices of food stocks) than to land access and livestock ownership outright.

8.2.2.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

Female community members across the GLR countries display a range of differences in terms of the housing, land access, and food security that collectively may not necessarily entail a disadvantage, but do at least indicate a slightly altered narrative. Females are more likely to live with a different family than before conflict – possibly in part because of their high rate of being widowed compared to male community members. Female community members are more likely to live in a house, but dramatically less likely to own their house – instead commonly citing spousal or familial ownership. Female community members have slightly less access to land for cultivation than male community members in addition to being less likely to owning livestock. However, female community members fare better overall in indicators of food security across the GLR countries.

Female community members overall perform slightly better than female ex-combatants across the GLR countries in terms of housing, land, livestock, and food security. The core difference in the narrative that female community members and female ex-combatants experience across the GLR countries is that female community members are generally more

likely to be integrated into a familial unit and reap the benefits this extended support network.

8.2.2.2 Unique Country Trends

As outlined above, land access among community members in RoC is considerably lower than on average across the rest of the GLR countries. It is possible that this trend is a product of the sample from RoC being captured exclusively in the Pool region of the country. Pool was the region of RoC in which the low level insurgency prevailed in the early 2000s and persisted longer than in other parts of the country. Due to displacement, insecurity and laggard recovery, land access has become a prevalent issue. Indeed, while community members in RoC have seen the greatest increases in their levels of land access of the GLR countries this is likely because community members in RoC started with very low land access at the end of conflict in the first place – and despite large improvements continue to have the least access to land across the GLR countries. Land access in RoC is also likely tied to the lowest levels of livestock ownership across the GLR countries.

8.3 Economic Issues

The following is an analysis of the economic status of community members and their relationship to that of ex-combatants across the GLR countries. The analysis proceeds in five main parts: (i) an examination of community members' employment statuses and general outlooks on employment; (ii) an examination of the barriers that non-economically active community members face to gaining a stable economic status; (iii) an examination of female community members' specific economic issues; (iv) an examination of community members' levels of income, savings, and access to credit as indicators of their general economic stability and ability to leverage economic opportunities; and (v) an examination of community members' level of engagement with economic associations as an extended support / opportunity network.

The structured analysis here follows in close parity with that of the ex-combatant sample, serving as a comparison for charting the degree to which ex-combatants achieve economic

reintegration and economic stability – the two not necessarily being the same thing. Indeed, conventional wisdom is that economic reintegration is essential for the process of building peace and security – however the economic context across the Great Lakes Region is often one of severe development challenges posed to both community members and ex-combatants alike. One way to view this is that ex-combatants reaching parity with community members along economic lines may end up meaning reaching a state of economic instability equal to community members.

8.3.1 Economic Status and History

Employment status was very consistent across the GLR countries for community members through time (prior to conflict, at the end of conflict, and at the time of sampling).¹²⁷ As can be seen in *Table 39* the most common employment status for community members across the GLR countries was self-employed in agriculture (36.9% prior to conflict, 42.5% at demobilization, and 38.3% at sampling). It appears that the slight spike in those community members self-employed in agriculture at the end in conflict coincides with drops in the number of unemployed and, more notably, drops in the number of community members studying or training compared to before conflict (19% prior to conflict, 11.8% at the end of conflict, and 7.9% at sampling). Uganda displays an exaggerated version of this trend, as prior to conflict most community members in Uganda were studying or training (43.3%) followed by self-employed in agriculture (33.9%), however by the time of sampling the employment statuses of community members in Uganda fell very much in line with the cross-country average.

¹²⁷ Due to the state of continued conflict in DRC, employment status was surveyed in reference to 5 years ago, 3 years ago, and today. Data on community member employment status in Rwanda is only available for the time of sampling.

Table 39: Community Member Economic Status at Three Time Points¹²⁸

	Community Member Employment Status at Three Time Points												
	Unemployed	Employed working for employer, agriculture	Employed working for employer, private sector	Employed working for employer, public sector	Self-employed agriculture	Self-employed services	Self-employed retail	Self-employed manufacturing	Hustle or involved in or reliant on the informal economy	Supplementing income through subsistence activities	Studying or Training	Housewife or Working in the home	Retired, but not economically active
Employment Status Prior to Conflict													
Male	12.90%	0.70%	6.90%	9.20%	37.00%	6.00%	2.80%	0.80%	0.70%	0.00%	20.10%	0.20%	2.50%
Female	18.20%	0.30%	2.80%	3.90%	36.40%	5.10%	6.20%	1.30%	0.00%	0.00%	17.60%	8.10%	0.10%
Age 18-30	18.90%	0.80%	4.50%	2.60%	18.40%	4.10%	3.00%	0.60%	0.60%	0.00%	42.60%	3.80%	0.00%
Age 31-40	14.20%	0.60%	6.30%	6.10%	34.70%	8.20%	6.20%	0.90%	0.80%	0.00%	17.90%	4.00%	0.10%
Age Over 40	12.70%	0.30%	5.40%	11.30%	51.10%	5.30%	4.30%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%	2.00%	3.20%	3.60%
DRC	19.90%	1.10%	9.00%	13.30%	18.10%	8.90%	8.10%	1.30%	0.00%	0.00%	11.40%	8.20%	0.80%
RoC	15.60%	0.60%	2.90%	3.30%	59.60%	4.80%	2.60%	1.70%	0.00%	0.00%	2.90%	2.00%	3.90%
Uganda	9.40%	0.00%	3.50%	4.10%	33.90%	2.90%	1.80%	0.00%	1.20%	0.00%	43.30%	0.00%	0.00%
GLR Average	15.00%	0.60%	5.20%	7.00%	36.90%	5.60%	4.20%	1.00%	0.40%	0.00%	19.00%	3.50%	1.60%
Employment Status at the End of Conflict													
Male	11.70%	1.00%	7.00%	7.70%	44.50%	6.60%	3.70%	0.80%	0.30%	0.60%	13.00%	0.60%	2.30%
Female	14.70%	0.50%	3.70%	4.80%	39.50%	5.50%	7.40%	1.20%	1.80%	0.90%	10.10%	9.80%	0.20%
Age 18-30	14.00%	0.70%	6.90%	3.10%	28.40%	5.30%	4.30%	0.60%	2.30%	1.20%	28.10%	5.30%	0.00%
Age 31-40	12.70%	1.50%	6.60%	7.10%	39.00%	8.70%	8.20%	0.80%	0.00%	0.80%	9.10%	5.40%	0.10%
Age Over 40	12.10%	0.30%	4.40%	9.30%	54.90%	5.50%	4.40%	0.90%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	3.20%	3.40%
DRC	17.50%	1.10%	8.50%	12.80%	20.40%	9.40%	8.90%	1.40%	0.00%	0.00%	8.80%	10.30%	1.00%
RoC	15.10%	0.60%	2.00%	3.10%	62.00%	5.00%	3.10%	1.50%	0.00%	0.00%	1.50%	2.60%	3.60%
Uganda	6.20%	0.60%	6.20%	3.40%	46.30%	4.00%	3.40%	0.00%	2.80%	2.30%	24.90%	0.00%	0.00%
GLR Average	12.90%	0.80%	5.60%	6.50%	42.50%	6.20%	5.20%	0.90%	0.90%	0.80%	11.80%	4.40%	1.50%
Employment Status at Sampling													
Male	16.30%	1.80%	6.80%	8.40%	38.30%	8.60%	4.10%	1.10%	0.80%	1.50%	9.30%	0.60%	2.50%
Female	18.20%	0.80%	4.30%	5.70%	37.90%	5.30%	7.90%	1.50%	2.30%	1.10%	5.70%	8.90%	0.30%
Age 18-30	20.20%	1.30%	8.40%	5.30%	25.00%	7.70%	5.30%	0.80%	2.10%	2.50%	17.70%	3.80%	0.00%
Age 31-40	15.60%	1.70%	5.90%	9.60%	39.20%	8.20%	6.30%	1.80%	1.40%	0.60%	4.00%	5.20%	0.30%
Age Over 40	14.70%	1.40%	3.20%	8.50%	50.90%	6.40%	5.40%	1.20%	0.30%	0.50%	0.00%	2.90%	4.60%
DRC	19.50%	1.00%	6.80%	12.20%	20.50%	9.40%	9.70%	2.20%	0.00%	0.00%	6.80%	10.20%	1.70%
RoC	14.40%	0.40%	1.70%	2.60%	64.70%	5.10%	2.60%	1.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.90%	1.90%	4.10%
Rwanda	28.80%	3.60%	8.90%	8.10%	13.70%	6.20%	5.20%	1.20%	1.60%	3.60%	16.50%	2.20%	0.60%
Uganda	5.10%	0.60%	5.60%	6.20%	55.40%	8.50%	4.50%	0.00%	4.00%	1.70%	7.30%	0.60%	0.60%
GLR Average	17.00%	1.40%	5.80%	7.30%	38.30%	7.30%	5.50%	1.20%	1.40%	1.30%	7.90%	3.80%	1.70%

Female community members were slightly more likely to be unemployed, self-employed in retail, or a housewife working in the home at all time periods when compared to male community members (see Table 39). Over time female community members have seen a slight drop in the rate of being self-employed in agriculture accompanied by slight increases in public and private sector employment as well as unemployment.

¹²⁸ The use of the phrase “at three time points” indicates that respondents were surveyed at one time point with questions regarding three different time points. Because of the inclusion of Rwanda, cross-country community member employment status at the time of sampling is biased compared to data for before conflict and at the time of demobilization programming. For example, the cross-country GLR figure for unemployment at the time of sampling without Rwanda in the sample is only 13% – compared to 17%. These cross-country figures should be approached cautiously and with an eye for detail.

When those community members across the GLR countries who were not employed at the time of sampling were asked to explain why they were not working, there were several dominant responses: (i) 43% said they were not working due to lack of opportunity; (ii) 16.8% cited financial problems (including lack of access to credit); (iii) 11.1% cited lack of sponsor; and (iv) 11.8% pointed to lack of marketable skills.¹²⁹ Uganda stood out from this general trend in reasons for not working – instead the majority (44.4%) said they were not working because they were a student (matching the findings on Uganda’s higher rate of studying and training).

Female community members across the GLR countries were less likely to cite lack of opportunity and lack of sponsor as the reason for their unemployment (37.6% and 8.6%, respectively) than male community members (48.2% and 13.1%, respectively). Inversely, female community members were more likely to cite a lack of marketable skills and financial problems including lack of credit (18.6% and 19.4%, respectively) compared to their male community member counterparts (5.8% and 14.1%, respectively). Along age demographic categories, those community members aged over 40 were less likely to cite lack of opportunity as a reason for their unemployment (36.5% vs. 51.9% of those 31-40 and 45.4% of those 18-30) and more likely to cite financial problems including lack of credit (23.3% vs. 13.9% of those 31-40 and 8.5% of those 18-30).

Across the GLR countries 31.9% of community members reported having more than one job / income earning activity.¹³⁰ When asked to explain further in Uganda there were several key responses: (i) 31.1% cited income supplementation for general survival as the reason for having more than one income earning activity; (ii) 19.7% explained that they subsistence farmed in addition to having a small business; and (iii) 19.7% said they worked more than one income generating activity for the general betterment of their economic situation. Females in Uganda were less likely to subsistence farm on the side of another job (14.3%) and more likely to work more than one job to meet basic needs (35.7%) than male

¹²⁹ Rwanda is absent from findings on explanations for unemployment among community members due to lack of directly comparable data. The term "sponsor" here refers to the apprentice / master relationship. Community members are saying that they do not have anyone to apprentice under.

¹³⁰ Rwanda is absent from findings on number of community members who participate in more than one economic activity and the reason why due to lack of directly comparable data.

community members (21.3% and 29.8%, respectively). In DRC and RoC the range of explanations was similar though differently distributed, 40.7% farmed on the side of another income generating activity and 19.1% worked more than one job to meet basic needs.

Of community members across the GLR countries, 57.3% would be willing to consider moving to another part of their country for better job opportunities.¹³¹ This figure reflects the trends in DRC and RoC well, however in Uganda the proportion of community members willing to consider moving for improved job opportunities was tipped the opposite direction (66.9% reporting that they would not consider moving). Across the GLR countries female community members were slightly less willing to consider moving for better job prospects compared to male community members (53% vs. 60.3%). Also, community members over the age of 40 were less likely to be willing to consider moving (49.2% vs. 64.5% of those 31-40 and 61.7% of those 18-30) – sacrificing their overall stronger social footing in the community.

When community members who were willing to consider moving for improved job prospects in Uganda were asked to explain further the most common responses were: (i) to improve their standard of living (33.9% total – 46.7% of females vs. 29.3% of males) and (ii) to seek out new opportunities and experiences (21.4% total – 6.7% of females vs. 26.8% of males).¹³² Again in Uganda, when those community members who were not willing to consider moving to another part of the country for improved job prospects were asked to explain further the most common responses were: (i) lack of education / still being a student prevents work (31.9% total – 42.5% of females vs. 26% of males) and (ii) family responsibilities (30.1% total – 35% of females vs. 27.4% of males).

Drawing from Uganda only, 59.4% of community members reported that they believe that it is harder for ex-combatants than others to find a job (compared to 78.7% of ex-combatants

¹³¹ Rwanda is absent from findings on community member willingness to migrate for better economic opportunities due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹³² Questions regarding community members' explanations for willingness to migrate for economic opportunities were only asked in Uganda.

in Uganda and 64.6% of ex-combatants overall).¹³³ Female community members in Uganda were slightly more likely to perceive that ex-combatants had a harder time finding jobs than others when compared to male community members (64.2% vs. 57.4%). In addition, age showed a negative relationship to the perception that ex-combatants have a harder time finding a job (67.5% of those 18-30, 57.9% of those 31-40, and 48.1% of those over 40).

Collectively community members' economic trajectory and understanding of the dynamics surrounding this trajectory come together in community members' overall outlook on their future. The vast majority of community members (77.9%) see their economic situation improving in the future. Both male and female community members across the GLR displayed a very similar positive outlook (79.3% vs. 76.8% respectively). Age displayed a negative relationship to the frequency of reporting a positive outlook on one's economic future with a steep threshold for those aged over 40 (83.2% of those 18-30, 81.7% of those 31-40, and 65.3% of those over 40) which, as outlined below, is especially tied to health related issues.

The range of explanations given from community members for a positive outlook on economic prospects in the future were diverse across the GLR countries, making a meaningful cross-country comparison difficult, however a certain range of responses were more common: (i) improved agricultural performance was seen as key in Uganda (23.3%) however less important in DRC and RoC (11.6% and 8.6% respectively); (ii) gaining employment was important in all countries (15.8% in Uganda, 16.8% in DRC, and 12.9% in RoC); (iii) personal effort or hard work was especially important in RoC but much less so in Uganda and DRC (35.8% in RoC, 13% in Uganda, and 17% in DRC); (iv) religious faith / grace of god was central in DRC and RoC (25% and 20.5% respectively) and completely absent (0%) in Uganda.¹³⁴

¹³³ Again, Uganda is discussed exclusively here because questions on the perception of relative difficulty that ex-combatants have finding jobs were only asked to community members in Uganda, whereas in ex-combatant surveys the same question was asked across all GLR countries excluding Rwanda.

¹³⁴ These findings should not play down the role of religion in Northern Ugandan culture. For example, the Acholi people have a rich tradition of belief blending indigenous and Christian religious customs. Rwanda is excluded from findings on reasons for community members' positive and negative outlooks on their overall economic situation due to lack of directly comparable data.

Of those community members who had a negative outlook on their economic prospects in the future there were also a range of common answers: (i) ill health was a common response in Uganda and DRC (34% and 22.2%, respectively) – this was an especially prevalent response among community members over the age of 40; (ii) poor agricultural yield was a common explanation in Uganda and RoC (21.3% and 23.2%, respectively); and (iii) general economic decline / lack of opportunities was a frequent explanation as well (14.9% in Uganda, 24.2% in DRC, and 34.3% in RoC).

As a final point, looking only to DRC and RoC we can observe that 56.1% of community members work for pay 12 months of the year, the remainder working for paid labor closer to the average 9.47 months a year. This makes sense, as 72.3% of all community members work 1-3 months for unpaid labor in addition to their paid labor. Female community members worked slightly longer on average for both paid and unpaid labor compared to male community members (9.59 months paid labor vs. 9.36 months, and 3.23 months unpaid labor vs. 3.05 months). Community members over the age of 40 had the largest average period of the year spent in paid labor (9.78 months) and the lowest average period spent in unpaid labor (3.07 months).

It appears as though in DRC and RoC, community members most commonly fall into one of three categories: (i) working 12 months a year for paid labor; (ii) working 12 months a year for paid labor and for 1-3 months of the year (farming season) working for unpaid labor; and (iii) working for around nine months of the year for paid labor and spending the remaining three months (farming season) in unpaid labor.

8.3.2 Non-Economically Active Community Members on Employment Issues

Those community members across the GLR countries who were not economically active explained a range of coping mechanisms to get by financially without an income. Most commonly, community members reported that they relied on cash contributions from family (28%), borrowed money from unspecified sources (19.3%), used past savings (15.8%), or got

help from public sources such as the community or a church (14.1%).¹³⁵ Female community members were less likely to use savings (11.7%) compared to male community members (19.5%) and more likely to rely on cash contributions from family than male community members (33.9% vs. 23%), supporting the idea that females (ex-combatants and community members alike) are especially reliant on the family and have fewer economic support networks overall. Age showed a positive relationship to the likelihood of using savings to get by (8% of those 18-30, 17.8% of those 31-40, and 19.8% of those over 40).

Looking specifically to Uganda, a large proportion of non-economically active community members (77.8%) believe that they have a harder time finding a job than other people.¹³⁶ Further, 100% of non-economically active female community members thought they had a harder time finding a job compared to 66.7% of their male counterparts. When asked to explain why they thought they had a harder time, non-economically active community members in Uganda most commonly cited incomplete studies / still a student (28.6%), low or no education (28.6%), and disability (28.6%). Female community members cited lack of education or qualifications at a higher rate (50%). This reinforces the evidence that community members, at least in Uganda, see education as a key pathway to gaining employment.

Across the GLR countries, non-economically active community members generally held quite polarized outlooks on their prospects of gaining employment in the near future. Of those community members, 48.9% reported that they think they have a good chance of getting a job in the near future, 1.4% that they have neither a good or bad chance, and 49.7% that they have a poor chance. This clear polarization was characteristic most clearly in DRC, however in RoC a larger proportion has positive outlooks (66.6%) and in Rwanda a lower proportion had positive outlooks (33.1%). These trends are visible in *Table 40*. Age showed a clear positive relationship to the likelihood of having a poor outlook on gaining employment in the future (44.1% of those 18-30, 47.4% of those 31-40, and 61.4% of those over 40).

¹³⁵ Rwanda is absent from findings on non-economically active community members' coping strategies due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹³⁶ This question on whether non-economically active community members perceive having a harder time finding a job than others was only asked to community members in Uganda, while for ex-combatants it was asked in DRC, RoC, Uganda, and Burundi.

Table 40: Non-Economically Active Community Member Outlook on Employment

	What are your chances of getting a job in the near future?	
	Good	Poor
Male	50.13%	49.23%
Female	48.70%	51.30%
Age 18-30	54.15%	45.85%
Age 31-40	52.60%	47.40%
Age Over 40	38.60%	61.40%
DRC	47.60%	52.40%
Republic of Congo	66.60%	33.40%
Rwanda	33.10%	66.90%
Uganda	50.00%	50.00%
GLR Average	49.60%	50.40%

In Uganda non-economically active community members were questioned further as to the reasons behind their answers.¹³⁷ Those who had a positive outlook explained their optimism with one of three answers: (i) that they hold qualifications and have papers (50%), (ii) that they are currently pursuing studies, and (iii) that they are bright, capable, hard working and motivated. Of non-economically active female community members in Uganda with a positive outlook on gaining employment in the near future, 100% explained their optimism as tied to their current studying.

Of those non-economically active community members in Uganda who had a negative outlook on gaining employment in the near future there were also three common explanations: (i) that they were disabled (50%); (ii) that they had low or no qualifications (25%); or (iii) that corrupt officials made gaining employment unlikely (25%). We can take away that, at least in Uganda, non-economically active community members perceive the attainment of education as among the key pathways to gaining employment in the near future – and inversely the lack there of as a key barrier.

8.3.3 Female Community Members on Employment Issues

Non-economically active female community members across the GLR countries generally did not feel discriminated against as a female (83.2% did not feel discrimination and 16.8% did). Uganda was the only GLR country that stood out from this trend – where 50% of non-economically active female community members felt discriminated against on the basis of

¹³⁷ Questions on the reasons behind non-economically active community members’ economic outlooks were only asked in Uganda.

being female. In Uganda, 100% of those non-economically active female community members identified male bosses or employers as the ones discriminating against them on the basis of gender.¹³⁸

When economically active female community members across the GLR countries were asked whether they perceived being discriminated against on the basis of being a female the proportion which felt discriminated against as a female was similar, but slightly lower (14.6%) than with non-economically active females. In Rwanda discrimination was perceived on the lowest level (4.8%) across the GLR countries, while it was highest in Uganda (23.3%). Still looking at Uganda, of those economically active female community members who did feel discriminated against on the basis of gender 57.2% identified that discrimination as coming from co-workers (50% of those specified male co-workers, 25% female co-workers, and 25% all co-workers).

When economically active female community members across DRC and RoC were asked whether they perceived female ex-combatants as having a harder time, 36% responded yes (the other 64% replying no). When those 36% that did think that female ex-combatants had a harder time than others were asked to explain, the most common explanations were the brutality and misconduct of ex-combatants (34.6%), the poor reputation of ex-combatants (32.1%), and distrust of ex-combatants (12.6%).

8.3.4 Income, Savings and Access to Credit

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize most of the Great Lakes Region, levels of community member economic activity are a good starting point for understanding basic individual and household economic stability. However, it is through more closely examining community members' income, savings and access to credit that we can begin to reveal some about their ability, or in some cases lack thereof, to move beyond

¹³⁸ Questions on both non-economically active and economically active female community members' perceived sources of discrimination were only asked in Uganda.

mere subsistence by leveraging economic opportunities and in turn exhibiting economic mobility.

Table 41: Community Member Sole Household Breadwinner Proportions

	Are you the sole, or only, breadwinner or do others in your household also earn an income?	
	Sole	Others assist
Male	57.50%	42.50%
Female	32.80%	67.20%
Age 18-30	42.90%	57.10%
Age 31-40	54.20%	45.80%
Age Over 40	55.70%	44.30%
DRC	80.00%	20.00%
Republic of Congo	36.00%	64.00%
Rwanda	61.30%	38.70%
Uganda	44.80%	55.20%
GLR Average	49.70%	50.30%

Across the GLR countries, 49.7% of community members reported that they were the sole breadwinner in their household, the remaining 50.3% reporting that others assist them. Despite this cross-country average, community members within the individual GLR countries responded in different proportions as to whether they were the sole breadwinners of their household – these findings are presented in *Table 41*. Concerning demographic categories, age shows a positive relationship to the likelihood of being a sole breadwinner (42.9% of those 18-30, 54.2% of those 31-40, and 55.7% of those over 40). In addition, across the GLR countries female community members were less likely to be the sole breadwinner of their household compared to male community members (32.8% vs. 57.5%) – contributing to the idea that female community members generally have fewer economic networks than males.

Table 42: Community Member Sole Breadwinner Meeting Monthly Expenses

	At the end of each month, do you meet your household expenses?				
	Usually have money left over	Usually break-even	Usually have to use past savings	Rely on family money transfers	Usually have to borrow
Male	4.50%	32.50%	5.50%	19.30%	38.20%
Female	0.40%	22.90%	2.40%	24.40%	49.80%
Age 18-30	4.40%	25.10%	3.10%	24.90%	42.50%
Age 31-40	0.30%	38.70%	7.90%	10.70%	42.50%
Age Over 40	3.60%	29.50%	4.00%	23.70%	39.20%
DRC	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%
RoC	9.10%	34.10%	13.60%	18.20%	25.00%
Uganda	3.00%	29.10%	4.20%	21.20%	42.40%
GLR Average	3.20%	29.30%	4.50%	21.00%	42.00%

Of those community members across the GLR countries who are the sole breadwinners of their household only 29.3% report that they break-even in meeting their household expenses each month while the remaining 42% usually have to borrow money, 21% rely on money transfers from family, and 4.5% use past savings.¹³⁹ Only 3.2% of community members usually have money left over after meeting their monthly expenses. Within each of the GLR countries the variation across these responses is displayed in *Table 42*. Female community members were less likely to break even in their monthly expenses than males (22.9% vs. 32.5%) and more likely to rely on family money transfers (24.4% vs. 19.3%) and borrowing in general (49.8% vs. 38.2%).

Regarding age demographics, those 31-40 are the most likely age group to break even on their monthly expenses (38.70%) and the least likely to rely on family money transfers (10.7%) – whereas those 18-30 and over 40 were less likely to break even (25.1% and 29.5%, respectively) and more likely to rely on family money transfers (24.9% and 23.7%, respectively). However, in terms of borrowing more generally those aged 31-40 were on par with other age demographics. These trends could suggest that those aged 31-40 are in a period where they are financially independent from the familial unit in which they were raised, though not yet having established their own familial unit to such a level that it can serve as an extended support network – though to confirm this speculation would require triangulation in future studies.

Of those 65.4% community members across the GLR countries who are sole breadwinners and have a shortage of income for meeting their monthly expenses, they are on average short by 46% of their required income. Of those 4.2% of community members across the GLR who have a surplus of income after meeting monthly expenses, they have on average a surplus of 32% of their income. Within-country averages for monthly income deficit and surplus are displayed in *Table 43*. Female community members on average have larger income shortages (mean 53%) and slightly smaller surpluses (mean 30%) than male community members (mean 41% and 34% respectively). Age showed a negative relationship to the average income shortage among community members (mean 51% of those 18-30,

¹³⁹ Rwanda is absent from findings on community member sole breadwinners' meeting monthly expenses, surplus percentages, and deficit percentages due to lack of directly comparable data.

42% of those 31-40, and 40% of those over 40). However in terms of average income surplus those 31-40 have the smallest average surplus (22%) while those 18-30 and over 40 have somewhat larger surpluses (28% and 38% respectively).

Table 43: Community Member Sole Breadwinner Average Monthly Income Shortages and Surpluses.

	Average Monthly Income Shortage	Average Monthly Income Surplus
Male	41%	34%
Female	53%	30%
Age 18-30	51%	28%
Age 31-40	42%	22%
Age Over 40	40%	38%
DRC	30%	13%
RoC	42%	35%
Uganda	46%	31%
GLR Average	46%	32%

Those community members across the GLR countries who are not sole breadwinners contribute 40% on average of their total household income. The variation in average income contribution within each of the GLR countries is displayed in *Table 44*. On average non-sole breadwinner female community members contribute less than males (mean 37% vs. 43%). Those aged 31-40 contribute the largest proportion of household income on average compared to other age demographic groups (mean 52% vs. 33% of those 18-30 and 44% of those over 40).

Table 44: Community Member Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contribution

	Average Non-Sole Breadwinner Household Income Contribution Percentage
Male	43%
Female	37%
Age 18-30	33%
Age 31-40	52%
Age Over 40	44%
DRC	42%
RoC	51%
Rwanda	31%
Uganda	43%
GLR Average	40%

In the two years prior to sampling 31.7% of community members across the GLR countries have had to borrow money to help meet their day to day needs, the remaining 68.3% not having needed to borrow, though there is a split between DRC and RoC where 23.1% and

20.3% (respectively) had to borrow, and Uganda where 52.3% had to borrow.¹⁴⁰ In DRC and RoC the most common expenses that borrowed money was used for were: (i) to assist family (26.7%); (ii) as a means of subsistence (21.6%); and (iii) for a business investment (18.5%). In addition in DRC and RoC the most common borrowing source was friends (53%) followed by family (20%).

Across the GLR countries, only 13.3% of community members had ever applied for micro-credit from a financial institution, the remaining 86.7% never having applied (possibly due to lack of access). This cross-country figure is very much an average in that there was a clear split between DRC and RoC, on the one hand, where micro-credit application rates were very low (5.3% in DRC and 3.4% in RoC), against Rwanda and Uganda, on the other hand, where higher proportions of community members had applied for micro-credit (24.6% and 26.4% respectively). This division may be a product of the overall levels of development in the sampled areas of DRC and RoC (especially eastern DRC) – financial institutions as such being nearly non-existent. Generally speaking female community members were just as likely to have applied for micro-credit across the GLR countries when compared to male community members (13.1% vs. 13.4%). In Uganda there was a gendered trend visible in which 37.1% of female community members versus 19.6% of male community members had applied for micro-credit.

Of those community members who had applied for micro-credit most had successful applications (90.4%). At a cross-country level female community members reported slightly lower success rates in micro-credit applications (84.4% vs. 94.5%) – at a within-country level there is further nuance to examine. In Uganda, male community members were 100% successful in their micro-credit applications compared to 69.2% of female community members. Inversely, in RoC 85% of female community members had successful applications compared to 60% of male community members. The explanatory factor behind these opposing gender trends in micro-credit application rates is challenging to identify, but could prove a useful direction of inquiry in future studies.

¹⁴⁰ Rwanda is absent from all findings on borrowing to meet monthly expenses due to lack of directly comparable data. Further, questions regarding the sources and uses of borrowed money were only asked to community members in DRC and RoC.

8.3.5 Economic Associations

Across the GLR countries, just over half of community members (53.7%) are currently involved in micro-economic activities – though in DRC this was a notably lower proportion (34.2%).

Across the GLR countries 21.8% of community members were currently a member of an economic association, 7.6% were previously a member but were no longer, and 70.6% had never been a member of an economic association. However, in Rwanda and Uganda there were notably higher proportions of community members who were currently members of economic associations (25.2% and 42.9% respectively) – these trends are displayed in *Table 45*. Across the GLR countries, female community members were slightly less likely to currently be a member of an economic association when compared to male community members (19.7% vs. 23.3%). However, Uganda stands out from this otherwise durable trend – female community members were actually more likely to currently be in an economic association than their male counterparts (54.5% vs. 37.5%).

Table 45: Community Member Economic Association Membership

	In the past two years have you ever been a member of an Economic Association?		
	Yes, have been a member previously – but not now	Yes, am currently a member now	No, have never been a member of an economic association
Male	7.50%	23.30%	69.20%
Female	7.70%	19.70%	72.60%
Age 18-30	7.00%	21.00%	72.00%
Age 31-40	7.10%	27.10%	65.80%
Age Over 40	8.10%	20.10%	71.80%
DRC	4.80%	9.80%	85.30%
Republic of Congo	4.40%	9.40%	86.20%
Rwanda	10.30%	25.20%	64.40%
Uganda	10.90%	42.90%	46.30%
GLR Average	7.60%	21.80%	70.60%

Looking only at Rwanda and Uganda, we can see that the most common form of economic association for community members is local savings and credit cooperatives, in which 40.3% of those who were currently a member of an economic association in Uganda belonged to

and 61.1% of those in Rwanda belonged to.¹⁴¹ The next most common form of economic association among community members was farmers associations (8.3%) – of which female community members were less likely to be a member of when compared to males (3.3% vs. 11.9%).

When asked about the primary benefits they gain from membership to their economic association there were diverse trends across the GLR countries. In Rwanda and Uganda, community members most commonly identify financial support as a key benefit of their membership to an economic association (38.9% and 69.2% respectively). However, for community members in DRC and RoC, social networking (30.2% in DRC and 23.9% in RoC) and economic networking (39.7% in DRC and 46.9% in RoC), and moral support (27% in DRC and 19.5% in RoC) were the key benefits to membership in an economic association. Though not the most common reply, social and economic networking were also perceived as benefits to economic associations in Rwanda (14.2% and 20.4%) but not in as much so in Uganda (3.1% and 4.6%).

Age appears to play a role in the value of economic associations in at least two ways. First, as age increases, community members are less likely to see financial support as the main benefit of being in an economic association (52.3% of those 18-30, 46.9% of those 31-40, and 37.5% of those over 40) – most relevant in Rwanda and Uganda. Second, as age increases, community members are more likely to see economic networking as the chief benefit (14% of those 18-30, 19.1% of those 31-40, and 20% of those over 40) – especially relevant in DRC and RoC.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Questions regarding the type of economic associations to which community members belonged were only asked in Rwanda and Uganda. In Rwanda these local savings and credit cooperatives commonly existed under the name VSLA – Village Savings and Loan Association.

¹⁴² However, this age related trend in DRC and RoC may be a product of the sampling biases in these countries towards community members over the age of 40.

Table 46: Community Member Economic Association Members Breakdown

	Who are the members that comprise this Economic Association?								
	Only Ex-Combatants	Mix but mostly Ex-Combatants	Mixed with both reporters and non-Ex-Combatants	Mixed but mostly non-Ex-Combatants	Civilians, no Ex-Combatants	Mainly disabled people	Military	Specified professionals such as teachers	Other
DRC	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%	58.7%	30.2%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	6.3%
RoC	1.9%	5.7%	43.4%	46.2%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Rwanda	0.0%	9.2%	6.4%	84.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Uganda	0.0%	36.4%	49.4%	0.0%	11.7%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
GLR Average	.3%	22.5%	31.9%	33.3%	9.8%	.7%	.2%	.7%	.7%

Across the GLR countries when community members were asked about the membership of their economic associations there was considerable variation across countries. The variation within each GLR country for community members’ perception of the membership of their economic association is presented in *Table 46*. Community members in DRC and Rwanda, and to a lesser extent RoC, were most heavily involved in economic associations without ex-combatant members, while community members in Uganda were more commonly members of economic association that also had ex-combatant members. It unclear this is a reflection of programmatic design or the result of social forces such as stigma.

8.3.6 Summary

Community members across the GLR countries show a relatively stable trajectory of economic status over time – the average unemployment rate varying as little as 2%. The majority of community members are self-employed in small-scale agriculture. Indeed, through time this remains the most important economic activity for community members across the GLR. Though the proportion of community members self-employed in small-scale agriculture peaks at the end of conflict and then drops some at the time of sampling, these drops, along with a continuous drop in the number of community members studying, are absorbed most notably into employment in public and private sector as well as self-employment in non-agricultural service and retail – indicative of the initial onset of improved stability and security in the wake of peace. Though, in DRC these is a nearly static state of employment among community members through time – likely a result of the continuing state of conflict in Eastern DRC.

Like ex-combatants, community members see their primary barrier to gaining a stable economic status as the lack of opportunities available to them but are also more likely to cite economic problems (such as access to credit) and lack of marketable skills as barriers than ex-combatants. In further contrast to ex-combatants, few community members were willing to migrate for better economic opportunities, likely an indicator of their stronger social and economic footing in the community. Non-economically active community members relied heavily on borrowing from family and friends to get by. However, overall community members had a positive outlook on their economic prospects in the future.

Community members across the GLR displayed a near even split between household sole breadwinner and non-sole breadwinner status. While on average non-sole breadwinners contributed less than half of their total monthly household income this was supplemented against the support of the rest of their household members' income contributions, placing them at a clear advantage to sole breadwinners. Over half of sole breadwinners had to borrow money from family or friends to meet their household expenses on a monthly basis. Sole breadwinners between the ages of 31 and 40 were the most likely to meet their monthly expenses without borrowing, and when they did borrow they were much more likely to do so from friends instead of family. Further, those non-sole breadwinners aged 31-40 also contributed the most to their total household income on average. These elements combined suggest that community members aged 31-40 are at their economic prime and among the most capable at meeting their household economic responsibilities.

The number of community members who have access to micro-credit is low across the GLR countries, and few were members of economic associations – though some community members came into economic associations with ex-combatants as a part of reintegration programming in some countries (e.g. DRC and RoC). The primary value that community members identified to economic associations (most commonly local credit and savings), was largely reflective of programmatic dimensions in each country – e.g. in DRC and RoC social and economic networking were the primary value of economic associations that community members identified.

8.3.6.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

As consistent with the analysis presented throughout this survey of community dynamics in the Great Lakes Region, female community members exhibit a distinct range of characteristics that collectively paint a picture of a weaker platform of economic stability. Female community members are more likely than males to be unemployed through time, and vastly more likely to work taking care of the household – to an extent this can be expected as a result of traditional gender roles in the GLR countries. Female community members are less likely to cite lack of opportunity as the primary barrier to gaining productive economic status, though still the primary, and more likely to cite lack of education or skills than male community members.

Across the GLR, household sole breadwinner status was generally an indicator of economic instability. In this sense females are at an advantage to males, being less likely to be a sole breadwinner. However, those female community members who were non-sole breadwinners contributed less to the household on average than males. Further, those female community members who were sole breadwinners were less likely to meet their expenses and more likely to borrow from family or friends to meet household expenses on a monthly basis than male community members – their income shortages were larger and their surpluses were smaller. So while female community members are less likely to be exposed to the economic vulnerability of sole breadwinner status, when they are, this vulnerability is more accentuated than for male community members. These findings flag female headed households as particularly vulnerable.

At first glance young community members (18-30) also appear to have some disadvantages to other age demographic groups. Young community members are the most likely to be unemployed at any time point, are less likely to meet monthly expenses, and have larger income shortages than their older peers. However, young community members are also the least likely age group to identify themselves as a household head and receive the support of their familial/ household unit – in a sense insulating them from the weight of their employment and income disadvantages. It may be that the disadvantages that young

community members face are simply an indication of their life stage in establishing an income source and building economic networks.

8.3.6.2 Unique Country Trends

In the analysis of economic issues presented in this section of the study, community members in DRC stand out subtly. First, across the GLR countries, self-employment in agriculture is the dominant economic status at all time points. While this is still the case in DRC, the overall proportion of community members self-employed in agriculture at all time points (before conflict, at start of demobilization programming, at the time of sampling) is considerably lower than the cross-country average. The difference is explained in part by the community members in DRC's higher levels of unemployment (highest at all time points across the GLR), employment in the public sector, and self-employment in services or retail. Overall this could suggest that community members in DRC have a harder time gaining employment, specifically self-employment in agriculture, than in other GLR countries and as a result participate more deeply in a range of alternative income activities.

In addition, community members in DRC are the most likely across the GLR to be sole breadwinners – and thus subject to greater household economic instability. Indeed, while sole breadwinners in DRC are the most likely across the GLR countries to meet their monthly expenses, less than half do so – instead relying on borrowing from friends and family on a regular basis. Though sole breadwinners in DRC have smaller monthly income shortages than those in other GLR countries, they also have smaller surpluses. Essentially, while sole breadwinner community members in DRC are slightly better off than those in other GLR countries, community members in DRC are also more likely to be a sole breadwinner – still an indicator of greater exposure to economic instability.

Collectively these two points, community members in DRC as the most likely to be unemployed and the most likely to be a sole breadwinner, cement the economic conditions for community members in DRC as the weakest in the GLR countries.

8.4 Social Capital

The following section provides a discussion and analysis of the many facets of social capital in the community member sample. The concept of social capital essentially revolves around the idea that social networks have value, both tangible and intangible, for individuals and communities and are a key indicator of the overall social health of communities – in turn, their ability to leverage this social capital towards social and economic outcomes. As such the analysis of social capital for community members across the Great Lakes Region presented here is comprised of five core components: (i) an examination of the size of community members' social networks and their levels of sociability; (ii) an examination of individual community members' levels of trust and solidarity with others in their community; (iii) an examination of community members levels of social cohesion and inclusion in the community; (iv) in turn, an examination of how these factors come together in community members' overall sense of empowerment; and (v) their perception of social change over time. Beyond serving as a key backdrop for understanding ex-combatants' position relative to community members, the analysis here represents a look into the core social dynamics present in communities across the GLR countries.

8.4.1 Networks and Sociability

Across the GLR countries, community members are unlikely to be in many social groups – though they are still in more social groups than ex-combatants on average. Community members across the GLR countries are in an average of 0.63 social groups. This average is reflected across the GLR countries with the exception of Uganda, where community members had more (0.93) social groups on average. Female community members had slightly fewer social groups than male community members on average (0.56 vs. 0.67).

In terms of change in number of social groups, 40.7% of community members across the GLR countries reported that the number of social groups that they belonged to at the time of sampling was more than that of one year prior, 45.8% the same number as one year prior, and 13.5% reported their current number of social groups was less than one year prior.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Rwanda is absent from findings on change in number of social groups due to lack of directly comparable data.

However, there is a sharp division between DRC and RoC on the one hand and Uganda on the other. In DRC and RoC, 77.9% of community members had seen an improvement in their number of social groups. Uganda stood in contrast from DRC and RoC as only 9.8% of community members were currently in more social groups than one year ago, 73.6% were in the same number, and 16.6% were in fewer groups. So while in Uganda community members had more social groups than in DRC and RoC in absolute terms, those community members in DRC and RoC had seen considerably more improvement.¹⁴⁴

Across the GLR countries, female community members were more likely to be in more social groups than one year ago compared to male community members (46.4% vs. 36.9%). In addition age displayed a positive relationship to the likelihood of being in more social groups than one year ago (31.3% of those 18-30, 45.5% of those 31-40, and 46.1% of those over 40).

Only 39.6% of community members across the GLR countries were on a management or organizational committee for a local group or organization – another indicator of social interaction and overall engagement in the community.¹⁴⁵ Female community members were less likely to be on a committee than male community members (30.4% vs. 45.7%). Those between the ages of 31-40 were the age segment that most commonly was on a committee (45.7%), compared to those 18-30 (33.1%), and those over 40 (41.5%).

The majority of community members (73%) across the GLR countries have contact with their immediate family.¹⁴⁶ However this cross-country figure masks some nuance in the trends within each GLR country. For example in RoC the proportion of community members who had contact with their families was absolute (100%) and in Uganda nearly so (97.3%). However, in DRC only 31% of community members had contact with their immediate family – likely a product of the extreme difficulty of travel and overall dynamics of displacement in

¹⁴⁴ It is possible that this gap between DRC/RoC and Uganda could be an indicator of the health of the overall social fabric in these countries, however it is also possible that it could be a product of periodization issues – e.g. a longer amount of time passed between the start of DDR programing and the time of sampling in Uganda than DRC in which time the overall security situation has improved considerably.

¹⁴⁵ Rwanda is absent from findings on membership to management or organizational committees due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁴⁶ Rwanda is absent from findings on familial contact, frequency of familial contact, reasons for levels of familial contact, and desired levels of familial contact due to lack of directly comparable data.

eastern DRC. Female community members across the GLR were slightly less likely than male community members to have contact with their immediate family (68.2% vs. 76.2%).

Of those community members across the GLR countries who did have contact with their immediate family, they most frequently had daily contact (63.9%), though in Uganda this proportion was much larger (93.2%). A cross-country summary of community members' frequency of familial contact is displayed in *Table 47*. Age showed a negative relationship to the frequency which community members reported having daily contact with their immediate family (53.1% of those 18-30, 40.1% of those 31-40, and 25.9% of those over 40).

Table 47: Community Member Frequency of Familial Contact

	Frequency of contact between community member and immediate family these days						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Half yearly	Once a year	Occasionally	Never
Male	69.40%	11.90%	8.20%	1.60%	0.60%	7.90%	0.20%
Female	55.10%	11.30%	14.60%	1.30%	1.50%	15.90%	0.40%
Age 18-30	78.00%	9.30%	5.20%	1.10%	0.60%	5.70%	0.10%
Age 31-40	63.50%	13.40%	11.50%	1.60%	1.40%	8.50%	0.20%
Age Over 40	52.90%	12.70%	14.40%	1.50%	0.90%	16.80%	0.80%
DRC	33.70%	17.40%	17.90%	0.50%	2.20%	28.30%	0.00%
RoC	23.30%	22.40%	25.00%	3.80%	2.20%	22.00%	0.90%
Uganda	93.20%	4.50%	1.10%	0.60%	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%
GLR Average	63.90%	11.70%	10.60%	1.50%	1.00%	10.90%	0.30%

Table 48: Community Member Desired Level of Familial Contact

	Is the current level of contact the maximum you wish or could it be more frequent?	
	Maximum	Could be more frequent
Male	54.20%	45.80%
Female	42.30%	57.70%
Age 18-30	54.60%	45.40%
Age 31-40	45.20%	54.80%
Age Over 40	47.10%	52.90%
DRC	11.90%	88.10%
Republic of Congo	35.10%	64.90%
Uganda	87.80%	12.20%
GLR Average	49.30%	50.70%

When community members across the GLR countries who did have contact with immediate family were asked whether the current level of their contact was the maximum they would desire, 49.3% responded yes – the remaining 50.7% responding no. Again, there is some nuance to be added here. In Uganda where daily contact was much higher, 87% responded that their current level of familial contact was the maximum they would desire. In contrast, in DRC, where the number of those who had contact with their family at all was much lower,

only 11.9% felt they currently had the maximum level of contact with their families that they would desire – these trends are displayed in *Table 48*.

When in DRC and RoC community members were asked to explain why they do not see their families more often, the most common responses were: (i) distance of travel (37.1%), (ii) not enough time (15.5%), and (iii) the cost of travel (19.2%) – largely corroborating the assertion above that familial contact, especially in eastern DRC, is a product of the difficulty of travel due to weak road infrastructure, mountainous terrain, strong seasonal rains, and continuing regional insecurity.¹⁴⁷ It is also likely that regional dynamics of forced displacement and migration may further damage social capital in DRC, RoC, and the GRL more broadly.

Across the GLR countries, when community members were asked to describe the number of friends they had the majority reported that they have lots of friends (48.5%), followed by a few good friends (30.9%), and not many friends (20.6%). Uganda stands out from this trend with 74.3% of community members reporting having lots of friends. Female community members across the GLR countries were less likely to describe having lots of friends and more likely to describe having not many friends compared to male community members (39% vs. 54.3% and 17.8% vs. 16.1%, respectively).

Across the GLR countries, when community members were asked to think about the age, gender, and educational background of their friends,¹⁴⁸ the majority of community members reported that their friends mostly shared the same age (57.7%) and gender (62.1%), while few (25.7%) shared the same educational background. These trends are durable across the GLR countries and are displayed in *Table 49*. In terms of demographic groups it is worth noting that female community members were slightly less likely than male community members to have most of their friends of the same age (54.4% vs. 60.1%) or educational background (24.9% vs. 26.3%), but slightly more likely to have them of the same gender (64.5% vs. 60.4%). Across age demographics, those over 40 were consistently the least likely to have most of their friends in the same age, gender, or education background group (only

¹⁴⁷ Questions regarding the reasons for less familial contact than desired were only asked in DRC and RoC.

¹⁴⁸ Rwanda is absent from findings of the demographic background of community members' friends due to lack of directly comparable data.

marginally less than those 31-40, see *Table 49*) – an indicator of older community members slightly more diverse social groups and overall stronger social footing.

When community members across the GLR countries were asked to whom they would turn to for help if they were to encounter an economic problem the most common responses were (i) family (39.9%) and (ii) friends (33.4%) – the remaining 26.7% said they would turn to no one (10.3%), to formal institutions such as local saving and credit associations (7.5%) or a range of other sources including the church (8.9%). Female community members were less likely to turn to friends and more likely to turn to family compared to male community members (27.2% vs. 37.2% and 44.9 vs. 36.8%, respectively). Age showed a negative relationship to the frequency at which community members reported that they would turn to family for economic support (50.4% of those 18-30, 35.8% of those 31-40, and 31.8% of those over 40). In addition, age showed a positive relationship to the frequency which community members reported turning to no one (6.3% of those 18-30, 9.2% of those 31-40, and 15.4% of those over 40).

Table 49: Community Member Friend Group Demographics

	Thinking about your friends, are most of them of the same age?			
	Most	Some	Few	None
Male	60.10%	26.70%	10.20%	3.00%
Female	54.40%	27.50%	12.70%	5.50%
Age 18-30	62.30%	22.50%	12.50%	2.70%
Age 31-40	55.60%	32.10%	8.70%	3.60%
Age Over 40	55.20%	27.90%	11.70%	5.20%
DRC	60.20%	24.60%	8.80%	6.50%
Republic of Congo	54.20%	29.40%	10.60%	5.80%
Uganda	58.20%	27.50%	14.30%	0.00%
GLR Average	57.70%	27.10%	11.30%	4.00%
	Thinking about your friends, are most of them of the same gender?			
	Most	Some	Few	None
Male	60.40%	27.20%	10.20%	2.20%
Female	64.50%	24.70%	7.30%	3.50%
Age 18-30	64.20%	24.10%	9.10%	2.60%
Age 31-40	62.60%	26.30%	8.40%	2.70%
Age Over 40	59.60%	27.80%	9.50%	3.10%
DRC	60.20%	25.10%	9.30%	5.40%
Republic of Congo	62.50%	26.30%	8.30%	2.90%
Uganda	63.50%	27.10%	9.40%	0.00%
GLR Average	62.10%	26.20%	9.00%	2.70%
	Thinking about your friends, are most of them of the same educational background or level?			
	Most	Some	Few	None
Male	26.30%	32.90%	31.30%	9.50%
Female	24.90%	28.00%	29.80%	17.30%
Age 18-30	32.30%	30.40%	26.60%	10.70%
Age 31-40	22.90%	30.50%	32.60%	13.90%
Age Over 40	22.40%	31.30%	32.90%	13.40%
DRC	21.40%	35.40%	23.90%	19.30%
Republic of Congo	21.50%	26.10%	35.10%	17.20%
Uganda	33.50%	30.80%	33.50%	2.20%
GLR Average	25.70%	30.90%	30.70%	12.70%

Generally speaking, across the GLR countries community members did not socialize often in public – meeting with people in a public place either to talk or have food or drinks. On average community members across the GLR countries met in public to socialize 1.33 times a week – though females met less often than males (0.95 vs. 1.57 times a week). An interesting note is that in DRC and RoC when community members were asked how often they met to discuss community issues with others over food or drinks, as opposed to just for socialization, the response rates were notably higher (mean = 2.12 times a week). With this, the majority of community members (57.4%) in DRC and RoC think that community issues have created the space by which they can more generally meet people and socialize.

Community members across the GLR countries indicate that their level of public socialization is most commonly the same as two years ago (50.4%), followed by more often (28.1%), and less often (21.5%). Female community members were notably less likely to see improvements in their level of public socialization in the two years prior to sampling than male community members (23.3% vs. 31.5%).

8.4.2 Trust and Solidarity

Drawing from Rwanda and Uganda, we can observe that trust among community members towards others in their community is generally high.¹⁴⁹ The majority of community members (63.3%) believe that people in their community can be trusted to a great extent, followed by to neither a great nor small extent (22.8%), and lastly to a small extent (13.9%). Female community members on average were less trusting of others in the community than their male counterparts – 58% of female community members had high trust compared to 65.7% of male community members and 18.8% of female community members had low trust compared to 11.7% of male community members.

As a further indication of this general level of trust, across the GLR countries 18.8% of community members felt that if they were to disagree with something that everyone else in

¹⁴⁹ This specific question about general trust levels in the community was only asked in Uganda and Rwanda.

their community agreed on they would not at all feel free to speak out, 63.5% reported they would definitely feel free to speak out, and 17.7% that they would feel free to speak out but only on certain matters.¹⁵⁰ Female community members were slightly more likely to feel they could not speak out at all and less likely to feel they could definitely speak out when compared to male community members (22.8% vs. 15.9% and 57.6% vs. 67.8%, respectively). It is possible that local gender based social norms play a role in these findings.

When asked whether or not they felt that the level of trust had improved in the last year / two years in the community, 43.4% of community members across the GLR countries felt that it had improved, 47.9% that it was the same, and only 8.7% that trust had deteriorated.¹⁵¹ This cross-country figure however is very much an average as within the individual GLR countries there were distinct trends – for example, in Uganda a clear majority (63.3%) felt that trust had improved while in DRC an even larger majority (73.6%) felt that trust had stayed the same. These within-country trends are displayed in *Table 50*. A consistent trend along gender demographic lines does, however, exist. Across and within the GLR countries, female community members are consistently less likely than male community members to see trust as improved (39.4% vs. 45.9% at a cross-country level) and more likely to see it as the same (51.7% vs. 45.5% at a cross-country level).

Table 50: Community Member Perceptions of Change in Trust

	In the past year / two years, has the level of trust in your area got better, worse, or stayed about the same?		
	Better	Same	Worse
Male	45.90%	45.50%	8.50%
Female	39.40%	51.70%	9.00%
Age 18-30	41.60%	47.30%	11.10%
Age 31-40	41.30%	51.90%	6.80%
Age Over 40	45.30%	46.90%	7.80%
DRC	15.30%	73.60%	11.10%
Republic of Congo	56.10%	39.50%	4.40%
Rwanda	39.30%	49.40%	11.30%
Uganda	63.30%	28.90%	7.80%
GLR Average	43.40%	47.90%	8.70%

¹⁵⁰ Rwanda is absent from findings on comfort of speaking out in disagreement with their community due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁵¹ In Uganda and Rwanda this question was asked with reference to the last year, where as in DRC and RoC it was asked in reference to the last two years. This creates some issues with periodization and comparability. These figures should be treated with caution. Interestingly, though the question refers to a longer period of time in DRC and RoC, this does not appear to translate to greater perceptions of improved trust among community members. In the case of DRC this may be the product of continuing insecurity.

When those community members across the GLR countries who thought that trust had improved in the last two years were asked to explain further, the majority (42.2%) cited improved safety and security as the main reason for improved trust – this answer was particularly prevalent among female community members (56.6% vs. 34.7% of male community members).¹⁵² A notable portion of community members (44.5%) also expressed a range of explanations that related to improved collaboration, cooperation and understanding due to communal living – a key component of the confrontational process of social reintegration.

Looking the other direction, when those community members across the GLR countries who thought that trust had deteriorated in the last two years were asked to explain further, responses were diverse – however, the most common were as follows: (i) dishonesty in general (23.4%), (ii) dishonest authorities (19.6%), and (iii) insecurity (11.9%)

8.4.3 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

When reflecting on the level of diversity among the people they live around, 36.7% of community members described their community as diverse (characterized by lots of differences between people), 25.9% as neither particularly diverse or homogenous (neither a great nor small extent of differences between people), and the remaining 37.4% described their community as fairly homogenous (characterized by few differences between people).¹⁵³ This relatively even distribution across the GLR countries can be nuanced with a closer look within each of the countries – for example, in Uganda and DRC, community homogeneity (low diversity) was perceived as considerably higher (57.5% and 56.7%, respectively) while in Rwanda, community members' perceived high levels of diversity (62.1%).¹⁵⁴ These specific within-country trends are displayed in *Table 51*.

¹⁵² Rwanda is absent from findings on the reasons for improved trust over the last two years due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁵³ Here the perception of diversity is constituted but the perception of unspecified differences among people in the community. Another way to phrase this would be the level of "differentness" that community members perceive in their community.

¹⁵⁴ It is possible that the perception of differences (or diversity) can have a diverse range of meanings across the contexts of different GLR countries. For example DRC is a country with rich diversity along cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups. However, the difficulty of movement in eastern DRC means that many such socio-linguistic groups live in isolation from each other. The community members may accurately perceive low diversity in their community, though at a national level diversity may be high. In contrast, the perception of differences (or diversity) may be high in Rwanda due to the centrality of the Hutu / Tutsi divide in the social history of the country and conflict there. Deciphering the role of perceived

At a cross-country level, age showed a distinct relationship to the perception of community diversity among community members. As age increased the likelihood of perceiving high diversity decreased (42.4% of those 18-30, 36.9% of those 31-40, and 30.7% of those over 40) and accordingly the likelihood of perceiving low diversity increased (33.5% of those 18-30, 34.5% of those 31-40, and 42.9% of those over 40).

Table 51: Community Member Perception of Community Diversity

	To what extent do differences between people characterize your community?		
	To a great extent, i.e. lots of differences between people	Neither great nor small extent	To a small extent, i.e. few differences between people
Male	37.50%	24.70%	37.80%
Female	35.50%	27.80%	36.70%
Age 18-30	42.40%	24.00%	33.50%
Age 31-40	36.90%	28.70%	34.50%
Age Over 40	30.70%	26.40%	42.90%
DRC	34.50%	47.00%	18.40%
Republic of Congo	25.10%	18.20%	56.70%
Rwanda	62.10%	20.40%	17.60%
Uganda	24.90%	17.70%	57.50%
GLR Average	36.70%	25.90%	37.40%

When community members across the GLR countries were asked whether differences between people in their community caused problems such as disagreement, arguments or disputes the majority (68.5%) replied no (31.5% responding yes).¹⁵⁵ Only Uganda breaks significantly from this trend – 69.1% of community members did think that differences caused problems in their community.¹⁵⁶ Congruent to the age demographic trend above in regards to the perception of diversity, as age increases among community members across the GLR countries they are less likely to see differences between people as a source of problems (43.9% of those 18-30, 29.5% of those 31-40, and 24.3% of those over 40) and more likely to not see them as a source of problems (56.1% of those 18-30, 70.5% of those 31-40, and 75.7% of those over 40). To recap, older community members are both less likely to see differences between people, and less likely to see these differences as a source of problems. Though female community members

differences across the different GLR countries is a challenging task with few clear answers, and as such these findings should be treated with caution.

¹⁵⁵ Rwanda is absent from findings on if community diversity is a source of problems due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁵⁶ As noted previously, the meaning of community members perceptions of differences among people in the community (broadly understood as level of diversity) is difficult to decipher and is likely highly context specific. Understanding the reason for community members in Uganda’s higher rate of belief that differences between people are a source of problems remains challenging and the concept of diversity or “differentness” is so broad that even meaningful speculation about this trend may not be possible.

identified levels of diversity in their communities on a level similar to male community members, they were less likely to think that diversity was a source of problems (28.7% vs. 33.5%).

Looking specifically at DRC and RoC, community members were asked to further explain the nature of the kinds of problems they encounter. Community members most commonly described the problems as revolving around (i) envy, slander or taunts (29.8%); (ii) misunderstanding (20.5%); or (iii) unspecified accusations made towards ex-combatants (12.7%).¹⁵⁷

Despite varying levels of perceived diversity and their association with problems in the community, across the GLR countries the majority of community members (75.3%) report that they feel a high level of togetherness and closeness with their community (19.6% feel neither distant nor close and 5.1% feel distant). Across demographic lines, this level is very even as well. However, DRC stands out from the trend as the country with the lowest proportion of community members who feel a high level of closeness and togetherness (61.4%). In addition, while in other GLR countries there is little variation along demographic lines, in DRC female community members are less likely to feel close to their community (57.4% vs. 65.1%) and more likely to feel neither distant nor close (32.2% vs. 27.5%) or distant (10.4% vs. 7.5%) compared to male community members.

In alignment with overall feelings of togetherness with the community, across the GLR countries 69.5% of community members had in the last year worked with others in the area they live to do something for the benefit of their community (the remaining 30.5% not having done so). Despite this cross-country figure there is a clear polarization between DRC and RoC, on the one hand, where the rate of participation was lower (53.2% and 54.9%, respectively) and Rwanda and Uganda, on the other, where participation was higher (92.9% and 76.9%, respectively).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Questions on the type of problems that diversity can cause were only asked in DRC and RoC.

¹⁵⁸ In the case of Rwanda, working for the benefit of the community is institutionalized in the practice of Umuganda – a practice dating back to Rwanda’s colonial era in which on the last Saturday of every month all able bodied adults participate in unpaid communal labor – with enforced penalties for non-participation.

There is a dispersed range of information regarding the perceived importance of community participation from community members. For example, in Uganda 25.3% of community members cite lack of participation in community activities as the cause of marginalization in the area that they live. In DRC and RoC an average of 53.3% of community members reported that there were penalties, both formal (such as a ticket or fee) or informal (such as social resentment or exclusion), for those who didn't participate in community activities – though within each country the figures were almost perfectly inverse (In DRC, 39.7% said that there were penalties and 60.3% said there were not, while in RoC the distributions were 57.6% and 42.4%, respectively).

8.4.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is an important indicator of overall levels of social capital and is understood as a result of individuals' levels of social connection and their ability to leverage the benefits of these connections and the community and the larger context of society. Collectively, the extent of these benefits and in turn the functions that they fulfill for individuals play a role in the psychosocial concept of empowerment – the individual or collective ability to affect change in one's life.

When asked to reflect on their general level of happiness, 71.8% described themselves as happy, 17.4% described themselves as neither happy nor unhappy, and 10.8% reported that they were unhappy. Community members in DRC were the least likely to report being happy (65.2%), while community members in Uganda were the most likely to report so (80.8%). Across the GLR countries, female community members were slightly less likely to be happy and more likely to be unhappy than male community members (67% vs. 70.6% and 15% vs. 11.4%, respectively).

When asked to what extent they felt they had the power to make important decisions that affect the course of their lives, community members across the GLR countries most commonly reported that they felt that they had such power to a large extent (51.3%), followed with decreasing frequency by to a medium extent (33.3%) and to a small extent

(15.4%).¹⁵⁹ These overall perceptions of power were remarkably durable within each of the GLR countries – however there are distinct demographic trends in regard to gender. Female community members across the GLR countries were nearly half as likely as their male counterparts to report having a large extent of power to make decisions in their lives (35.6% vs. 62.3%) while more likely to perceive power to a medium extent (41.8% vs. 27.3%) and more than twice as likely to have it to a small extent (22.6% vs. 10.4%).

Table 52: GLR Community Member Empowerment (Power, Ability, and Control)

	Do you feel that you have the power to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?		
	Large extent	Medium extent	Small extent
Male	67.0%	24.7%	8.3%
Female	35.6%	40.3%	24.1%
Age 18-30	46.5%	34.4%	19.1%
Age 31-40	55.6%	31.6%	12.8%
Age Over 40	55.1%	30.6%	14.2%
GLR Average	51.3%	33.3%	15.4%
	Do you feel that you have the ability to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?		
	Able to change life	Neither able nor unable	Unable to change life
Male	86.0%	10.1%	3.9%
Female	67.9%	22.7%	9.3%
Age 18-30	75.0%	18.1%	6.9%
Age 31-40	80.7%	13.7%	5.5%
Age Over 40	78.0%	15.6%	6.3%
GLR Average	78.8%	14.9%	6.7%
	How much control do you feel you have over decisions that affect your everyday activities?		
	Lots of Control	Neither a lot nor a little control	Little Control
Male	71.6 %	21.6%	6.8%
Female	53.1 %	31.9%	15.1%
Age 18-30	61.1 %	26.7%	12.2%
Age 31-40	68.3 %	26.3%	5.4%
Age Over 40	65.7 %	23.5%	10.8%
GLR Average	64.4 %	25.6%	10.0%

Interestingly, when community members were asked a very similar question as to what extent they felt they had the ability (as opposed to power) to make important decisions that affect the course of their lives, perceptions of empowerment were considerably higher – 78.8% reporting that they were able to make changes, 14.9% that they neither were able or unable to make changes, and 6.7% that they were unable to make changes in their life.¹⁶⁰

Very similar to the question above on power to make change, females also considerably less

¹⁵⁹ Rwanda is absent from findings on sense of empowerment in terms of power to make important decisions and ability to make important decisions due to lack of directly comparable data.

¹⁶⁰ The analytical distinction between senses of empowerment in terms of power versus ability is not clear. Interpreting any meaning to the disparity in levels of power and ability is therefore problematic and these data should be treated as a broad indicator of a positive sense of empowerment rather than as exact measures of different components of empowerment.

frequently reported having the ability to make changes and more frequently neither being able nor unable as well as just unable (as is displayed in *Table 52*).

Table 53: Community Member Perception of Individual Impact on Community

	Do you personally have a positive or negative impact on the place you live?		
	Positive impact	Neither positive nor negative impact	Negative impact
Male	70.10%	20.70%	9.20%
Female	51.00%	28.80%	20.20%
Age 18-30	68.30%	19.50%	12.20%
Age 31-40	64.30%	23.70%	12.10%
Age Over 40	57.20%	28.00%	14.80%
DRC	35.80%	37.30%	26.90%
Republic of Congo	39.20%	36.80%	23.90%
Rwanda	93.70%	4.90%	1.40%
Uganda	81.30%	16.50%	2.20%
GLR Average	62.60%	23.90%	13.60%

When asked yet another question about perceived levels of empowerment, but this time scaled in reference to the extent that community members feel control over decisions that have an effect of their everyday activities, the trends are remarkably similar to the previous two questions above.¹⁶¹ Of community members questioned across the GLR, 64.4% perceive that they control most decisions that affect their everyday lives, 25.6% perceive that they control some decisions, and 10.1% few decisions. A very similar gender-based demographic trend was exhibited here as well – as is visible in *Table 52*.

When community members across the GLR countries were asked about whether or not they had a positive impact on the community they live in, there was a clear polarization between DRC and RoC on the one hand, and Rwanda and Uganda on the other. As is visible in *Table 53* in DRC and RoC there were relatively even distributions of community members’ responses to having a positive impact, neither a positive nor negative impact, and a negative impact. In Rwanda and Uganda, by contrast, the frequency of community members having the perception of having a positive impact on their community was high – in the case of Rwanda, almost absolute.

¹⁶¹ This question regarding community members’ levels of control over everyday decisions has been re-coded from a five point scale to a three point scale for increased comparability to the other two measures of empowerment (power and ability) presented here.

In regards to gender, in DRC and RoC female community members much less frequently than male community members reported having a positive impact on their community (27.9% vs. 46.1%), while in Rwanda the extent of the gap between female and male community members is approximately half of that in DRC and RoC (87.9% vs. 96.3%). In Uganda, female community members even have a slightly higher likelihood of perceiving a positive impact than males (82.5% vs. 80.8%).

Turning to age demographics, in DRC and RoC age showed a positive relationship to the likelihood of the perception of having a positive impact on the community (26.3% of those 18-30, 39.1% of those 31-40, and 43.6% of those over 40). While there was no linear trend in regards to age visible in Rwanda; in Uganda, age showed a slight negative relationship to the likelihood of the perception of having a positive impact on the community (85.7% of those 18-30, 82.5% of those 31-40, and 73.2% of those over 40).

Certain parts of this trend of polarity between DRC/RoC and Uganda/Rwanda continue when community members are asked to what extent they feel valued by others in the area they live. On average across the GLR countries, 70.3% of community members felt valued by others in their community. However DRC showed smaller proportions of community members who felt valued (64.4%), while in Uganda almost all (98.3%) community members felt valued. Female community members were notably less likely to feel valued by their community compared to male community members (66.5% vs. 72.9%).

When asked how often in the past year they had joined with other people to express concerns to the government or local leaders for the benefit of the community, 44.7% of community members across the GLR countries had never done so, 11.6% had once done so, 21.1% had done so a few times (five or less), and 22.6% had done so many times (five or more). This cross-country trend in which the large majority of community members have never gathered to express community concerns is characteristic of DRC, RoC and Uganda.

However, in Rwanda the frequency of gathering was most commonly many times (62.4%) – as is displayed in *Table 54*.¹⁶²

Table 54: Community Member Frequency of Public Gathering to Express Concerns

	In the past year, how often have you joined other people to express concerns to officials or local leaders on issues benefiting the community?			
	Never	Once	A few times, five or less	Many times, more than five
Male	34.60%	13.40%	24.10%	27.90%
Female	60.70%	8.70%	16.30%	14.30%
Age 18-30	43.30%	9.90%	20.20%	26.50%
Age 31-40	39.40%	11.60%	23.20%	25.90%
Age Over 40	49.30%	12.80%	21.00%	17.00%
DRC	69.60%	11.00%	13.60%	5.80%
Republic of Congo	70.40%	13.70%	14.40%	1.50%
Rwanda	5.90%	5.90%	25.70%	62.40%
Uganda	34.10%	15.90%	30.20%	19.80%
GLR Average	44.70%	11.60%	21.10%	22.60%

Female community members were more likely to have never participated in voicing community issues when compared to male community members (60.7% vs. 34.6%) and less likely than males to have participated once (8.7% vs. 13.4%), a few times (16.3% vs. 24.1%), or many times (14.3% vs. 27.9%). Age shows a slight negative relationship to the likelihood of gathering many times for political participation in the last year (26.5% of those 18-30, 25.9% of those 31-40, and 17% of those over 40).¹⁶³

When questioned further as to the extent that they thought that local government and leaders take into account those concerns voiced by the community when they make important decisions that affect the community, 17.4% of community members across the GLR countries felt that leaders took their concerns into account a lot, 41.7% a little, and 40.9% not at all.¹⁶⁴ Female community members were less likely than male community members to feel that leaders took their concerns into account either a lot or a little (15.8% and 37.5% vs. 17.6% and 44.7%, respectively) and more likely to feel that leaders did not take their concerns into account at all (46.7% vs. 36.8%).

¹⁶² This high rate of public gathering to express concerns in Rwanda is likely another effect of Umuganda. While the main purpose of Umuganda is community work it also serves as a platform for leaders to communicate important news on a national and local level as well as for individuals and communities to express concerns and plan for future Umuganda.
¹⁶³ This age related trend in the likelihood of public gathering may in part be related to the heavy sampling bias in RoC, the country where community public gathering was lowest, towards community members over 40.
¹⁶⁴ Rwanda is absent from findings on the extent to which community members feel leaders take their concerns into account due to lack of directly comparable data.

8.4.5 Social Change

Similar to trends in the ex-combatant sample, across the GLR countries community members generally were polarized in their outlook on the likelihood of their overall situation improving in the future between those that thought that it would improve in a few years and those that thought that their situation would deteriorate in the future. Overall, only 1.5% of community members thought that their situation would improve in a few weeks, 4.9% thought it would improve in the coming months, 50% that it would improve in a few years, 6.4% that it would remain the same, and 37.3% reporting that they foresee their overall situation deteriorating in the future.¹⁶⁵ As in the ex-combatant sample, only Uganda stood apart from this trend – 79.3% of community members reporting that they thought their overall situation would improve in a few years. These findings may suggest that while in general community members have a polarized outlook for their future, those who do have a positive outlook understand the time horizons of social change – occurring in the scale of years rather than days, weeks, or even months.

Female community members across the GLR were less likely to report that their situation would improve in the next few years compared to male community member (43% vs. 54.9%) and more likely to think that their overall situation would deteriorate in the future (44.7% vs. 32%). Age as well held a clear relationship to polarized response between these two outcomes. As age increased community members were less likely to see their overall situation improving in a few years (61.4% of those 18-30, 54.4% of those 31-40, and 40.3% of those over 40) and more likely to see it deteriorating (24.8% of those 18-30, 37% of those 31-40, and 46.9% of those over 40).

When questioned whether they are satisfied with the way that their life has been to date, across the GLR countries 32.5% of community members reported that they were satisfied, 8.2% that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and the remaining 59.3% that they were dissatisfied. However, this cross-country figure fails to depict the nuance between GLR countries as there was a clear split between Uganda on the one hand, and DRC / RoC on the

¹⁶⁵ Rwanda is absent from findings on community members' overall outlook on their situation for the future and their overall level of satisfaction with their life up until sampling due to lack of directly comparable data.

other. In Uganda 43.3% of community members being satisfied, 24.4% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 32.2% being dissatisfied. In contrast, in DRC and RoC 73% of community members were dissatisfied with their life to date and only 27.1% were satisfied.¹⁶⁶ Female community members were slightly more likely to be dissatisfied with their life to date than male community members (62.9% vs. 55.9%).

Table 55: Community Member Cross-Category Social Change¹⁶⁷

Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom (the first step) stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step stand the richest – On which step were you one year ago in relation to:	FOOD?	HOUSING?	CLOTHING?	FINANCES?	SCHOOL FEES?	HEALTH?	LEISURE?
Male	3.49	3.39	3.53	2.93	3.97	3.71	3.69
Female	3.57	3.60	3.62	3.20	4.04	3.77	3.66
Age 18-30	3.44	3.35	3.51	2.95	4.30	3.69	3.94
Age 31-40	3.68	3.59	3.67	3.15	4.00	3.86	3.83
Age Over 40	3.50	3.52	3.54	3.04	3.82	3.69	3.45
Burundi	3.39	3.18	3.57	2.91	2.77	3.30	XXX
DRC	4.06	4.19	4.23	3.49	4.37	3.89	4.40
RoC	3.58	3.46	3.47	3.17	3.60	3.59	2.92
Uganda	2.94	2.77	2.99	2.46	XXX	XXX	XXX
GLR Average	3.49	3.40	3.57	3.01	3.58	3.59	3.67
Consider a 9-step ladder where on the bottom (the first step) stand the poorest people, and on the ninth step stand the richest – On which step are you today in relation to:	FOOD?	HOUSING?	CLOTHING?	FINANCES?	SCHOOL FEES?	HEALTH?	LEISURE?
Male	3.73	3.60	3.89	3.16	4.06	3.81	3.80
Female	3.75	3.78	3.85	3.31	4.19	3.84	3.77
Age 18-30	3.85	3.65	3.98	3.28	4.35	3.88	4.07
Age 31-40	3.91	3.85	3.96	3.41	4.18	3.97	3.96
Age Over 40	3.54	3.61	3.73	3.07	3.94	3.69	3.54
Burundi	3.61	3.45	3.72	2.94	3.03	3.44	XXX
DRC	3.96	4.17	4.18	3.41	4.31	3.81	4.36
Roc	3.93	3.70	3.94	3.42	3.91	3.84	3.18
Uganda	3.34	3.16	3.48	2.84	XXX	XXX	XXX
GLR Average	3.70	3.62	3.83	3.15	3.74	3.69	3.78

Community members were questioned about their perceptions of their own position in society across a range of fields at the time of sampling and a year prior using a nine-step

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that in DRC and RoC, community members were not given the option of replying that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their life up to the time of sampling – this scaling issue may have inadvertently inflated the number of community members who expressed being dissatisfied with their life.

¹⁶⁷ In Table 55 the use of XXX signifies a field where no data is available.

ladder response prompt.¹⁶⁸ Their responses are tabulated below in *Table 55* by mean score. The lower the mean score is the closer the community member is to the bottom rung of the ladder – where the poorest people tend to be. Generally speaking, across and within the GLR countries community members, as with ex-combatants, consistently identify themselves in the poorest half of society – between steps two and four. However community members rank themselves slightly better than ex-combatants on average across all categories.

Looking at the GLR countries as a whole there is a slight increase in the mean scores for community members across all categories. This trend is reflected within each country with the exception of DRC – where on average, scores were higher across all categories, but had declined across all categories from a year prior (with the exception of leisure). A closer look at DRC reveals that the only demographic group that saw average improvements across any categories was those aged 18-30 (who improved across all categories with the exceptions of finance and school fees). At a cross-country level, all gender and age demographic categories see improvements across all categories (with the exception of the health category for those over 40 which stays the same over time). Interestingly, despite the range of economic and social disadvantages that females hold, they perceive themselves as slightly better off than males across all categories except for clothing and leisure at the time of sampling and one year prior.

8.4.6 Summary

Overall, community members across the GLR countries show positive levels of social capital and a general trajectory of improvement. Community members have a growing number of social groups and high levels of contact with their families, forming a broad social platform that can serve as a fallback position in times of hardship or a springboard in moments of opportunity. While community members have diverse friend groups who they can often turn to for support, the family unit is still the core of their social support network.

¹⁶⁸ Rwanda is absent from these social change findings due to lack of directly comparable data, however this is the only section in the community dynamics annex (§8) of this study where Burundi is included.

With these generally strong social networks, community members in turn display a high level of trust in the community and show a continued positive trajectory in this field – also aided by increased stability and security in the end of conflict. These factors have set the context in which community members feel a strong sense of togetherness and meet to work together for the betterment of their communities. Further, community members report being generally happy and describe a broadly positive sense of empowerment in their lives (though they are simultaneously dissatisfied with their lives to date in general). While community members rank themselves consistently in the poorest half of society across a range of categories, they also display a shallow trajectory of improvement over time. Indeed, while community members are polarized in their general outlooks for the future, those with a positive outlook express that they understand that social change does not occur overnight, but rather in the scale of years.

Very generally speaking, it appears that the social dynamics of communities across the GLR countries (with the exception of DRC) and provide a context for which ex-combatants can return to communities and strive towards reintegration into an already stable community setting in terms of social capital. However, this general ability of the communities in the GLR absorb ex-combatants and serve as a setting which they can reintegrate into should not mask the realities of the post-conflict social landscape. Families, communities and broader networks in the GLR countries have been affected severe violence and displacement - to the great detriment of trust, solidarity, and social cohesion across the broader social fabric of society. In this sense to long-term project of rebuilding society is one that ex-combatants and community members face together.

8.4.6.1 Vulnerable Subgroups

As consistent with the analysis presented throughout this study, female community members fare worse off than male community members in terms of most indicators of social capital and are thus further solidified as a vulnerable group. Female community members have weaker social networks and less family contact that subtracts overall from their ability to leverage the value of these social connections – leaving female community members in a position of relative social isolation.

Though there is some variation from country to country, female community members feel less trust with the community, less togetherness with the community, are less happy personally, are less likely to feel they have a positive impact on the community, and feel less empowered to affect change in their lives. However, despite this broad range of disadvantages in terms of social capital female community members consistently perceive themselves as slightly better off relative to the rest of society than male community members across a broad range of categories including food, housing, finances, and health.

Many of the social disadvantages that female community members display may be the result of traditional gender structures and their resulting gender-based inequalities. Understanding these disadvantages is important in the examination of community dynamics themselves, but also carries weight for the return of female ex-combatants. What this means for female ex-combatants is that social reintegration (in terms of reaching parity with community members) may inadvertently mean reintegrating back into basic gender inequalities – possibly with the added dimension of stigma as an amplifying force to these disadvantages. With this in mind it is important to recognize the importance of reintegration programming that not only addresses the specific disadvantages that female ex-combatants face, but to fit in as part of an effort towards affecting a larger collective shift towards gender equality in post-conflict and development settings.

8.4.6.2 Unique Country Trends

Overall, community members in DRC rank lower than community members in the rest of the GLR countries across a broad range of social capital indicators. Collectively, the core weaknesses of community members in DRC in terms of social capital can be characterized along three dimensions: (i) weak family connections; (ii) weak community connections; and (iii) weak personal self-worth and empowerment.

Access to family networks is an important inroad for building further social and economic networks and in turn leveraging the tangible and intangible value of these networks. In terms of family, community members in DRC have the lowest levels of contact with their families, those who do have contact with their families have it the

least frequently, and in line with this community members in DRC are the least likely to be satisfied with their level of familial contact. The weak state of familial networks that are characteristic of community members in the DRC are likely a product of the social geography of eastern DRC. Many community members have been displaced or migrated and continuing instability coupled with the mountainous landscape, near non-existent road infrastructure, and heavy seasonal rains keep family networks effectively fractured – isolated by social and physical barriers.

The weakness in family connections in DRC corresponds to a distinct weakness in community connections among community members as well. Community members in DRC have a low number of social groups on average, reported weakest levels of improvement in trust in the community, the lowest sense of togetherness, and were the least likely to work with others for the betterment of their community compared to community members in other GLR countries. These indicators of weak social capital for community members in terms of family connections and community networks correspond to the overall weaker economic situation of community members highlighted in §8.3.6.2 of this annex.

Further, these broad weaknesses in community members in DRC's familial and community networks correspond to their low senses of self-worth and empowerment. Community members in DRC are the least likely to feel they have a positive impact on the community, the least likely to feel valued by others in the community, and the most likely to be dissatisfied with their life compared to community members in other GLR countries. In addition while community members in DRC perceive themselves as slightly better off compared to the rest of society across a range of categories than community members in other GLR countries, they are the only group who see a decrease in their perceived standing over time – possibly a result of continuing instability in the region.

Violent conflict has damaged the social fabric of individuals and communities across the GLR. However, it appears that the continued insecurity in eastern DRC coupled with the intense geographic landscape in the region has contributed to a fragmented social geography in which familial and communal networks are fractured and cannot be leveraged for their value by community members – leaving them particularly exposed to

social and economic isolation. Future studies on social capital in the region could flag the interaction of social capital and social geography as a field for further analysis.

8.5 Reintegration Experiences

The following is an analysis of community member experiences of the reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants. Most importantly, the analysis here highlights the changes in community perspectives towards ex-combatants since the reintegration process began. For the greatest analytical value this chapter should be read in conjunction with §7.5 on ex-combatants' DDR experiences. Owing to data constraints, this section of the study draws exclusively from DRC, RoC, and Uganda.

8.5.1 Community Sensitization and Preparedness

Across the GLR countries, community members most commonly received information, though not necessarily official information, about ex-combatants coming to the area they live in to reintegrate through: (i) word of mouth (41.2%); (ii) radio (27.3%); or (iii) a community meeting (11.1%). In Uganda, though the three most common mediums by which community members received information about returning ex-combatants were the same, radio was the most common medium (30.2%), followed by word of mouth (22.5%), and community meetings (14.8%). Across the GLR countries, female community members were more likely to get information about ex-combatants from word of mouth than male community members (49% vs. 35.9%) and less likely to get it from radio (23.8% vs. 29.8%). Those aged 18-30 were particularly likely to have received information through radio compared to other age demographic groups (35.2% of those 18-30, 27.1% of those 31-40, and 22.1% of those over 40).

The vast majority of community members across the GLR countries (70.5%) reported that they were given no help in understanding how reintegration was going to take place, the remainder reporting receiving some help (20%) or reporting receiving lots of help (9.5%).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ At least in eastern DRC, the geographic challenges of face-to-face sensitization can play a role in these figures.

Uganda stands out from the cross-country trend with a less unipolar distribution (47.2% no help, 34.8% some help, 18% lots of help). In regards to gender, female community members were more likely to report receiving no help compared to male community members (77.3% vs. 65.8%). While this gendered trend continued in Uganda there was an additional dimension – female community members were also more likely to have received lots of help on understanding how reintegration would take place compared to male community members (23.2% vs. 15.6%).

When asked further whether they thought they should have been informed or given more help before ex-combatants were reintegrated into their community, there was a near even split across the GLR countries in community members responses – 52.1% reporting that yes they should have been given info and help and 47.9% replying no. A closer look at each of the individual countries shows that in RoC and Uganda there was an approximate 60/40 split between those who responded yes and no. Interestingly, in DRC this split in responses was reversed 40/60. This is interesting because DRC was the country where community members most frequently (87.6%) reported receiving no help on understanding how reintegration would take place.

When asked by what medium they would have liked to have received information about the reintegration process the three most common replies are the same as the three most common mediums by which community members actually did receive information – though with distinctly different distributions between these responses – 44.1% of community members wanted to receive information about reintegration in community meetings, 29.3% preferred radio, and 9.4% by word of mouth.¹⁷⁰ As displayed in *Table 56* though the most common medium by which community members across the GLR countries received information about reintegration was word of mouth the most preferred was clearly community meeting. Female community members were slightly less likely to prefer radio as an information medium compared to male community members (26.5% vs. 30.7%) and more likely to prefer word of mouth (16.5% vs. 5.6%).

¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately there is no data available regarding community members' perspectives on the content of the information and sensitization they did receive.

Table 56: Community Member Information Sources on Reintegration¹⁷¹

	How were you informed about Ex-Combatants coming to reintegrate into the area you live?	How should you have been informed?
Community meeting	11.1%	44.1%
Word of mouth	41.2%	9.4%
Radio	27.3%	29.3%
Church or mosque	1.5%	4.7%
NGOs or charities	1.4%	2.2%
Government ministries	1.9%	6.5%
Newspaper	.8%	2.3%
Phone call/ Megaphone/ Public Announcement	.0%	.2%
National Commission	0.0%	.1%
Letter	.2%	.1%
Door-to-door announcement	.1%	.1%
Other	3.6%	.3%
Was not informed	11.0%	XXX
All Means	XXX	.8%
Subtotal	100.0%	100.0%

8.5.2 Community Perspectives on Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Fear

Across the GLR countries, community members had only a moderate level of personal interaction with returning ex-combatants – 35% had lots of direct contact, 21.2% had a little direct contact, and 43.9% had no contact. However, this cross-country figure masks the diversity in levels of community member contact within the GLR countries – In DRC, the levels of contact were drastically lower than average (10.1% lots of contact, 11.1% some contact, and 78.8% no contact) while in Uganda, contact levels were generally higher than average (63.7% lots of contact, 23.1% some contact, and 13.2% no contact).¹⁷² RoC fell closest to the cross-country average with 30.1% lots of contact, 31.2% some contact, and 38.8% no contact.

In DRC and RoC, where community member contact with returning ex-combatants was lower, female community members were less likely to respond that they had lots of direct contact than male community members (7.8% vs. 12.2% in DRC and 23.4% vs. 35.9% in RoC) and more likely to respond that they had no contact (82.6% vs. 75.3% in DRC and 43.4% vs. 34.8%) while in Uganda, where contact levels were generally higher, the trends were reversed – female community members were more likely than male community members to

¹⁷¹ In *Table 56* the use of XXX signifies a field with no available data.

¹⁷² In DRC, especially eastern DRC, these lower levels of community member contact with returning ex-combatants may be a product of the difficulty of travel and continued insecurity as a part of the dynamics of return.

respond that they had lots of direct contact than male community members (73.7% vs. 59.2%) and less likely to respond that they had no contact (8.8% vs. 15.2%).¹⁷³ Across the GLR countries, age showed a negative relationship to the likelihood of reporting having lots of contact with returning ex-combatants (44.2% of those 18-30, 31.9% of those 31-40, and 28.7% of those over 40) and, inversely, a positive relationship to the likelihood of having a little contact (13.7% of those 18-30, 23.5% of those 31-40, and 25.9% of those over 40).

Drawing specifically from DRC and RoC, the majority of community members (64.3%) described their contact with ex-combatants as positive, while 25% described their contact as neither positive nor negative, and the remaining 10.7% as negative.¹⁷⁴ Female community members were slightly less likely than male community members to describe their contact with ex-combatants as positive (60.5% vs. 66.7%) and more likely to describe it as neither positive nor negative (26.7% vs. 23.9%) or just negative (12.9% vs. 9.4%). Community members over the age of 40 were the least likely demographic subgroup to describe their interactions as positive (60.1%) and the most likely to see interactions as neither negative nor positive (27.1). Interestingly, the two demographic subgroups with the highest frequencies of describing their contact with ex-combatants as either negative or neither positive nor negative, females and those over 40, were also those that reported the lowest levels of direct contact with ex-combatants as described above.¹⁷⁵

Table 57: Community Member Fear of Ex-Combatants

When ex-combatants first came to live in your community, did you fear the listed reporter group:		Country			
		DRC	Republic of Congo	Uganda	Subtotal
Male Ex-Combatants	Yes, I feared them	97.1%	95.6%	83.3%	91.1%
	No, I did not fear them	2.9%	4.4%	16.7%	8.9%
Female Ex-Combatants	Yes, I feared them	60.4%	62.2%	29.4%	47.4%
	No, I did not fear them	39.6%	37.8%	70.6%	52.6%
Child Ex-Combatants	Yes, I feared them	63.6%	63.9%	25.5%	46.8%
	No, I did not fear them	36.4%	36.1%	74.5%	53.2%
Disabled Ex-Combatants	Yes, I feared them	63.0%	57.0%	19.6%	42.2%
	No, I did not fear them	37.0%	43.0%	80.4%	57.8%

¹⁷³ This gendered trend is likely a product of the fact that female community members who had a spouse were more than twice as likely as male community members to have a spouse who was an ex-combatant.

¹⁷⁴ Questions regarding the positive or negative nature of contact with returning ex-combatants were only asked in DRC and RoC.

¹⁷⁵ It is difficult to decipher the relationship between levels of community member contact with returning ex-combatants and perceptions about the positive or negative character of those interactions – if there is one at all. One could postulate that lower levels of contact with returning ex-combatants provides a limited base on which for community members to break down stereotypes and stigma. Or, one could just as well propose that precisely because of negative experiences with returning ex-combatants community members have minimized contact.

When asked to reflect on when ex-combatants first came to live in their community, just over half of community members (51.5%) reported that they had fears about their presence – the remaining 48.5% reporting that they had no fears. This near even split is fairly durable across the GLR countries. Female community members are slightly more likely than male community members to report having fears about ex-combatant presence in the community (53.5% vs. 50%).

When asked about which specific groups of ex-combatants they feared, community members across the GLR countries gave a consistent message: community members reported fearing male ex-combatants to a very high level (91.1%) and female, child and disabled ex-combatants to a considerably lower level (47.4%, 46.8% and 42.2%, respectively). As is visible in *Table 57*, across all categories Uganda showed lower levels of overall fear – especially in regards to female, child, and disabled ex-combatants.¹⁷⁶ In regards to community member demographic trends, female community members were slightly more likely to report fearing ex-combatants across all categories and age showed a positive relationship to the likelihood of fearing ex-combatants across all categories.

In Uganda, community members were asked to outline what kinds of specific fears they held about different kinds of ex-combatants. As is visible in *Table 58*, the most common fear that community members held in regards to the return of all types of ex-combatants was the possibility of ex-combatants being a perpetrator of violent crime such as murder or rape. Interestingly when community members are asked about the fears they have about the presence of ex-combatants in their community today now that ex-combatants have been there for some period of time, 93.1% report that they have no fears – the remaining 6.9% still holding some fears. This denotes a dramatic improvement in the community's ability to absorb ex-combatants since their initial return and a key hint for understanding the process of social reintegration in the GLR countries.

¹⁷⁶ One explanation for the lower levels of fear of child ex-combatants in Uganda could be related to the dynamics of mobilization and return. Abduction is a known recruitment tactic of the LRA in northern Uganda. In terms of dynamics of return this has created a sentiment among community members in which they view child ex-combatants simultaneously as victims and perpetrators and have displayed accepting attitudes of their return. It is also possible that the long period of time between informal and formal demobilizations and the overall trickle-in model of demobilization in Uganda may play some role in the slightly lower overall levels of fear surrounding the return of ex-combatants.

Table 58: Community Member Specific Fears of Ex-Combatants in Uganda

When ex-combatants first came to live in your community, describe what fears you had of the listed reporter group:	Male Ex-Combatants	Female Ex-Combatants	Child Ex-Combatants	Disabled Ex-Combatants
Possibility of ex-combatants being a perpetrator of violent activity or crime such as murder, rape	38.6%	28.6%	38.5%	31.6%
Fear due to ex-combatants carrying firearms and weapons	14.5%	7.1%	11.5%	10.5%
Lack of trust in ex-combatants or fear of ex-combatants	7.2%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Fear due to possibility of resumption of rebel activity by ex-combatants, or retaliation, or resurgence of rebel activities	4.8%	3.6%	3.8%	15.8%
Intelligence gathering, spying	1.2%	10.7%	11.5%	10.5%
Inability to stay or coexist with community	1.2%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%
Interruption of the community, cause problems in the community, cause insecurity in the community	3.6%	7.1%	7.7%	10.5%
Uncontrollable, badly behaved, drinking, unsociable habits	13.3%	10.7%	7.7%	5.3%
No mercy or sympathy or empathy shown, bad character of ex-combatants	1.2%	14.3%	7.7%	5.3%
Ex-combatants' appearance	1.2%	3.6%	3.8%	5.3%
Interpersonal conflicts with other people	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ex-combatants being bitter and unforgiving	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%
Psychological problems, such as they quickly change moods and become hostile	12.0%	10.7%	3.8%	0.0%

Across the GLR countries, 31.3% of community members believe that ex-combatants should have behaved differently since coming to the community (the remaining 68.7% responding that ex-combatants should not have behaved differently), a figure that is very consistent within the individual GLR countries and across demographic subgroups. Similarly, when community members were asked whether they thought the community should have behaved differently since the arrival of ex-combatants, 27.5% thought that the community should have behaved differently. When asked about whether or not there was any resentment in the community about the support that ex-combatants received, 27.9% thought that there was resentment, though it is unclear how this resentment is related to the ways in which community members think returning ex-combatants and community members should have behaved differently.

8.5.3 Positive and Negative Perceptions of Ex-Combatants

Across the GLR countries, 29.8% of community members believe that there are negative dimensions to having ex-combatants in the community – the remaining 70.2% responding that there are no negative dimensions. However Uganda stood apart from this trend, instead community members less frequently identified ex-combatant presence as having negative

dimensions (18.1% yes negative factors, 81.9% no negative factors). When asked to outline the types of negative dimensions related to having ex-combatants in the community the most notable responses were: (i) that having ex-combatants in the community increased the risk for violent crime (54.4%); (ii) that ex-combatants have generally bad or brutal behavior (18.3%); or (iii) that ex-combatants can bully, intimidate, or threaten others (10.7%).

When asked whether there were positive aspects to having ex-combatants in the community, across the GLR countries, 67.7% of community members responded that there are distinct positive dimensions to having ex-combatants in the community – a higher proportion than identified negative aspects. Again, Uganda stands apart with 95% of community members identifying that there are distinct positive dimensions to having ex-combatants in the community. When asked to outline the main positive dimensions to having ex-combatants in the community, notable responses from community members were: (i) that ex-combatants give sound advice to other people and serve as good role models (23.9%); (ii) that ex-combatants make positive contributions to the economic fabric of the community (23.7%); and (iii) that ex-combatants handle all village security issues (7.8%).

8.5.4 Summary

There are several key findings to take away from this section. In terms of information and sensitization: (i) across the GLR countries community members most commonly received information and sensitization about the return and reintegration of ex-combatants through word of mouth; (ii) community members across the GLR countries would most dominantly have preferred to receive information and sensitization about the return and reintegration of ex-combatants in a community meeting forum.

Turning to community members' levels of fear surrounding returning ex-combatants there are also several key points: (i) community members across the GLR countries had generally high levels of fear, particularly in regards to violent crime, associated with the return of ex-combatants – especially male ex-combatants before their return; (ii) after ex-combatants have returned to communities the level of fear that community members hold towards ex-

combatants dropped drastically – though some resentment remained; and (iii) after ex-combatants have returned to communities, community members more commonly identify a range of positive aspects to having ex-combatants than negative.

Collectively this narrative of high community member fear, exposure to ex-combatants, followed by low fear with a mostly positive perception of ex-combatants is a positive indication of communities' ability to absorb returning ex-combatants. Further, this narrative gives support to the idea that much of the social dimension of reintegration is constituted by a process of confrontation and atonement – eroding distrust and stigma. While it appears as though initial trust barriers may fall quickly the longer road to reaching social and economic parity for ex-combatants remains.

8.6 Conclusions

Conflict across the Great Lakes Region has carried enormous weight in affecting the lives of ex-combatants and community members alike. Though conflict-affected countries in the GLR are generally characterized by severe economic development challenges and a deteriorated social fabric, this study has revealed that in the wake of peace, communities across the GLR have reached a level of relative social and economic stability. It is this stability that constitutes communities' capacity to play a positive role in accepting and absorbing returning ex-combatants into their social and economic fabric. Indeed, without a relatively stable social and economic base in the community the idea of the “reintegration” of ex-combatants would lose much meaning – as ex-combatants would reintegrate into economic instability and social marginalization. Thus, understanding the state of communities and their social and economic dynamics is an essential backdrop for understanding ex-combatants' position and trajectory on the path to reintegration – gaining social and economic parity with community members.

8.6.1 The Community and Economic Reintegration

The analyses of the community member sample presented in this study have shown that community members across the GLR display a stable economic trajectory over time. The majority of community members are engaged in self-employment in small-scale agriculture and as such land access for cultivation and grazing is a key issue. In addition, community members show some diversification into self-employment in service or retail related activities. Overall community members' employment statuses are stable over time and unemployment varies little on average.

Like ex-combatants, community members see the primary barrier to improving their economic situation as revolving around lack of opportunities. Beyond this, community members cite lack of access to capital and credit as among the additional barriers to leveraging what opportunities do come towards their economic betterment – and indeed their access to capital and credit in terms of the reception of micro-loans or membership in economic associations such as local savings and credit organizations is low.

In the context of the severe development challenges that characterize the GLR countries, community members' core strength lies in their relative economic stability. The vast majority of community members meet their monthly household expenses alone, or with the help of others in their household. Only a minority is locked into patterns of borrowing from family and friend networks to meet their basic needs. It is this economic context of relative stability that provides the context in which ex-combatants can return to communities and strive towards parity in a meaningful sense – the longer term process of upward economic mobility occurring outside the bounds of reintegration.

8.6.2 The Community and Social Reintegration

The analysis presented in the community member sample presented in this study shows that across the GLR countries community members have a generally positive level of social capital, and further a positive trajectory over time – as the social fabric of communities is mended in the wake of improved peace and security. The core of social capital revolve

around social networks, be they familial, communal, interpersonal friendships, or strictly economic. Networks have value both in the sense that they serve as a platform for social and economic support within communities, but also can be leveraged to create new social and economic opportunities. Community members across the GLR countries show that they have connection to those around them in terms of social groups, diverse friends, and economic networks. In this sense older community members (over 40) have perhaps the highest social capital and a solid footing in the community – often rank highest on core indicators. However the core of community members’ social capital, and gateway to accessing broader social networks, is their solid grounding in the family unit accessed through marriage.

Indeed, marriage rates are a powerful indicator of overall community social capital – correlating to larger social and economic networks on average. As community members marry they expand their social networks and the overlap of these individual networks grows – in a very literal sense weaving together to constitute the social fabric of communities and societies. Community members’ rates of marriage are entangled with their number of social groups in general and contribute to their overall engagement in the community in terms of trust, solidarity, social cohesion, and inclusion – in turn feeding back into network building. It is this dynamic interaction of community members’ networks and their collective benefits that feed back to the individual as well – cementing their personal sense of empowerment and understanding of their place in society. Understanding the dynamism of social networks, the family core among them, as fabric connecting individuals into communities is core to understanding the contexts which ex-combatants approach in the process of social reintegration. Essentially social reintegration means that ex-combatants must find a way to connect into this social fabric – perhaps most meaningfully through marriage.

The analysis presented in this annex suggests that though issues of stigma and distrust towards returning ex-combatants may exist in many contexts across the GLR, these barriers break down fairly quickly. It is the presence of an underlying social fabric, in terms of individual social capital, that exists throughout communities across the GLR countries, with the notable exception of DRC – discussed below, that can serve as the necessary condition for ex-combatants’ embankment on a path towards social reintegration.

8.6.3 Female Community Member Sub-Group

Throughout the analysis of community dynamics presented in this annex female community members have consistently displayed a range of disadvantages across nearly all core demographic, economic, and social indicators that collectively paint a narrative of gender inequality across the GLR countries.

Female community members have lower literacy and educational achievement levels than male community members – this, in part, affects their higher likelihood of unemployment through time. Female community members understand this connection between education and unemployment – being more likely to cite lack of education and skills as a barrier to gaining a productive economic status. Furthermore, perhaps not surprisingly, female community members are more likely than males to work in the household fulfilling traditional gender roles. Female community members are less likely to be a sole household breadwinner, an advantage, though when they are they fare considerably worse off than male community members in terms of meeting monthly expenses.

Beyond their weaker overall economic position, female community members also face considerable disadvantages in terms of social capital. Female community members have smaller social networks in terms of levels of familial contact and number of social groups; in turn, they are less integrated into the social fabric of communities – leveraging the value of their networks in terms of support and opportunities. Female community members feel less trust in the community, less togetherness with the community, feel they have less of a positive impact on the community, and are less happy and empowered overall.

Collectively the range of disadvantages that female community members face across the GLR countries is likely a product of traditional gender inequalities. In this sense these disadvantages are both structurally ingrained and culturally reproduced. Acknowledging the social-structural disadvantages that female community members face across the GLR countries is not only an important dimension of understanding community dynamics, but also the prospects that female ex-combatants face as they approach the process of reintegration. If female ex-combatants are to gain parity with female community members,

issues of stigma will no doubt serve as a barrier to entering the community, but if female ex-combatants are rather to reach parity with male community members, a much deeper set of social-structural barriers stand in their way – barriers that they and their female community member counterparts face together. In this sense reintegration programming is poised to serve not only the needs of female ex-combatants, but also represents an opportunity to encourage a larger community-wide transformation.

8.6.4 DRC – A Splintered Society

While throughout the analysis of community members presented in this annex each of the GLR countries has varied considerably in terms of specific contextual trends, only DRC displays a truly divergent narrative of community dynamics. As outlined in §8.4.6.2, community members in DRC stand out from the rest of the GLR countries with the weakest levels of social capital across a broad range of indicators. When female community members across the GLR countries display disadvantages, these disadvantages are often exaggerated in DRC. Though the exact reasons for these trends are unclear, it is likely that this weak social capital at the individual level, and weak social fabric at the community level, are related to ongoing instability in Eastern DRC coupled with the harsh social geography in the region – keeping families, social groups, and networks separated by physical barriers. The analysis presented paints DRC as a splintered society where community members have weak familial and communal networks – missing the opportunity to leverage their value.

This narrative has considerable weight for understanding the community dynamics in DRC itself, but is also essential for understanding the prospects for meaningful ex-combatant reintegration in DRC. If reintegration means reaching parity with community members then ex-combatants appear to have done well in reentering this splintered society with weak social fabric – though this is not to suggest that ex-combatants in DRC do not face significant barriers to reentering communities. However, if social reintegration is understood as going beyond mere parity, to a process of building social networks and in turn leveraging their value then this is a challenge that community members and ex-combatants alike will face in DRC. With this in mind, it may be that in the context of DRC, or perhaps settings of long-

lasting or continuing conflict in general, community based approaches to reintegration focused on benefiting the community could prove particularly impactful. However, as always, reintegration programming must be grounded in the context that is meant to affect. In DRC, or elsewhere, meaningful reintegration programming must be anchored in complexities of the local context – a challenging endeavor indeed.

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