



SIMT12, Master's Thesis (two years) in Gender Studies
Spring Term 2011
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Faculty of Social Sciences

**CONFLICT AND REINTEGRATION: THE CASE OF FEMALE EX-COMBATANTS
IN COTE D'IVOIRE.**

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Abstract

This study was carried out in Cote d'Ivoire on female ex-combatants and members of organisations working with reintegrating former combatants. The study revolves more on war and reintegration of female ex-combatants. The main objective of the study is to document the presence, roles (combat roles), and treatment of women within war and reintegration. This is done for the fact that, women are often present if not always present within wars but are often neglected in the aftermath.

As opposed to the quantitatively dominated method within research today, to carry out this study, qualitative method was applied. The qualitative method was made up of semi-structured interviews used to collect the necessary data from both female ex-combatants and representatives of organisations working in the domain of reintegration of ex-combatants in Cote d'Ivoire. Information collected from the participants was greatly incorporated into the analysis. Snowballing sampling was used to get the seven interviewees. The female ex-combatants were gotten via an organisation. They come from different social backgrounds of age, education, marital status etc. The other five interviewees in the study (representatives of organisations) also come from different social backgrounds of age, gender, marital status, and education. Furthermore, documents from different organisations working with reintegration of ex-combatants were used to cross check with the result of the interviews.

The data was analysed from two points of view namely: theoretical material and past literatures. Some of the core arguments which build up the theory - masculinity being a preserve for men and exists in males' bodies, masculinity being a hard wiring of genes and hormones. Counter arguments such as masculinity is a social construct just as gender is and can be thought and learned through socialisation or culture and can be learned by both males as well as females. Through this, data was analysed following a contextual pattern. This includes, investigating the presence of women in traditional "masculine" spheres; military, violence and drugs; female ex-combatants within DDR programs, equality and fair treatment, completion/abandonment, and also if female ex-combatants were considered social pariahs within their communities of origin. Primary data shows that women are not only victims during conflicts but are also active participants and perpetrators of violence.

Keywords: *Conflict/war, female ex-combatants, reintegration, Gender, masculinity, Cote d'Ivoire*

Appreciation

Special thanks go to my supervisor Pr. Helle Rydström of the Gender Studies Department for her guidance and encouragements. Am also indebted to all my colleagues, and professors of the Gender Studies department whose ideas have enriched my academic, personal, and professional outlook throughout these years of studies at Lund University. My sincerest gratitude also goes to the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window for funding my scholarship. I would also like to show gratitude to Pr. Petter Pilesjö, the Erasmus Mundus (EM10) Coordinator at Lund University who facilitated my studies and made my studies must enjoyable.

Last but not the least, I will like to show gratitude to my late father Nnoko Sumelong Elias who unfortunately did not live to witness this work, to my family in Cameroon whom despite the distance between us have never stop extending their love. To my Mum Epote Mary for her encouragement, to my brother Nnoko Charles for paving the path for me, to Nnoko Divine for his fatherly words to my boyfriend Eric Bamu, to my friend and sister, Christina who has always been there for me, to my sisters; Mercy, Lilian, Stella. Florence, Felicia, Pamela and to my two kids Mercy and Eric. To Ajang George for his love and care, to Salote for her contributions, and also to the Cameroonian society in Sweden.

Finally, I would not have completed this thesis if not for the participants whom despite their busy schedule and the political unrest that characterized the country during the interviews still made their possible best to see my work go through.

ABBREVIATIONS.

DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
RDR	Rassemblement des Republicains
FN	Forces Nouvelles
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire
MPIGO	Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix
PDCI	Parti Democratique de Cote d'Ivoire
RDA	Rassemblement Democratique Africain
CNPS	Comité National de Salut Public
GNP	Gross National Product
HRWR	Human Rights Watch Report
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ONUCI	United Nations Operations in Cote d'Ivoire
NASSAIB	Nabintou Saida Ibrahim
PNRRC	Programme National de Reinsertion National et de Reinsertion Communautaire
BDG	Bureau de Gestion des Demobiliser
OIC	Opportunity Industrialisation Centre
GTZ	German Agency for Development Co-operation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General overview

Child and women soldiery has become an issue of global concern. More than 250 000 soldiers under the ages 18 are fighting in conflicts in over 40 countries around the world (Coalition, 2004). Despite the fact that there is an ample descriptive evidence of the conditions and factors underlying the rise of child and women soldiery in developing world, majority of the literature has portrayed this as uniquely male phenomenon, ultimately neglecting the experiences and perspectives of girls within fighting forces (Nordstrom, 1997:5). Gender perspectives on armed conflicts have not been recognised. This tradition of armed conflict as a phenomenon occurring between only males is reinforced by popular media images of boys and men holding guns such as AK47s, girls on the other hand are rendered invisible within fighting forces and they are being placed at the periphery and the diverse roles which they play are to a greater extent not acknowledged (McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Denov & Maclure, 2006; Kearns, 2003; Veale, 2003). Despite girls' invisibility in armed conflicts, they are increasingly used in armed conflicts than reported. McKay & Mazurana, (2004) maintains that, "between 1990 and 2003, girls were part of fighting forces in 55 countries and participated in conflicts in 38 countries around the globe." Girls are said to be present in armed opposition groups, militias and paramilitaries and also found in government forces. The proportion of female fighters is said to vary from geographic regions and ranges from 10% to 30% of all combatants (Bouta, 2005). Girls are said to comprise 30 to 40% of all child combatants in recent African conflicts (Mazurana et al, 2002: 105).

When girls within armed conflicts are discussed, be it in academia, media or policy, there has been a tendency for them to be portrayed predominantly as silent victims-particularly as "wives", as victims of sexual slavery and in tangential supporting roles (Denov, 2007). On the other hand, boys in fighting forces have been depicted primarily as fighters, commanders and perpetrators of wartime atrocities. These difference and gendered portrayals unquestionably represents the experiences of boys and girls. Research has shown that girls and boys play complex and multiple roles in armed conflicts, whereby both girls and boys are severely victimized and involved in domestic and supporting activities such as espionage, as well as active combatant roles as commanders and fighters (Maclure & Denov, 2006; Sideris, 2003; Enloe, 2004).

The end of conflict came as a critical transition for girls. According to Denov (2007), girls are often suddenly removed from their militarised surroundings and are compelled to reintegrate into a civilian in a relatively short period of time. Exploring the post- conflict realities of girls in past fighting forces, Denov (2007) contends that what once again clearly stands out is that, in spite of their critical roles played during the conflict period, girls are largely invisible in the post- war context. Girls' invisibility is said to be evidenced in their exclusion from formal Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programming as well as their marginalisation within the socio economic realms (Denov, 2007). Girls are said to be subjected to profound community stigmatisation and rejection as a result of their former affiliation with armed groups (Denov, 2007). In this light, the marginalisation and discrimination that these girls experienced during conflicts often continue in the war's aftermath.

It is against this background of marginalisation and subordination of women in armed conflicts and reintegration programs or processes that this paper will be examining the situation of women ex-combatants in Cote d'Ivoire. This investigation will hopefully provide insights of women's' participation in armed conflict and their experiences within the DDR programs, and in their communities in the aftermath of war.

1.2 Why Cote d'Ivoire

Unlike other civil conflicts that have occurred in African countries, that of Cote d'Ivoire seems rather interesting as it is one of those conflicts that does not only include women as victims of war atrocities but also includes them as actors, active participants, and perpetrators of this civil conflict/war. However, not much has been written about this particular conflict. This is particularly interesting to the field of gender studies and feminists as it goes a long way not only to deconstruct the stereotype that violence, aggression, and war are a 'natural' preserve of men or a 'male's sphere' but also that women do have space and roles to play in it.

1.3 Study objectives

The over-arching objective of this study is to document the lives and experiences of female ex-combatants within fighting forces, DDR programs and their communities in general. To accomplish this, i will seek to:

- Investigate the combat roles women ex-combatants played when they were part of the armed forces.
- Investigate on the treatment of female ex-combatants within DDR programs to help them reintegrate back into their communities.
- Investigate if women ex-combatants are marginalized in their communities.

1.4.1 Statement of the research problem and question

When girls within armed conflicts are discussed, be it in academia, media or policy, there has been a tendency for them to be portrayed predominantly as silent victims-particularly as “wives”, as victims of sexual slavery and in tangential supporting roles (Denov, 2007). Majority of literatures portray war/conflict as uniquely male phenomenon, ultimately neglecting the experiences and perspectives of girls within fighting forces (Nordstrom, 1997:5). Gender perspectives on armed conflicts have not been recognised and this situation is said to continue during the aftermath of war both within the reintegration programmes and communities.

-What are the combat role(s) female ex-combatants played during the Ivorian civil conflicts?

-What are the treatment(s) female ex-combatants receive vis a vis men both in the reintegration programs and by their kinsmen in their communities?

1.4.2 Focus

The research will be focusing mainly on female ex-combatants in Cote d’Ivoire and will be looking only on issues of conflict and reintegration.

1.5 Description of Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is a francophone West African country situated on the coast of Africa. It has an area of 124,470 square miles (322,460 square km). The country shares its boundaries with Mali and Burkina Faso in the north, Liberia and Guinea on the west, and Ghana on the East. To the south is the Gulf of Guinea and beyond it the Atlantic Ocean. Cote d'Ivoire is known to have two distinct climate zones. Along the coast, the weather is humid. Temperatures vary from 70° F (21°C) to 90°F (32°C). In the northern savanna, temperature differences are more extreme. In the summer, temperatures can drop to 54°F (12°C) at night and rise above 140°F (40°C) in the day.

Population-wise the country is estimated to be 15000000 millions which date back from the last population census conducted in 1998. The population is composed of at least 60 ethnic groups or language communities which have been divided by ethnologist and sociologist into four main groups-the Mandé, the Gour, the Krou, and the Kwa, (Konate, 2004; Skogseth, 2006). These groups are: the East Atlantic (or the Akan people), The West Atlantic (or the Krou), the Volatic, and the Mandé. These groups are said to be differentiated in terms of environment, language, economic activity and general cultural characteristics (Konate, 2004)

Yamoussoukro which is referred to by Sheehan (2000:13) as the “Radiant City” was designated the official capital of Cote d'Ivoire in 1983 by former president Houphouët-Boigny. Other major cities of Cote d'Ivoire include Abidjan, Bouake, San Perdro, just to name a few.

Agriculture forms the backbone of the Ivorian economy. Almost 70% of Ivoirians' are engaged in some form of agricultural activity. Cote d'Ivoire is known to be among the world's largest producers and exporters of coffee, cocoa beans and palm oil. It also exports agricultural goods such as pineapples and rubber. The unemployment rate (the percentage of the labor force that is without jobs) in Cote D'Ivoire is as high as 50% ranking it 135th in the world (CIA World Factbook, 2010). It has a Human Development Index (HDI – a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: a descent standard of living, knowledge and longevity) value of 0.484, adult illiteracy rate (15years and above) of 51.3%%, gross enrolment of 37.5%, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capital 1.690 US\$. Life expectancy at birth in Cote d'Ivoire is 56.8 (Human development report, 2009)

As far as religion is concern, Konate (2004) maintains that Cote d'Ivoire is a diversified nation with at least three officially recognized religions namely, Islam with 35-40%, Christianity 13-20% and others (including indigenous religions) representing 25%. This author further notes that these different ethnic-religious groups are not confined to their historical-geographic spaces; they are however, said to be blended with one another.

Map of Africa showing the location of Cote d'Ivoire

Map of Cote d'Ivoire



Source: <http://www2.luventicus.org/mapas/africa/costademarfil.gif>

Source: <http://www.addictedtotravel.com/Resources>

[Images/2009/7/eadd99cbdf1f467ca87299df22c85f06.gif](http://www.addictedtotravel.com/Resources/Images/2009/7/eadd99cbdf1f467ca87299df22c85f06.gif)

1.6 Background to conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire

The first military coup d'états in the political annals of Cote d'Ivoire took place on 24 December 1999 after thirty-nine years of political stability (Akindes, 2004:5). Akindes, further writes that, in October 2000, the country again experienced two shocks- The first was a clash between government forces on one hand, and civilians on the other hand, who according to Akindes (2004) were imposing the will of the majority in the elections that had been manipulated to the benefit of the Putschist general, Robert Gueï (Akindes, 2004:5).

Akindes (2004), also contends that the second shock was centered on the acts of barbarity which was unleashed during the violent clashes between the militants in the two main opposition parties, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), which he writes was backed by a fringe of the gendarmerie, and Alassane Ouattara's Rassemblement des Republicains (RDR). These series of violence continued with a discovery of a mass grave containing 57 bodies (Akindes, 2004). According to Akindes (2004), there was also another outbreak of violence on the 4 and 5 December 2000 following the invalidation of Alassane Dramane Ouattara's invalidation in the general election. The author writes that this time, the clash was between the riot police and the RDR militants who had as Slogan "Trop c'est trop" ("Enough is enough!"). This clash resulted into twenty deaths (Akindes, 2004). Akindes (2004) makes use of authors such as Benegas and Losch (2002) to trace the roots of military or civil wars in Cote d'Ivoire. The authors note that, two years after the October 2000 elections that ushered Laurent Gbagbo into power, Cote d'Ivoire experienced a mutiny which they say developed into armed conflict which followed the succession of three rebellions led by Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) – Cote d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement, Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO) - Ivoirian Popular Movement of the Great West, Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) - Movement for Justice and Peace. (Benegas and Losch (2002) in Akindes, (2004)

Sany (2010), on the other hand maintains that the root causes of conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire includes: economic, and political factors and the politicization of ethnicity (p: 4)

1.6.1 Economic Disparities: Trouble Brewing

Sany (2010) maintains that, the French colonial system in Cote d'Ivoire laid the ground work for division and inequality between the North and the South. According to Sany (2010) the post colonial realities are said to have deepened these inequalities. "Both the economic boom that post colonial Cote d'Ivoire enjoyed during the 1960s and the early 1970s and the steep decline that followed have helped nurture the seeds of division between the North and the South"(Sany, 2010:4). Sany (2010) also writes that, the economic growth, prosperity, and stability which Cote d'Ivoire witnessed in the 1960s was thanks to the rising cocoa and coffee export and also thanks to the large Muslim immigrant population from poorer countries of the north to do the majority of the cocoa cultivation. According to Sany (2010:4) the immigrant population swelled at this time from 3 million in the 1960 to 4 million in the 1970, making up roughly a quarter of the population. Most of these immigrants came from neighboring Mali

and Burkina Faso (Sany, 2010). This high population influx according to Sany (2010:4) is said to have been encouraged by the government of President Houphouët Boigny -welcoming migrants and promising them ownership of the land which they cultivated. However, this is said to have never followed through with the provision of actual land titles (Sany, 2010)

Sany (2010:4) further maintains that “the fall in the price of cocoa and coffee in the 1980s exacerbated poverty in the country.” Sany (2010:4), maintains that in the poorer Savannah regions in the north, poverty rates rose from 25.6 percent to 56.9 percent during this period. Sany, (2010) further writes that economic decline plus job scarcity in the 1980s led to the original farmers in the south requesting for their lands to be returned to them; thus, igniting conflict between northern immigrants, and the southwestern Bété and the southeastern Baoulé.

1.6.2 Politicization of Ethnicity: Ivoirité

Approximately one quarter of Cote d’Ivoire’s 15 million people are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, and Niger (Sany, 2010; Akindes, 2004). The rhetoric of the concept of “Ivoirité” was introduced in the public discourse in 1995 by President Henri Konan Bédié, whose goal was to strengthen national identity (Sany, 2010:4). According to Konate (2004) the rhetoric of Ivoirite was made stronger by Bédié’s speech:

“L’ivoirité ce n'est pas une loi, c'est une nature, une qualité au coeur de la fraternité et de l'humanisme, un comportement, une attitude pour le rayonnement de notre identité collective et l'affirmation de notre indépendance parmi les souverainetés nationales et internationales.”

(“Ivoirité” is not a law, it is a nature, a quality in the midst of brotherhood and humanism, a behavior, an attitude, which aims at the radiation of our collective identity, and the affirmation of our independence amongst national and international sovereignties)

Henri Konan Bedie’s speech 12th August 1995 cited in Konate (2004)

With the gain in momentum of this concept, Konate (2004) writes that, this concept resulted to a factor of exclusion from political participation and citizenship for some citizens alleged to be immigrants from neighboring countries. Sany (2010) also contends that “the concept was

legitimized in the 2000 constitution, which restricted presidential candidates to those citizens who were born in Cote d'Ivoire and from an Ivorian parents (both parents)". According to Sany (2010) this law excluded many potential candidates the most prominent of which was Alassane Dramane Ouattara, former prime minister under President Houphouet Boigny, who was accused of being citizen of neighboring Burkina Faso, therefore making him ineligible to run for presidency in Cote d'Ivoire. This new law called into question non-Ivoirian's rights and access to land. Those who suffered from this were mainly Muslims from Burkina Faso, Mali, or from the north who made up a bulk of Ouattara's supporters (Sany, 2010). Sany (2010:4) further writes that the politicization of identity based on national origin became a divisive force that contributed to the disintegration of the social fabric of this once prosperous country.

1.7 Multipartyism as opposed to Single party system

Tracing the origin of multi governmental groups as opposed to a single party system in Cote d'Ivoire, which plunged Cote d'Ivoire into multiple civil conflicts, I will like to recap on the political ideology of Felix Houphouet Boigny who became the country's first president.

Felix Houphouet Boigny became the first president of Cote d'Ivoire in 1960 after leading it to independence. He ruled for 33 years until his death in 1993. He is often remembered for his political legacy and leadership style which Akindes (2004:7) referred to as "Houphouetism" – which is characterized by socio-political regulations and formalized ideology. His political philosophy is succinctly expressed as "the culture of dialogue and peace" (Akindes, 2004:7).

Akindes (2004) notes that, Houphouet's political ideology was built on certain colonial ethnology and the process of inventing the political in Cote d'Ivoire. According to Akindes (2004), after independence, Boigny inherited the colonial policy of "Ivorian" and the country wide regional planning. His policy on agricultural development plus the concentration of foreign capital, led to Cote d'Ivoire becoming a sub regional economic pole which attracted other factors of production such as capital, subregional labor, and all kinds of expertise (Akindes, 2004). According to Akindes (2004) this led to the development of areas such as Port-Bouet, Grand-Bassam, development of transport and medical infrastructure, building of wharfs, development of export oriented agriculture which was based on palm oil, cocoa, coffee and rubber. Right up to the first half of the 1980s, "Cote d'Ivoire consistently recorded an annual growth rate in GNP of more than 7% a rate comparable to high growth countries

like Japan, Korea and Brazil” (Akindes, 2004:9). This growth is said to have culminated with an influx of immigrant laborers from neighboring countries (Akindes, 2004). Cote d’Ivoire became favorable for immigrants at this time not only because of economic reasons but also of the peace that reigned as opposed to its neighboring countries such as Mali, Niger, Togo, and Benin that were in civil crisis. Ghana and Nigeria which were then the biggest economies were in a period of crisis (Akindes, 2004). The author further contends that, the end results of these increase in economic migrations was long-term settlements which also resulted to intermixing of ethnic groups.

Despite all the economic success which Boigny recorded, he is criticized for embarking on the choice of post-independence economic dependence just for his personal prestige and sub regional leadership (Akindes, 2004).

During Boigny’s rule, Akindes (2004) maintains that, Boigny established a “de facto authoritarianism by means of systematic resort to repressive laws, banning of opposition parties and many organs of expression, exiling trade-union militants and imprisoning Sanwi Secessionists” (p:13). Cote d’Ivoire at that time became a monolithic and despotic “sovereign” state (Akindes, 2004). But three decades after Boigny’s single party rule, the forcible process of democratization began there as it was in other countries in the 1990s. With this, Cote d’Ivoire witnessed a blossoming of issues such as “Ivoirité” and ethno- nationalist rhetoric which led to social tension and deadly tension (Akindes, 2004:7&17). This rhetoric led to the exposure of the social division of the society which was characterized with the poor integration of ethnic groups and immigrant population.

Akindes, further notes that this Phenomenon was highlighted by the unfavorable economic situation in the country such as cuts in the prices of agricultural raw materials, increase in dollar rates, and price of oil, and a rise in international interest rate. This led to a downturn in domestic savings and investment which fell from 25% of GNP in 1980 to 40% of GNP in 1990 and 8% in 1993 (Akindes, 2004). Similarly, Akindes contends that this poor economic condition was also followed by an unbalanced public finances, hence public borrowing which led to an increase in public debt from 196% of GNP in 1990 to 243% in 1993 (Berg et al, 1999)

Furthermore, the price of cocoa and coffee which the Ivorian economy was based on were also low at this time. At this period the country was forced to devalue its currency in 1994. Though (Akindes, 2004) notes that the devaluation of Ivorian currency stimulated the Ivorian economy at the beginning, the same author notes again that on the other hand its dividends were poorly managed leading to an economic foundering of the sub-regional economic pole which represented 40% of GNP (Akindés, 2004). At this time, Corruption was also known to be part of the political class which coincided with increase pauperization, such as youth unemployment, property conflicts, and the inability of households to make ends meet (Akindes, 2004). This period ushered in political social unease coupled with the fact that PDCI-RDA's regulatory was diminishing due to the introduction of democratization. Sensitive issues that were repressed or evaded during the political crises then came to surface.

The last stroke that broke the camel's back according to Akindes (2004) was the death of Boigny in 1993. The author contends that during this period, hostilities between rival political clans within the PDCI came to surface. Henri Konan Bédié then president of the National Assembly was to take over the presidency as article 10 of their national constitution stated. Bédié's succession led him and Alassane Dramane Ouattara then prime minister into conflict whom was said to be dissatisfied with PDCI's internal practices. The people from the north with Leader Ouattara were no longer accepting to be second class citizens or camp followers, a position which they took during the Akan-dominated PDCI-RDA (Akindés, 2004). They then decided to make their own entry into the political arena with the prime minister as their leader. This led to the domination of the political landscape by three people, each of whom according to Akindes (2004) represented both a region and a political group in the eyes of the people.

Henri Konan Bédié, who is known to be heir to the myth of Akan aristocracy, had an electorate mainly concentrated in the centre, south, and southeast; Laurent Gbagbo, prophet of a radical break with Houphouëtism. For some, he was considered as the heir to the work of Kragbe Gnagbe, the rallying symbol of the Bété population and a sizeable fringe of population in the west who consider themselves to have been marginalized in the redistribution of the "fruits" of growth; and lastly, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, candidate of the PDCI dissidents and in particular of mainly Muslim people of the north. (Akindés, 2004:18-19)

On the 24 December 1993, a military coup d'état was plotted against Bédié which ended his rule and forced him into exile. In the midst of all these, a fourth actor came to surface in the name of General Robert Gueï, former army chief of staff. He is said to have hailed from the west and was head of Comité National de Salut Public (CNSP) (National Committee for Public Salvation)

Thus, the above reason for multiparty politics in Cote d'Ivoire could be broadly categorized into three major groups namely: Failure of Boigny's policies, Introduction of democratization, and Ethnic rivalries. I will therefore sum up by saying that, these above factors laid the foundation for a conflict to spark out in Cote d'Ivoire.

1.8.1 Joining the Army/Military Forces.

According to the Human Rights Watch Report (HRWR) published online, joining or becoming part of the military during the Ivorian Civil/military crisis was mainly by force through raids and kidnapping. Hundreds and even thousands of people are said to have joined the military through this inhumane process. However, there exist some other reports which are contrary to that of the human rights watch. Drogoul (2008) contends that during the military crisis that took place in Cote d'Ivoire in the 90s, men especially young boys joined the military by enrolling themselves voluntary within the new forces. Drogoul further maintains that their voluntary engagement is said to be based on the fact that they wanted to do away with fear, intimidation, idleness, and poverty.

1.8.2. Military Organization and Leadership

According to an online article titled "Bienvenue en zone rebelle", military zones were organized to form up ten groups. Each of the groups was headed by a "commandant" (commander). A military section was also placed under the supervision of a section commander. All the soldiers were to report to the "chef d'états major". Drogoul (2008) also writes that, leadership in the group was based on education, and language proficiency. Those who had a high level of education and could speak good French were made "chefs de patrouille" ou "de brigade" (Drogoul, 2008).

1.9 Women in Ivorian Civil Crisis

Writings on civil conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire have often neglected women, and whenever they are included, majority of them view women as mainly victims of this atrocity. Despite women's misrepresentation or under representation within this crisis, a fact worth noting is that, not only men made up the military forces (government and rebelled groups) during the conflict period. Women are said to have made up a significant number of the total arm force. According to an article "Femmes en guerre" (Women in Conflict) Bader, maintains that women have been part of the Ivorian rebellion though their exact number is not known. Women were said to be part of the "Forces Nouvelle" (FN) rebelles who controlled half of the northern part of the country in 2002, after haven attempted to overthrow President Laurent Gbagbo. However, women were estimated to make up a thousand. Bader writes that among these women were mothers, traders, students, who all were actively engaged in duties such as maintaining barricade, vehicle checks with "kalachnikov" in their hands. Others are reported to have been working in offices at the military headquarters, while the younger women are said to have been taking risky duties such as body guards to military chiefs.

Haven presented the presence of women in the military; I think it is also interesting to see how these women joined. Bader again writes that most women joined the army voluntarily as opposed to the forceful means that characterised other African countries. However a good number of them also joined the group through force. According to Bader, women joined the army against the will of their parents, and husbands. Bader also advances that most of these women are said to have joined the army because they saw it as a source of livelihood in the time of war. Thus the presence of women in the army during the Ivorian civil conflict can be said to be two sided- wilful participation and forceful abduction.

While in the military, these women however did not find life so easy as they were subjected to human rights abuse such as sexual violence and rape from male commanders, colleagues and other rebel group members such as, Le Mouvement pour la Justice de la Paix (MJP), Le Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) and Le Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO). These three groups later took up the umbrella name "Forces Nouvelles" (Akindes, 2004). Though the exact statistics of sexual violence and rape are said to be non existent, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International estimates that hundreds if not thousands of women were victims of army group members. What really catches the reader's attention is that these reports claim these numbers are made up of civilian

women as well as women who are in the army. HRW and a report published by *genre en Action* notes that these rapes resulted to pregnancies though the exact number is not known. Embarking on knowing the exact number of women who got pregnant relating to the Ivorian conflict and what happened to them and their children will be an interesting research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Women in armed force, Conflicts/ Wars and the roles they play (Global Overview)

“women have always and everywhere been inextricably involved in war, [but] hidden from history... During wars, women are ubiquitous and highly visible; when wars are over and the war songs are sung, women disappear”

De Pauw 1998 in Goldstein, J. (2001:59)

Goldstein (2001:35) maintains that women have been poorly represented among anthropologist studying war. He further writes that, it is only recently that the roles of women in war have received increased attention in both scholarship and political debate. However, women, and girls, fight or provide military support in most conflicts. Scholars have begun to assemble narratives of women and girls as combatants—in El Salvador, Columbia, Eritrea, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uganda and elsewhere (e.g. Luciak 2001b, McKay and Muzurana, 2004, Muzurana, 2005, Maclure & Denov, 2006; Sideris, 2003). The studies above describe the wide range of female roles in armed groups, and emphasize that Women do not only make up part of the armed forces but play diverse roles such as cooks, nurses, teachers, drivers, sectaries and combats (Vickers, 1993, Yuval-Davis, 1997:93-115). However, women are also involved in military main ‘Business’ that is, fighting and killing and perpetrate the same violence as males (Enloe, 1983; McKay & Muzurana, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 1985; 1991a). Before moving further into the discussion, I will like to define what war in this writing will mean. War in this writing will be defined as *“lethal intergroup violence”* (Goldstein, 2001:3)

Goldstein (2001:60-64) traces the presence of women in fighting forces as far back as the slave-trading era. He contends that, in the 18th and 19th century, women made up a large part of the standing army in Dahomey Kingdom (Present-day Benin) which was a military organization greatly feared by its neighbors (p.60-61). Women have also been part of modern great power armies such as the Soviet Union during World War II (Goldstein, 2001:64)

During the gulf war, 20000 women were involved in the launching of patriotic missiles (Vickers, 1993). Women have also been part of the military and armed force in Austria and Italy for centuries and had received decorations. Augusta Kruger of the Ninth Prussian

Regiment is known to have been decorated both with the Iron cross and the Russian Order of St George (Vickers, 1993:19). Similarly, Angelique Brulon, who was sub lieutenant in the infantry in France, was decorated with the Legion of Honor as well as Therese Figuer who had four horses killed under her (Vickers, 1993). Vickers further maintains that women were among many who fought in the American civil war.

During the colonial period, women had taken up arms to end colonial rule or to participate in wars of liberation or partisan struggles (Vickers, 1993). Women have even been terrorist –or freedom-fighters (Vickers, 1993).

Vickers (1993:19), asserts that in recent years, women and young girls are known to have taken part in some 20 wars, as, soldiers or as military support forces in countries such as South Africa, El Salvador, Mozambique, Peru, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Philippines, and with Palestinian fighters in Lebanon and the Israel occupied territories. She further notes that In Lebanon, women took part mainly by providing food to combatants, sewing hospital sheets, donating blood as well as administering first aid. Vickers (1993) also writes that in Chile and Argentina, women have been part of human rights struggle although usually in a non-violent fashion.

In countries such as Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, and Netherlands just to name but a few, women who are in the military serve in positions of combat (Vickers, 1993).

2.2. How do Women join Fighting Forces?

Women are known to enter fighting forces in a variety of ways including through recruitment, joining, abduction, and compulsory service (International Fellowship of Reconciliation & International Peace Bureau, 2005:12; Denov, 2004). In Sri Lanka, some were taken from orphanages (Keairns, 2003) or were born into a force as in the wars that occurred in Mozambique, Northern Uganda and Sierra Leone (Veale, 2003). Others are noted to have joined as a result of abuse or other domestic problems, as it is reported in the case of Colombia (Paez, 2001). Finally, women are known to have joined the fighting forces because they sought protection, food, education and career options, and also because family members and friends also joined (International fellowship of reconciliation & International Peace Bureau, 2005:12).

2.3.1 Violence against Women in War times.

“...women suffer great hardship in wartime. They ...may be killed or injured in ethnic or civil disturbances...” “...women can find that armed conflict means rape and other forms of abuse...as well as loss of the means of livelihood.” (Vickers, 1993:18)

Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois (2004:1) contend that “Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality-Force, assaults, or the infliction of pain- alone. Violence can also include assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim”. These same authors also maintain that, violence can be “everything and nothing; legitimate or illegitimate; visible or invisible; necessary or useless; senseless and gratuitous or utterly and strategic.” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois (2004:2). The every day violence of infant mortality, slow starvation, disease, despair, and humiliation that destroys socially marginalized humans with even greater frequency are usually invisible or misrecognised” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004:2). Unlike revolutionary violence, community-based massacre, and state repression are often painfully graphic and transparent (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). However, the type of violence we will be looking at here will be physical violence committed against women.

As earlier mentioned in the introductory chapter and will further appear in chapter three, violence has been constructed as a masculine practice which even includes rape.

Hundreds if not thousands of literatures have shown men as the perpetrators of rapes where women are usually the victims. Authors such as (Vickers, 1993; Worcester et al, 2002; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) have all written on cases where women have been victims of rape by men. Vickers (1993) asserts that, rape and sexual abuse has been sometimes used by government soldiers as a means of extracting information from women suspected to be involved with arm opposition or as a means of punishment. Amnesty International, (2007) notes that rape has also been used as a strategy to terrorise, demean and ‘defeat’ an entire population, as well as a way of engendering hatred and destruction.

Countries where rape has been used as war weapon include: Yugoslavia in 1990-1995, Rwanda in 1994, East Pakistan in 1997, Kosovo in 1999 (Worcester et al 2002:107-119). Other countries in which rape was used as a war tool include; Myanmar, Philippines and Bangladesh - rape was used in these countries as a punishment tool against women who supposedly were related to group members or individuals whom the perpetrators regarded as

oppositions (Vickers, 1993). Vickers, further notes that during WWII, the Japanese army forced Korean women to serve Japanese soldiers as prostitutes. Again, in Turkey, rape was used to extract confession from people. Other countries that women have been victims of rape by soldiers include, Mauritania, during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Vickers, 1993:23) .Women were also raped in Sierra Leone during conflicts (Denov, 2006). Vickers (1993) contends that, not only are civilian women victims of rape, but also women do face sexual harassment within the military.

2.3.2 Rape on Women during the Ivorian Civil conflict

During the Ivorian civil conflicts, hundreds, possibly thousands of women and girls were victims of widespread rape and sexual harassment by civilians and combatant forces (Amnesty International, 2007:4-21). However, the scale of rape and sexual violence in this country has been underestimated. According to an article published by amnesty.org titled: *Cote d'Ivoire: Targeting Women the forgotten Victims of the Conflict*, during the Ivorian civil crisis many women were gang raped, abducted and reduced to sexual slavery by fighters. These rapes are said to have been committed both in the public and in front of family members, including children, by both government and non-governmental forces. Some women were known to have been raped beside corpses of their family members (Amnesty International, 2007:4-21). This same article notes that, mercenaries of MPIGO, MPCCI and MJP (New Forces) took part in raids of towns and villages, killing civilians, raping women, and abducting them to serve as sex slave (p.4 -21).

Amnesty International (2007:11-12) notes that women were also raped on ethnic or political grounds by the Government Security Forces and government back-up group such as the FESCI (Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire). It is advanced that these rapes were used as a weapon to humiliate them, the men in their families, and their communities as a whole (Amnesty International, 2007).

2.4 Rape as a War Crime and a Crime against Humanity

Rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by combatants or fighters during an arm conflict - whether international or non-international – are recognized as crimes against humanity and war crimes under international criminal law Amnesty international (2007).

The Rome Statute (1998) to which Cote d'Ivoire is a signatory, defines rape as, *sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization, forced pregnancy and other form of*

sexual violence as war crimes whether committed in an international or non-international armed conflict (Ellis, 2007).

Violations of Human rights and abuses targeting women in situations of armed conflict are contrary to the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law. There is a need for effective responses, including investigation and prosecution, and reparations for the victims of sexual violence such as rape and sexual slavery. Amnesty International (2007) notes that in Cote d'Ivoire, wide spread rape and other forms of sexual violence have been used with impunity, indicating the deliberate strategies by government and armed opposition forces to use rape and other forms of sexual violence against women to instill terror.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are prohibited under international humanitarian law. Common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which applies to non international armed conflict expressly forbids rape and all forms of sexual violence. In addition to this; Article 4 of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, Ratified by Cote d'Ivoire in 1989, which applies to non international armed conflicts, prohibits all forms of violence such as "...collective punishments; taking of hostages; acts of terrorism; outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault; slavery and the slave trade in all its forms..."

Violent acts against women amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes are subjects to universal jurisdiction (Amnesty International, 2007). Officials' failure to condemn or punish rape gives it an overt political sanction which allows rape and other forms of torture to become tool of military strategy. Therefore, under international law, the authorities in any country where people are suspected of such crimes present must investigate them, regardless of where the crimes were committed. Amnesty International, (2007) notes that, "*If there is sufficient admissible evidence, that state must prosecute the suspects, extradite them to a state able and willing to provide a fair trial or surrender the suspects to an international criminal court*".

Rape committed during the Ivorian civil conflicts amount to the violation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) which Cote d'Ivoire ratified in 1995, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of

the Child, Convention on Civil and Political Rights as well as regional treaties such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Amnesty International, 2007).

Finally, Cote d'Ivoire is also a signatory to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of women in Africa, which was adopted by the African union in 2003. This protocol obliges states to adopt appropriate and effective measures to enact and enforce laws to prohibit all form of violence against women, including unwanted or forced sex, and to punish the perpetrators of violence against women (Amnesty International, 2007). Again, Article 11 of the protocol specifically relates to the protection of women in armed conflicts be them in the military or civilians. Sexual violence is usually associated with women soldiers as they are often considered to be "wives" of their male colleagues. As a result, when they return from wars or battles, they are usually isolated by members in their communities, especially men who see them as whores.

2.5 Women Ex-combatants as Social Pariahs ?

Previous researches show that female ex-combatants become social pariahs. Women and girls returning from armed groups are thought to be more isolated than males (Corbin, 2008; Muzurana, 2005). This isolation or rejection is noted to weigh most on those females who were sexually abused or bore children to rebels (Amnesty.org, 2007; McKay, 2004; Sideris, 2003; UNIFEM 2004). These women are thought less likely to get marry, find livelihoods together with their children, and they are thought to have high rates of stigmatization and rejection by their own families and communities-with many forced to leave their communities (McKay et al. 2006). Muzurana (2005) contends that women and girls associated with fighting forces can face high levels of stigma upon returning to their communities, which results in their exclusion from social networks needed to access shelter, land, property, food, labour exchange, family and child support, and hence, more sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Despite all this, there is however little evidence showing that ex-combatants face difficulty in gaining social acceptance (Annan &Patel 2009). On the other hand, studies instead suggest that ex-combatants gain social acceptance and function along side with other in their communities (Boothby et al. 2006; Blattman 2009; Williamson 2006). However, most of these studies concern men. A report by MDRP (2008) on central African demobilization, notes that female ex-combatants are generally well-received by their families. It will be

interesting to test these contrary views of reintegration of ex-combatants within different post conflict societies.

2.6 .1 War , Reintegration and DDR Programs

After conflicts or wars, nations and people try to build their lives and avoid a slide back to conflict. Combatants' reintegration is important not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because failure to do this can hamper on social integration, peace and even economic recovery. Not until recently, national programs for disarmament, demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) excluded most women and children associated with fighting forces (Mazurana, 2005; McKay, & Mazurana, 2004; McKay et al. 2006 UNIFEM, 2004; Vickers, 1993). On the media and reports on war/conflict, the iconic image of the combatant at war is usually a young man with an automatic weapon (AK47). Women are typically depicted as victims: mourning family, fleeing, struggling to care for a child, or sexually abused. Perhaps as a consequence, reintegration programs have targeted mainly males.

What is reintegration and DDR? What do we know about it? And how is it important to female ex-combatants in particular?

Reintegration is a concept that is not easy to define. Kingma (1997) defines reintegration as *some resumption of livelihoods and social relationships, either to the life led before war or that of non combatant peers*. Brito & Mussanhene (1997) classified reintegration into: *Social and Economic reintegration*. They define social reintegration as “the reinsertion in the family and community, and the mental elimination of the perception of being member of a specific group; on the other hand, Economic reintegration as the involvement in sustainable activities producing revenues, and the elimination of special Material of needs.”

UNIFEM (2004:2) defines DDR(R) as:

Disarmament is “*the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programs, including the safe storage and financial disposition of weapons, which may entail their destruction.*”

Demobilization refers to “*the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally*

entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge; and transportation on their home communities. It may be followed by recruitment into a new, unified military force.”

Reintegration refers to *“the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training and a job-and income-generating projects. These measures frequently depend for their effectiveness upon other, broader undertakings, such as assistance to returning refugees and internally displaced persons; economic development at the community and national level; infrastructure rehabilitation; truth and reconciliation efforts; and institutional reform. Enhancement of local capacity is often crucial for the long-term success of reintegration.”*

Reinsertion is *“the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration.”* Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment, and tools. The UN Operational Guide to DDR (2006), maintains that while reintegration is a long-term and continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year

2.6.2 Objective(s)/aim of DDR

The ultimate objective of DDR process is the social and economic reintegration of former combatants in order to contribute to sustainable peace, reconciliation of the society, stability and long term development and the aim is to help ex-combatants move away from the roles and positions that were defined during the conflict to identifying themselves as citizens and members of the local community (European Commission & EU, 2006). The DDR process is aimed at dealing with the post-conflict security problem that arises when combatants are left without livelihoods and support networks during the vital period of stretching from conflict to peace recovery and development. Furthermore, DDR also helps build natural capacity to assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants and to support communities receiving ex-combatants and working for their peaceful and sustainable reintegration (UN Operational Guide to DDR, 2006).

DDR programs provide the first opportunity for armed groups, political parties and men and women to renegotiate their identities and their relationships which they have established for themselves in the military (UNIFEM, 2004, Yuval-Davis, 1997).

2.6.3 What principles guide the UN approach to DDR?

Five overarching principles guide the UN approach to DDR. DDR shall be:

- People-centered;
- Flexible, transparent and accountable;
- Nationally owned;
- Integrated; and
- Well planned.

However, only the first principle will be elaborated on in this paper (for further readings see www.unddr.org). By ‘people centered’, the operational guide to DDR published by the UN (2006:26) maintains that the primary focus of any UN-support DDR [shall] be on people. *“Non discrimination and fair and equitable treatment of participants and beneficiaries are core principles of the UN approach to DDR”*. By this it means that:

- *individuals shall not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, class, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political opinion, or other personal characteristics and associations; and*
- *there shall be differences in the support provided based on the specific needs of each sex and those of differing ages and physical abilities.*

Also, the UN Operational Guide to DDR (2006) also stresses on the fact that, female members of armed forces and groups who participated in armed conflict in both combat and support roles shall not be left out of formal DDR processes because past experiences has shown that they were often ‘self-demobilized’ and experienced difficulties and stigma during their reintegration into civilian life. In cases that they were included, their special needs were often ignored (p.49)

However, UNIFEM (2007) notes that due to the security imperative of disarming belligerents, DDR efforts have often commenced hastily, or without adequate planning and resources. In the process, they have often sacrificed gender perspectives and community ownership, thus undermining both security and sustainability.

Mazurana (2005:5) contends that, majority of women and girls associated with armed opposition groups in Africa do not participate in official DDR Programs. The reasons being that, “they are blocked by the narrow definition of ‘Combatant’ and also “due to the widespread corruptions and deception on the part of male commanders trying to maximize for themselves and their relatives from the DDR process”. (Mazurana 2005:5).

2.7.1 Women’s Contribution to Reintegration and Peace

What impact do women have in the reintegration programs/processes and peace? Should their presence be encouraged?

Women are known to play a vital but often unrecognized role in averting violence and resolving conflicts around the globe. With expertise in post-conflict reconstruction, grassroots activism, transitional justice, military reform just to name but a few, these women bring new approaches to sustainable peace and restoring human dignity. Despite all this, scholarship regarding the work of women as contributors to reintegration and peace builders is scarce and their contribution is unrecognized both at institutional and public policy levels.

Mazurana & Carlson, (2004:4) notes that, in Sierra Leone, “Women as individuals and in groups, have been critical to reintegrating former combatants, particularly those excluded from official programs”. They also note that, women who had lost their children during the conflict opened their homes to former child soldiers. Others are also noted to have set aside their own suffering and offered help, believing that, “if left abandoned, the child ex-combatants would have nothing positive to do...and would have a threat to a fragile peace.” (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004).

2.7.2 Women’s contribution to world Peace and Anti War Struggles

Vickers (1993) traces the linkage between women and peace as far back as in ancient Greece. She further maintains that in ancient Greece, women launched a sex strike against their men as a tactic to end war. A similar case occurred in Finland in recent times where women refused to bear children until their pro-nuclear energy was changed. Women peace societies were established in London in 1820 and America in 1830 (Vickers, 1993; Cockburn, 2007). Furthermore, Vickers (1993:121) contends that women have been in the fore front of anti-nuclear movement since the dropping of bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She further notes that, in Sri Lanka, Argentina and El Salvador, women have formed the Mothers Front to

protest against the disappearance of their sons and husbands and have written petitions to their governments.

In 1932, women collected nine million signatures on a petition urging steps to achieve total and universal disarmament for the disarmament conference that year. Also, during the International Women's Decade Conference in Copenhagen, Nordic Women for Peace are known to have brought half a million and German women a further 100,000 (Vickers, 1993). Women have also created organizations at international and national levels and also grassroots networks aimed at promoting peace such as; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, The war Resister League 1923, Irish Women for Peace, Nordic Women for Peace, DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), AAWORD (Association for African Women for Research and Development), and WAND(Women and Development) in the Caribbean (Vickers, 1993), Women in Black and Code pink , Women for Peace in America, La Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres in Columbia, East Asia- US-Puerto Rico Women's Network against Militarism (Cockburn, 2002).

2.8 UN Security Council Resolution 1325

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council acknowledged that women have a key role in promoting international stability. Resolution 1325 was passed on women, peace and security. This resolution called on all parties to ensure women's (be them combatants, citizens, educators or agents of change) participation in peace processes, from the prevention of conflict to negotiations and post war reconstructions (UNIFEM, 2004). This same resolution reaffirmed the relevance of gender issues in DDR processes and notes that women are an asset to the peace and DDR process and must be afforded their right to participate fully (UNIFEM, 2004). Resolution 1325 of the Security Council acknowledges women and men ex-combatants and their dependents have different needs in the DDR process.

Despite the adoption of resolution 1325, a seminar report produced by UNIFEM (2006) entitled: *Women in Post-Conflict Societies in Africa*, clearly shows that women are excluded from formal peace negotiations and from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes, and are confronted with increased domestic violence from male ex-combatants who are uncertain about their new roles and place in society. International assistance operations still neglect the specific needs of women and girls in arm movement

(UNIFEM, 2006). Therefore to leave women and girls out of these programs is not only undermining resolution 1325 of the Security Council but also the objectives of the DDR.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1.0 Introduction

Questions such as, why and how are women oppressed have been of chief interest to feminist analysis. In feminist understandings, gender and gender relations are largely seen as socially and culturally constructed (Yuval-Davis, 1997:1-5, Connell, 2002). Also, masculinity which has been argued by some to be biological and posits from males bodies has also been viewed by writers as not a biological determinism, but as social construction (Connell, 2005).

What do these terms mean to us? How are they constructed? Can they be changed?

Despite the fact that greater understanding of sex and gender has been garnered, the reality of the social nature of these concepts shows that as cultural and social discourse change, so too are the meanings of these terms. Haven realized that issues such as sex and gender and masculinity have ever-evolving meaning, therefore any attempt to understand these issues should be build in a modern context with consideration of cultural and social realities. This backup will serve as the basis for my investigation. Thus this section will be looking at “Masculinity” and “Gender” theories, its construction, evolutions, and how they can be changed.

3.1.1 Gender

Gender in simple terms can be described as a social product created by humans, and is reliant on people constantly “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 126; Butler, 2004; Connell, 2002). Not only is gender a social construction, it also encodes relationships of domination (Prugl, 2003). Gender should also be understood as social structure and not an expression of biology nor a fixed dichotomy in human life or character (Connell. 2002:9; Goldstein, 2001:2). The act of “doing gender” is in essence a complex combination of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micro political actions that perpetuate specific expressions of masculinity and femininity (Jackson & Scott, 2002; Goldstein, 2001).

Despite the fact that gender is a social construction, “gender like other such structures of social identity as culture, ethnicity, class, sexuality and nationality shapes who we are, what we have and how we make sense of the social and political world” (Sharoni, 1994:31). Butler, (2004) maintains that femininity is fragile in construction to the extent that it is necessary for women to constantly assume and reproduce femininity. Butler (2004) postulate

that women reproduce femininity through “*performative acts*” in order to strengthen the principles of femininity within the larger culture. Gender therefore should be viewed through the interaction of social factors as propagated within a larger social context. Today the act of engaging in gender has become a routine embedded into the fabric of our societies that only becomes noticeable when gender signs and signals are missing or ambiguous” (Lorber, 1994; as cited by Disch, 2009, p. 113).

Margaret Meads (1967) in Goldstein (2001:35) puts forward that societies have been unwilling to arm women and not that biological difference make women more peaceful. We cannot blatantly assess whether a person is male or female based on their mannerisms, clothing or even speech. Only then, when we cannot overtly identify typically male or female traits, that we consciously acknowledge ‘doing gender’ or recognize that we are enacting masculine or feminine traits. A research carried out in the USA showed that “men are more likely than women to own weapons...” (Connell, 2002:2). This perhaps can be a justification why it is argued that, men are more violent, thus should be the ones to take part in wars or conflicts. However this should not be the only justification as conflict roles do not only focus on military “main business” (Enloe, 1983) but also on other supportive roles to the actual fighting on or off the battleground such as preparing food, providing education(Yuval-Davis, 1997:109). Thus women should fall within the discourse of ‘legitimate wars’.

Thorne (1993) in Connell (2002:14) deemed gender differences to be not just “*something that simply exists*” but “*something that happens*”, and also something “that can be unmade, altered, made less important” (Connell, 2002: 14). One can therefore deduce that such reasoning could also be transferred to the “*parallel processes*” (Connell, 2002:14) experienced by adults; although, it is a more common practice within western societies to markedly distinguish between gender boundaries.

3.1.2 Rethinking Gender.

Feminist argue that gender should be overthrown, eliminated, or rendered fatally ambiguous because it is always a sign of subordination for women (Butler, 2007: xiv).

Kimmel in Pease & Pringle (2001) maintains that “... not having to think about gender is one of the ‘patriarchal dividends’ of gender inequality.

Gender cannot be thought of as a separate or non-situated category. Mohanty (2003:47) argues for the impossibility of a unitary definition of gender. This means that, hegemonic

ways of constructing gender should not be applied universally but however that gender as an analytical category is useful if theorized adequately. What this means here is that, analysis of how gender is constructed should be understood in specific historical, social, cultural and geographical context. This will help us to see the commonalities and diversities on a global scale.

The idea that gender is a social construction has been widely accepted by feminist theorists (Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, and Connell, just to name a few). What does this actually mean? Gender is not something that we see out there or something we can grasp and identify. It is something that many authors have argued to exist as an analytical category constructed in order to be able to explain the world around us in certain ways, usually explaining inequalities between men and women in different societies and historical context. As a result, women's lives were either misrepresented or not represented at all (Butler, 2007:2). Taking the military or conflict which is our area of interest, we come to realize that, it is the way that society or gender is constructed and represented that has made it a 'male sphere' while ignoring women's contributions and presence. Yuval-Davis, (1997:108) maintains that discourses about the gulf war has been much more gender neutral than the previous ones because at that time, the women soldiers who dressed in battle fatigues were hardly distinguishable from the men under all the protective layers.

Authors such as Oyeronke (1998), maintains that, not all human cultures organize their social world in biological deterministic ways and that not all cultures construct gender. She argues that the Yoruba culture in Nigeria did not construct gender before colonization. Oyeronke further asserts that,

“The notion that all cultures across time and space do and must construct gender introduces an incorrigible proposition in feminist thought. In spite of contrary evidence from other cultures, scholars continue to seek gender and male dominance in other cultures without first establishing whether gender as a social category is transcultural. This question has been bracketed off. If gender is indeed a social construction, as a dominant group of feminists unequivocally and correctly affirm, then logically it cannot be transcultural” (Oyeronke,, 1998: 1054).

Though one might agree with Oyeronke, however, one may also argue that, she argues for the non existence of gender in the Yoruba culture because she does not want to see it and not because it does not exist.

Bakare-Yusuf (2003) has attacked Oyeronke's approach when analyzing Yoruba culture, claiming that the gender neutrality in Yoruba language does not necessarily prove the absence of sex based inequalities in Yoruba culture, as Oyeronke claims. Bakare-Yusuf problematizes Oyeronke's understanding of language, and her lack of analysis when it comes to consider relations between power and meaning, and the way meanings change over time, and the importance of taken the unsaid seriously. According to Bakare-Yusuf (2003, p.133), Oyeronke's "desire to uncover a pure Oyo-Yoruba cultural framework that is anterior to colonial projects is deeply problematic and against the grain of the cultural system she wishes to uncover". Taking more information about Yoruba culture into consideration, Bakare-Yusuf is able to see gender based inequalities in Yoruba culture, which are identifiable in other linguistic forms and silences.

3.2.1 Masculinity within the "Nature Nurture Debate"

There exist a huge debate over the role of biology and culture in shaping social behavior (is it mainly because of the way men and women are brought up, or are differences part of biological makeup?). "Nature versus Nurture" debate which is more than two decades old still emphasizes two polar extremes (nature or nurture). On one side, genetics explains everything and that people are just like other animals, males and females are made up of different stuff- boys of "srups and snails and puppy dog tail" and girls of sugar and spice and everything nice"- because God or evolution designed us that way (Goldstein, 2001:128). The Nature activists argue that "war and sexism are biologically determined 100 percent and concludes that biology is destiny and destiny is diversity" (Goldstein, 2001). What has caught my attention here is the last part of the quotation "... destiny is diversity". This means that biology is flexible and varied.

On the other hand, any concession that biology has any role in gender or war brings accusations of "essentialism". Critics of socio-biology argue that war is just a cultural invention, and not "set in stones" like genetic are. Essentialism holds that "biology is not destiny". Similarly, Goldstein, (2001:132) observes from his research that "real biological gender differences, as opposed to stereotyped ones, are not categorical. Men vary within their

gender, as do women”. His curves on the biology of individual gender shows that women are well within the male curve and can perform as well as most men. He also shows that women in nontraditional gender roles (joining the military) will probably perform as well as their male counterparts (see Goldstein, 2001:132-134).

3.2 .2 Masculinity Theory within battles and wars

Connell, (2005:71) defines masculinity as “ simultaneously a place in gender relations , the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender , and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture”. Within the bodily experience, masculinity is viewed within traditional masculine stereotypes of strength, sports, false control, aggression, power hunger and risk-taking (Goldstein, 2001). These characteristics of masculinity have been viewed by many to be biological and posits from males’ bodies (Connell, 2005). However the characteristics vary from society to society.

Kimmel in Pease and Pringle (2001) studies in the US recognizes that definition of masculinity varies. Thus “*Masculinity in this view is not a constant, universal essence, but rather an ever changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors that vary dramatically*” (Kimmel in Pease and Pringle (2001). Thus we speak of “*masculinities*”, in recognition of the different manhood that we construct (Kimmel in Pease and Pringle, 2001:22). Similarly, Connell (2005) shows that, masculinities are ‘configurations of practice’-ways of being men are constructed in relation to one another and broad gender order. Just as there is no single femininity or womanhood, ways of being men are socially and historically variable. Connell further notes that, while there is diversity in men’s practices, each era has a hegemonic form of masculinity that dominates what manhood is meant to be.

The hegemonic image of manhood (masculinity) is constructed often through the articulation of differences with a variety of ‘others’-racial or sexual minorities and, of course, women (Kimmel in Pease and Pringle, 2001:22). Connell (1987:183) tally’s with this argument by saying that the hegemonic definition of masculinity is ‘constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women’ (Connell, 1987:183).

Masculinity theory is largely positioned in a larger spectrum of sociological research undertaken on the subjects of gender and sex. Masculinity theory has also been used in colonial studies to problematize the masculinity of the colonized (for further readings see

McClintock, 1995; 1998; Pease and Pringles, 2001). It is not just the specific behavior and actions of individual that define masculinity; rather, masculinity is a consideration of power structures and men's relationship to women in social and cultural discourse (Connell, 2005). These discourses of patriarchal power relations have been extended to areas such as wars with men at the winning end rendering women invisible.

Allwood, (1998: 77), maintains that sex role theory and the social construction of gender were central points for developing research on masculinity and femininity. According to Allwood (1998), sex role theory was used by feminist in their research for explaining the differences between women and men which developed to the various ideas of how gender was constructed and why masculinity and femininity were different. This resulted to explanations that individuals learned to behave in a gender appropriate way(s) through socialization (Allwood, 1998:77-78). He further notes that, sex roles were role theory which was later replaced by the concept of gender. Thus, *"Masculinity and femininity are quite easily interpreted as internalized sex roles, the product of social learning or Socialization"* (Connell, 2005:22).

The development of gender had a wide effect on the analysis of femininity and also served as the basis for understanding masculinity. According to Allwood (1998:92-93), "Men have consequently been constructed as objects of study who are not only gendered, but whose gender identity exist only within the power relation between the sexes". Connell (2005:76ff), also maintains that "we must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance (complicity), dominance (Hegemonic) and subordination/marginalization". Women are mostly the occupants of the marginalized group. According to Allwood (1998:95), sex role has established two critical assumptions about maleness and male behavior: that power in masculinity is maintained and reproduced.

From the above, it is clear that the manner in which masculinity has been developed and conceptualized is predicted upon a social construction and the understanding of gender and sex roles Connell, 2005:21).

Again, masculinity is placed in a web which also includes the power differences that exist between women and men (Kimmel in Pease and Pringle, 2001, Connell, 2005). Kimmel asserts that, "Men's power over women is expressed in to arenas:

Public Patriarchy and Domestic patriarchy (p.23) which he defines as follows:

Public patriarchy is known to refer to “*the institutional arrangements of a society, the predominance of males in all power positions within the economy and polity, both locally and nationally, as well as ‘gendering’ of those institutions themselves.*” (Kimmel in Pease and Pringle, 2001:23). *Domestic patriarchy* on the other hand refers to “*the emotional and familial arrangements in a society, the ways in which men’s power in the public arena is reproduced at the level of private life.*” He further contends that this includes male-female relationships as well as family life, child socialization and the like.

3.2.3 Rethinking Masculinity?

Connell, (2005:45) maintains that “arguments that masculinity should be or can be changed often come to grief, not on counter- arguments against reform, but on the belief that men cannot change, so it is even dangerous to try”. He further adds that we hear of ‘real men’, ‘natural man’ the ‘deep masculine’ (Connell, 2005). Thoughts that true masculinity proceed from men’s bodies- to be inherently in a male body or express something about a male body, example, men are thought to be naturally aggressive than women, and rape results from an innate urge to violence and that men, do not naturally take care of infants (Connell, 2005). However, there are many available researches today that do not tally with this argument.

Where violence or war is addressed, “it tends to be subsumed under biologized notions of ‘human aggression,’ reduced to a discursion of drives and instincts” (Scheper-Huges & Bourgois, 2004:4). Critics of socio-biological argue that war is “just” a cultural invention (Goldstein, 2001:131). Scheper-Huges & Bourgois further rejects the view that violence is fundamentally a question of ‘hard-wiring genes or hormones’. They instead assert that “We are social creatures. Cultures, ideas, social structures, and ideologies shape all dimensions of violence, both its expressions and its repressions. Scheper-Huges & Bourgois, (2004) argue that, “*torturing and killing are as cultural as nursing the sick and wounded or buying and mourning the dead*”. Though Scheper-Huges & Bourgois try to bring out in their writing how “masculine” characteristics can be developed in individuals, their theory however can be criticized as being too simplistic.

Leach, (1994) similarly adds that understandings of Masculinity theory in modern society have expanded. He further notes that (like femininity, masculinity operates politically at different levels. “At one level, it is a form of identity, a means of self-understanding that structures personal attitudes and behaviors. At another, distinct but related level” (p: 36). He

again argues that masculinity becomes a cultural ideology which defines the appropriate role that a male must fulfill.

Leach (1994) affirms that just as masculinity is a culturally and socially constructed behavior and variable, this state is not natural.

“Unlike the biological state of maleness, masculinity is a gender identity constructed Historically, Socially, Politically (Leach, 1994:36). It is the cultural interpretations of maleness, learnt through participation in society and its institution” (Leach, 1994:36).

Masculinity is therefore an ever evolving process which requires the individual to be intimately linked to cultural and social discourse. The male is expected to identify with the social institutions that construct masculinity and react in a manner that is acceptable with what those institutions view as acceptable behavior.

“Boys are not generally taught to make themselves attractive. Rather they are taught the importance of appearing hard and dominant- whether they feel like it or not.” (Connell, 2002). On the other hand, “girls are still taught by mass culture that they need above all to be desirable,...” (Connell, 2002:2). Again, ideas about gender-appropriate behaviors are constantly being circulated not only by legislation but also by priest, parents, teachers, advertisers, talk show host and disk jockeys. They also help to create and disseminate gender difference, by displays of exemplary masculinity and femininities (Connell, 2002:4). Women are portrayed in the media to be dangerously thin, heavily made up, pretty, and not doing anything while boys are portrayed usually in the military, private security and blue collar crimes (Connell, 2002).

Thus being a man or woman is not a fixed state. It is a becoming, a condition actively under construction. Simone de Beauvoir in Connell, (2002) puts this in a classic phrase: *‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’*. This principle can also be argued to be true for men: *‘One is not born a masculine, but acquires and enacts masculinity, and so becomes a man’*. If we take this to be true, then we might argue that, there is nothing such as ‘masculine’ or feminine’ nor can we say that war, violence and conflict is masculine and not feminine. It is thus culture that makes that distinction in favor of men.

The world is moving through an era of transition in the definition of masculinity, what it means to be a man (Saunders, 2005). He goes on to note that the result of this transition and the reconstruction of masculinity have led many men unsure about their masculinity and how

to “be a man” (p: 38). Similarly Ferguson in Pease and Pringle (2001:118) writes that masculinity is “in crisis”. He uses the case of Ireland to show dramatic changes in how masculinities are configured in the Western world both in terms of a configuration of power relations and hegemonic masculinity (for further reading, see Pease and Pringle, 2001:118-131).

Though the above authors present interesting findings on the evolution and construction of masculinity, they however fail to give the recent meaning of the terms, masculinity or femininity. Hoffman et al (2005) assert that the process does not only require personal integration but also social integration. "...*Each female individual must be allowed the latitude to determine what her femininity (femaleness) means to her and each male individual must be allowed the latitude to determine what his masculinity (maleness) means to him*" (Hoffman et. al 2005 :67). Thus, the individual is given some leeway when developing a definition of masculinity with which he feels comfortable.

Connell also examines the individual construction of what it means to be masculine. He notes that, developing the masculine identity is a process that requires the individual to assimilate the external with the internal in an effort to create a gender role that is comfortable. Connell, 2005: 11) argues that "*Masculinities are constructions within a gender order; but gender orders are neither simple nor static*". He further notes that, the fact that this process is not simple or static is reflected in the fact that individual males ultimately develop their own definition of masculinity that is predicated upon the social construction of maleness and personal qualities and attributes of the individual. Thus masculinity is an evolving process that is not out there or ready-made, but it is something that we have invented and do or practice in our societies.

3.3 Theoretical conclusions

Chapter three was to show the complexity of men and women in “masculine roles”. I will therefore argue that, “normality” is not all encompassing. Women as combatants or paramilitary can and had pushed the limits, transgress borders, redefine and negotiate space in spheres which are structured, controlled, and dominated by men. Hopefully, this will also be proven in the data presentation below showing border transgression between masculinity and femininity in violent situations. That is, how women ex-combatants defined themselves within

those “masculine” spaces. Such as the military and combat spaces which has been viewed as a predominantly males’ sphere

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Methods

The research is based on qualitative interviews with representatives of heads of organizations of (UNDP, DDR section at ONUCI, PNRRC, BGD, and NASSAIB), and of course female ex-combatants themselves in Cote D'Ivoire. The aim of involving these two categories of persons was to get an 'insider-outsider' perspective of the issue to be studied. Reports written by the organizations were also obtained as well and incorporated into the research where necessary. Flick Maintains that:

“Qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations, owing to the fact of pluralization of life worlds. [...] This pluralization requires a new sensitivity to the empirical study of issues. Advocates of postmodernism have argued that the era of big narratives and theories is over. Locally, temporally and situationally limited narratives are now required. [...] Rapid social Change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives.”(Flick, 2009: 12).

4.2 Case study

O'Reilly (2009) refers to a case study as “... a choice of what is to be studied.” (p.23). The author further adds that “a case study can be a person, a group, an event, an institution, or even a process” (p.24). In the same light, Flick (2009:134) broadly defines a “case” as including persons, social communities, organizations, or institutions as the subject of a case analysis. “A case study investigates a few cases, or often just one case in considerable depth.” (O'Reilly, 2009:23). In this particular research, the subject for the case analysis will be female ex-combatants and the case study will be the country of study, Cote d'Ivoire. The reason for choosing a case study as opposed to other methods such as surveys is that, we can learn something more general from this particular case. However, generalizing this case is not of paramount interest to me. Also, generalizing requires larger sample size which is not the case in this study as it offers just a small sample of seven persons (five representatives of organizations and two female ex-combatants) but also because that the case is intrinsically interesting and can build new knowledge. Denzen (1989) in O'Reilly (2009:85) maintains that events, situations or organizations should be studied on its own terms, understood within its own frame of reference and why not represented in multiple ways.

4.3.1 Researcher

Writers have argued that in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. A more traditional qualitative research learns from participants' lives but maintain a stance of 'empathic neutrality' (Patton, 2002:49). Critical and post modern genres, though, assume that all knowledge is political and that researchers are not neutral since their ultimate purpose include advocacy and action, thus it is important to have a reflexive reflection on the role of the researcher because the research is interacted with objective influences (Marshall& Gretchen 2006). However, I decided to be neutral during this research.

4.3.2 Access to the Field

Gaining access to the field and people was of high importance to me after the library and surfing the internet stage, a stage which Paul Thomson (1988) in O'Reilly (2009:5) refers to as the "general gathering stage". To gain easy access to the field, O'Reilly (2009:6) maintains that "it is far better to begin with an intellectual puzzle and then ask where the action is". For this study, I did not want to investigate merely on female ex-combatants but also the institutional programs of ex-combatants and communities in which they are found in. This helped me think where to begin.

First of all, I had to find out which organizations were handling reintegration of ex-combatants in the field. The next step was to ask myself how to get to meet these people who are completely unknown to me and get information which I need without the research going daunting. O'Reilly (2009:6) maintains that "... even in more familiar surroundings such as schools or factory, persuading people to accept a researcher into their daily lives, to live amongst them, to spend time watching, listening and asking questions, can be daunting." To deal with this problem, my supervisor and I wrote letters containing a brief introduction of the research and its importance which I sent to these organizations (PNRRC, UNDP, DDR department in ONUCI, NASSAIB, and BGD) in the field requesting for an interview to be carried out with representatives of each of these organizations. After some time, I received mails granting me permission to conduct interviews with these organizations.

4.4.1 Interview Methods

Though there exist many types of qualitative research techniques, I made use of two, namely interviews and report analysis. I made use of these two techniques due to their relevance to the research question. The interview type used in this research is the semi-structured type.

This type of interview is non-standardized interview. The interviewer has a list of questions but may decide whether to deal or not to deal with them all in the interview (Gray, 2009). The semi-structured type is known to be a good method to find out views and opinions that the interviewee might have towards a certain topic (O'Reilly, 2009:125-126). The questions are flexible and the interviewer is able to change questions and areas under discussion to address the topics that are more important to certain individuals. In this method not all questions are relevant for everybody and this gives us the opportunity to talk around the questions and perhaps still get some relevant information.

At the preparatory stage, I constructed an interview guide composed of a list of questions I wanted to get answers to. The aim was to give a structure for what to talk about and “the interviewees should be given as much scope as possible to reveal their views” (Flick, 2009:173). The question guide was made up of some open questions which demanded the expression of informants’ opinion. Flick (2009:156) maintains that interviewees have their own subjective theory on the topic. The researcher aimed at revealing these theories, and includes them into her analysis.

During the research, I conducted 5 interviews to heads of organizations working with DDR programs and 2 interviews to female ex-combatants. Out of the 5 interviews that were conducted with representatives or heads of organizations, 4 of them were done on a face to face and one was done via phone. The interviews were mainly semi-structured interviews. Understanding the roles of female ex-combatants during the conflict period, and the treatment and problems faced by female ex-combatants within the DDR programs and their communities was most important for the research question. “Interview participants are more likely to be viewed as meaning makers, not passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The qualitative interviewing is to derive interpretations, not facts or laws, from respondents’ talks.

During the research period, the language of communication was French except for one interview where English was used. I had to first of all translate the question guide for the interviewees as they could understand only French.

4.4.2 Ethical Issues

About the ethical codes of research, "...research should be based on informed consent. They also require that the researcher should avoid harming the participants, including not invading their privacy and not deceiving them about the research's aims" (Flick, 2009: 36-37). The interviews should be voluntary-based, with informed consent, and confidentiality considerations (Flick, 2009:40). By confidentiality (Flick: 2009:40) means that the information about them should be used in a way which makes it impossible for other persons to identify the participant or the use of any institution against the interest of the participant. In practice I gave my research introduction and the promise to keep the material in secret only for the research, and to make them anonymous. This is because I did not want to expose the research participants to any disadvantages or dangers in their societies and also given the fact that the topic in question was very sensitive. I also obtained permission for tape-recording the conversation from my participants.

4.5 Data Collection, Presentation, and Analysis

4.5.1 Data Collection and Presentation

Besides the interviews, data to back up the opinion from the interviewees was obtained from previous reports of ONUCI; UNDP and BGD. These reports were added in the research in order to make the data stronger. Many of these reports and text were in French which the researcher had to read with some difficulty and translate. Before conducting each interview, the researcher had to remind the research participants once more of the research topic and its importance and permission to record the conversation was granted. During the interviews, I made use of two methods systematically – taking down notes and using a tape recorder to record the conversations.

Data presentation will include both detailed information and some general responses, usually of a theoretically relevant nature and also regarding the significance of what the researcher has uncovered.

4.5.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that involves "summarizing, sorting, translating and organizing" (O'Reilly, 2009:13). The author further maintains that "analysis means moving from a jumble of words and ... to something less wordy, shorter and more manageable and easier for an outsider to understand." "it also involves exploring deeply to see what is there that might not

be obvious, standing back to see what patterns emerge; thinking and theorizing to draw conclusions that can be generalized in some way or the other, and writing.” (p.13-14). Data (field notes) will therefore be analyzed with this in mind. Also data will be analyzed in connection with the theoretical framework and literature review materials in mind.

One of the issues I will want to cover in the thesis analysis section will be the presence and active participation of women in “masculine” sphere.

Another issue I will want to show within the analysis section will be the reception, participation and treatment of female ex-combatants within reintegration programs and their communities of origin.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

The research is based on the qualitative interviews of heads of DDR programs and female ex-combatants and data on past experiences. The interviewees are the key participants. The agreement to use nick names or codes in places of their names and to tape record was achieved before the interview began. All interviews are not in the research; however, the collected interviews have provided abundant information which provides plural perspectives on the insights on the lives and experiences of female ex-combatants.

4.7 Limitations

Conducting interviews is a skill and the first time can never be perfect. In the field the researcher faced certain difficulties in finding some key informants (female ex-combatants). This problem was however solved using the snow balling method (getting contacts of ex-combatants through organizations dealing with reintegration such as NASSAIB).

Another major problem which the researcher encountered in the field was the societal unrest that was sparked out by the outcome of the November 2010 political election. This hampered the researchers’ movement to meeting points to conduct interviews. Interview meetings were postponed to later dates when people felt safer to go out of their homes. This did not however solve the problem as the researcher never had the opportunity to meet face to face with one of her key interviewee. In order to get the information the researcher needed from her, telephone interview was seen as the way out despite the fact that lack of face-to-face interaction in interviews may weaken the rapport and trust between researcher and interviewee.

Also the research does not include all the organizations in Cote d'Ivoire dealing with the reintegration of ex-combatants such as GTZ, OIC, and maybe others due to time limitation. Time limitation did not also allow the researcher to be familiar with the stage and also giving participants' time to be familiar with my presence, trust, and share their lives, thoughts and experiences with me. This might have caused lack of confidence and trust and hence participants unwillingness to share some vital information with the researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.

5.1 Gender and Masculinity within conflict/war

The theoretical frameworks and reviewed literatures for this study were written prior to the type of data to be collected. These frameworks will serve as an analytical tool for this study and hopefully facilitate our understanding of the interview context. However I will not claim that all the findings will neatly fit into the already prepared framework of the study. Thus, the data collected will not be analyzed strictly on the theoretical frameworks.

5.2. Women in traditional “masculine” spheres.

The theme of this section focuses on how women ex-combatants’ presence and life experiences within military or conflicts in their societies can be fitted within the hegemonic frame of masculinity. Despite their gender, they show a huge tendency of negotiating and renegotiating their life experiences. The present narratives portray Ivorian female ex-combatants as “masculine”. Despite their gender, they are accepted or recruited into military groups and take on combatant roles alongside other men. Issues of age, bodily experiences and most specifically gender has limited women to live full lives and enriching lives.

From previous research, women and girls have been neglected or not included in war or conflicts. In situations that they were included, the tendency was them to be portrayed as silent victims (usually as victims of rape and sexual abuse) and tangential supporting roles. However, this is not the case in this research as participants confirm women’s’ active participation in the Ivorian civil conflicts.

In the following sections, I will describe the interviews of two groups (female ex-combatants (FEC) and representatives of organization working with ex-combatants (RO) and the narratives will include reasons for joining, methods, roles they performed and treatments they received in the army.

The narratives that follows confirms the presence and the participation of women in the military during the Ivorian civil conflicts which is an area that was traditional viewed to be a “masculine” domain. Women’s presence and participation is also supported by reports of BGD and DDR section report within UNOCI and all organizational representatives (RO) who confirms the active participation of women during the Ivorian civil conflict despite the fact

that it was dominated by men. Women were however estimated to make up 15% to 25%. It also clearly brings out the voluntary participation as opposed to forceful abduction that has been the case in different countries such as Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka (Denov, 2007). The narratives also confirms the participation of women in military main business such as killing, fighting, body guards and espionage(Enloe, 1982, Mckay and Muzurana, 2004) and also sheds light on their motivations for joining the military which ranges from fighting for the nation, a source of leaving and also due to idleness.

FEC1 (age 36), from Bouake is an ex-combatant living in the city of Bouake. She joined the military at the age of 26 and became a combatant. She clearly states her motivation and how she became part of the fighting forces during the civil war. She joined the fighting forces voluntarily after leaving school because she had nothing doing. This is her life story prior to and after becoming a combatant.

FEC1: I joined the military group at the age of 26 when I left the university. I was at my final year of studies at the university when clashes between the military groups intensified. This led to the closure of many schools as student and teachers stayed back at their homes for safety. After staying home for some time without doing anything, I heard rumors that there was a military group stationed near by our community that recruited and accepted voluntary soldiers to fight in their groups. I was interested and decided to find out for myself. After locating the group, I was however afraid to go directly to them to offer my services

Angela: *why were you afraid to go and offer your services?*

FEC1: I was afraid that they will not accept my offer since I was female. You know in my community, areas such as the military and hunting are areas that have been taught and known to be spheres where only men can be found and women could not fit in it. Women were only recently accepted and in most cases, this situation was very rare.

Angela: *Please continue.*

FEC1: I stood there for some minutes and was thinking of going back home. After haven wondered around for some time, suddenly I saw two women who were standing not far from me dressed in the same uniforms as the men soldiers and even carrying guns with them. I was a little surprised but this gave me some hope as I thought then that I might be accepted and

without any hesitation I went towards them, greeted, and then told them my willingness to join the group. Everyone who was around and heard me saying this turned towards me. I immediately that I was perhaps not welcomed. But to my greatest dismay I was sent to the commander who was happy and welcomed me in the group.

Angela: *Can you please tell me what motivated you in joining the group and what are the role(s) you performed while in the group?*

FEC1: *I joined the group for the nation. Most of us who joined the army during this period were to serve the nation. I wanted to fight for my country .I also joined the fighting forces at this time as I had nothing doing due to the closure of schools. You see my dreams of becoming an educated and important figure in the future were shattered. I saw this as a societal problem that needed the contribution of all to be solved. So when I joined the group, they asked me what I thought I could do, and my reply was that I wanted to fight alongside others. One of the men soldiers immediately interrupted and asked if this beautiful face of mine could stand a gun not to talk of a gun shot. I insisted that I wanted to fight alongside others. I was accepted into the group. When I joined them, I did not know how to use a gone but I was later taught how to use one which I learnt so quick without any problem*

Angela: *if I understand you well, you mean you took up arms and participated in shooting and killing?*

FEC1: *Hahahahahahaha [laughs], oh yes! I did. This I did alongside men fighters and other women and together we considered ourselves as brothers and sister and protected each other.*

The following female ex-combatant, FEC2, from Bouake also, has a similar narrative to FEC1. However she differs from FEC1 in that she joined the army at an earlier age (16years). Her experiences as a combatant are also different as well. The following is her life story.

FEC2: *I joined the army at the age of 16 after leaving secondary school because of the war. Schools were closed and we stayed home doing nothing. We could not even go to the farms because it was not safe since our farms were located very far from our residents and we were afraid of being captured by oppositional military group on our way to the farms. So stayed at home.*

Angela: *tell me more about you becoming part of the army.*

FEC2: *One day, I was at home and my brother who had earlier joined the army came home with his friends with big bags. I helped them with their heavy bags. Later on my brother called on me to open up the bags and take out the food items which were meant for the family. He also gave some money to my mother to buy some other items that we needed at home. When I saw this, I thought I should join too so that I will also provide for my family. Before my brother left, I decided to ask him if women were allowed to join too.*

Angela: *Why did you have to ask your brother that question?*

FEC2: *When I was growing up as a child, I always heard people saying that the army was meant just for men. It was common to witness fights between men or boys with people watching, but we the girls or women were not allowed to do so. But as I grew older, I started seeing some women putting on military uniforms and they were no doubt in the military.*

Angela: *Please tell me what your brother told you*

FEC2: *His response was YES! I also asked them if I could follow them to their military group and join too. He nodded his head in confirmation and the next day we left together for the group where I was happily accepted. While in the group I played the role of a spy together with another girl. We were often sent to go and spy on the government groups and bring back information .I was also one of the store keeper of all the weapons. I also went to the battle front trice. After some time, I was made the commander's body guard where I served for years.*

In summary, traditional masculinity is built on the practices through which men and women engage places in gender. It is viewed within bodily experiences through traditional masculine stereotypes or characteristics of strength, sports, aggression, risk-taking and power hunger. These characteristics have been viewed by many to be biological and posits from male's bodies (Connell, 2005). However, from the above narratives, the traditional masculinity theory does not apply to this study of female ex-combatants in Cote d'Ivoire. We find women actively participating in roles that were considered to be "masculine" and could only posit from males bodies. The narratives of the above female ex-combatants goes further to confirm

the arguments of Kimmel in Pease and Pringle (2001) and Connell, (2005) who both argue that definitions of masculinity varies both socially and historically.

One of the ex-combatants stated above that she was given a gun and learned how to use it (shooting and killing). This narrative supports Connell(2005:22) who argues that masculinity just as femininity are products of social learning or socialization (cultural invention) and not biologically determined (Connell, 2002:9). Women were not portrayed in the interviews as victims of violence, but they themselves have used violence such as shooting and killing. We also find women playing diverse roles such as spies, fighting in the battle front, acting as body guards to military commanders. I argue that masculinity is a product of cultural learning and not what already exists in human beings. Also this narrative fits well within the Essentialist argument who hold that “biology is not destiny” and Goldstein (2001) who asserts that “real biological gender differences, as opposed to stereotyped ones, are not categorical. Men vary within their gender as do women.” Thus being a man or a woman is not a fixed state. It is a becoming, a condition actively under construction. Simone de Beauvoir in Connell, (2002) puts this in a classic phrase: ‘*One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman*’. This principle can also be argued to be true for men: ‘One is not born masculine, but acquires and enacts masculinity, and so becomes a man’. If we take this to be true, then we might argue that, there is nothing such as ‘masculine’ or feminine’ nor can we say that war, violence and conflict is masculine and not feminine. It is thus culture that makes that distinction in favor of men.

5.3 Military, drugs and Violence

Women ex-combatants and representatives of organizations confirm that violence has been part of the military groups within the civil crisis that occurred in Cote d’Ivoire. They acknowledge violence (sexual violence and rape) was used against civilian women as a war weapon. There existed other forms of violence which can be termed physical. The following are the narratives of female ex-combatants and representatives of organizations. First is the story of FEC2.

FEC2: *In my group, there were at times cases where members will fight each other but it was considered as something not very serious. We were like family and so we could not hurt one another It often occurred after they had taken a lot of alcohol or smoked marijuana. You know what drugs and alcohol can do to people.*

Angela: *so if I understood you well you mean to say that you used drugs in your groups?*

FEC2: *Definitely! Most men in the group could not do without it. I also had to take it sometime as it gave us courage and strength to keep on fighting.*

Angela: *Was there any other type of violence within the group?*

FEC2: *what do you mean by that?*

Angela: *I mean sexual violence.*

FEC2: *Mhhhhhhh, No, no, no! None that I remember. You know we were like brothers and sisters and we could not do that to one another. You know we were with some of our family members within the same group and others were with their husbands. So there was no room for that in my group. But I learnt that there were sexual violence committed against women in different groups and also violence against civilian women by arm groups who used it as a military weapon against their enemies.*

FEC1 indicates the presence of violence within military or arm groups. She notes that in her group, violence was mainly physical (fighting) between men which were as a results of alcohol intake and drug usage. The views of FEC1 are also shared by all the representatives of different organizations though there are some differences. Below is what RO3 narrates about these issues.

RO3: *violence has always been part of the Ivorian military. Now in Cote d'Ivoire when you mention the words military or army, the first memory that will come up in an Ivoirian's mind will be violence or killings. It's so sad that this violence did not only take place amongst the different rival military groups but it was extended to innocent civilians with women being the majority and suffering a great deal of it.*

Angela: *Can you please explain to me what you mean by women were the majority victims?*

RO3: *you know during the crisis women were victims at all levels. They were not only killed but they were subjected to sexual violence as rape which so many find had to forget till today as there were not only physical and emotional pain that followed, but some rapes even*

resulted to diseases and pregnancies as women were infected with STIs and HIV/AIDS. In the DDR programs we have both civilian groups (those affected by the war) and women ex-combatants themselves who are good examples. But most often they do not want to talk about it and prefer to keep it hidden from others because of stigmatization.

Angela: *Did you find out from the ex-combatants themselves what were the causes of these violence on them by members of different armed groups?*

RO3. *Not directly. This was a very sensitive case to talk about as it involved a lot of emotions. So we had a psychiatrist who was dealing with that. But during our meetings together with partner organizations, one of the reasons that were advanced for the rape on female combatants within their group was heavy drug use and alcoholism. That did not surprise me at all. You know “la drug c’est leurs deuxième nature” (drugs are their second nature).*

All the respondents (FEC1, FEC2, RO1, RO2, RO3, RO4, RO5,) confirm the presence of violence within the Ivorian military during the civil conflicts. The violence is reported not only to be present within the groups, but it’s being extended to the civilian communities with women being majority of the victims. Another significant finding that clearly stands out from the narratives is the use of drugs for whatever reasons within the groups. It doesn’t just ends there, but respondents also confirm that violence that had broke out within the military groups were mostly as a result of drugs and alcohol consumption which I view as a significant contribution that proponents of masculinity theory failed to take into account. Despite the fact that all the respondents have mentioned the presence of violence within the military or army, it also necessary to take note that, alcohol and drugs acted as catalysts. One will therefore argue that violence an aggression are not biological but are acts and doings that are learned through socialization and circumstances beyond one’s control such as acting under the influences of drugs and alcoholism. Thus the masculinized are no so rigid and they provide a field of maneuvering even for women. The respondent’s narratives therefore show that men do not perpetrate violence just because it is coded within their genes as masculinity theory tells us but because of other factors that authors have failed to take into consideration during the development of the theory.

5.4 Female Ex-combatants, DDR programs, Equality/Fair treatment.

This theme was developed in order to bring out the views or impressions of both female ex-combatants and representatives of organizations of female's integration within the DDR programs and their treatments. These views will be analyzed with reviewed literatures in mind.

Female ex-combatants show that they are treated equally with the men within the DDR programs. There are however gaps which they pointed out. Below are the narratives of female ex-combatants and representatives of organization.

Angela: *can you tell us how you joined DDR programs?*

FEC2. *When the war ended, we were demobilized from our camps by the DDR-ONUCI military section and sent to different organizations for follow up. Oh! The beginning was not easy at all. It was a whole long process as it included so many stages that we had to go through before we were placed into a program.*

Angela: *Can you please tell me more what these stages were all about?*

FEC2: *After haven grouped us together, DDR-ONUCI soldiers sent us to PNRRC where we were received. The first thing we had to do was give up our arms to the military authorities in charged. Then we also had to do a medical test which was compulsory for all. We were later sent into different lodgings for men and women. We also received an installation package or kit as they called it which was composed of basic necessities. After these processes, we were, later demobilized into different camps for skill training. At the end of the skill training which took weeks for some and months for others, we each received a card showing that we have completed the process.*

Angela: *Can you please tell me the containment of the kit?*

FEC2: *of course, we had in the kit some T-shirts, tooth brush and paste, soap. I think that is all that was in the kit. This kit was shared to both men and women that were in the demobilized camps.*

Angela: *Was there any basic necessity that you as a woman needed that was not in the kit?*

FEC2: *There was a basic necessity that was not found in the kit which was very important for all the women. We are women and some of us still have our menstruation every month. It was a big problem for us to take care of ourselves when we had our menstruation. We really want that the kit should also have sanitary towels for our hygiene during menstruations.*

Angela: *Were there any differences in the treatment of men and women in the camps?*

FEC2: *During the long time that we spent together with the men in the programs, we were all treated equally. When it came to meetings and follow-up programs, we all sat together and decided as a group what to do. As I earlier mentioned, we were all given the same elementary kit although it was not a complete kit for women. The only difference that I took note of and which I see it as good thing is that, men and women slept in different buildings.*

Below is also a similar narration from FEC1 on this same topic.

FEC1: *We were all treated equally. We got the same treatments as the men. Our per diem during the program, and even at the end of the program was all the same. When we were in the programs, we were asked to choose what activities we wanted to carry out at the end of the program. Men were not forced to choose certain activities and women others, but women mostly went into small business such as the selling of food items because most of them had gotten experience in that before and the men went mostly went into taxi driving and mechanic though some were also found in business as the women.*

All the representatives of the organizations (RO1, RO2, RO3, RO4, and RO5) equally shared the view of equal treatment of both female and male ex-combatants within the reintegration programs. However, one of them said something slightly different .Below is what RO4 had to say.

RO4: *both men and women were treated equally in the demobilization process. They all received the same basic need kit though it was initially meant for men because the program was initially conceived for men. They all went through the same treatment depending on the type of activities they wanted to pursue at the end of the program which ranged from three months to six months(three months for those who were into business, animal keeping and agriculture and six months for drivers and mechanics). Even within the training period, they all received an allowance of 20.000cfa (approximately 31 Euros). At the end of their course*

or training, they also received a certificate and a carte showing that they have completed their programs. With the card, they would be able to receive their reinsertion kit which ranged between 350,000cfa to 450,000cfa.

The above narratives show the presence and fairly equal treatment of both female and male ex-combatants within DDR. Despite women's presence, one can deduce from the data gotten from the field that women were not included during the planning of the programs. Examining the containment of the basic need kit, women are totally excluded. An ex-combatant pinpoints the neglect or absence of hygiene towels for menstruation. A pair of T-Shirt, soap, brush and tooth paste is not sufficient enough given the biological nature of women who have their menstruations every month. The narrative of RO4 also tallies with (McKay and Muzurana, 2004; Muzurana, 2005; and Mckay et al, 2006; UNIFEM, 2004; Vickers, 1993) who maintained that, DDR programs have often excluded women and children. UNIFEM (2007) also notes that due to security imperative of disarming belligerents, DDR efforts have often commenced hastily or without adequate planning and resources and in the process, they have often sacrificed gender perspective. One might attribute this neglect of women within DDR programs perhaps also to the narrow definition of who is a 'combatant' (Mazurana, 2005:5). The above clearly shows that, women have not been included in the definition of a "combatant" and perhaps it's the reason why their needs are not present in the kits such as hygiene towels.

Again, the above narratives also show or confirm the neglect of the basic *principle 1* of the UN approach to DDR. This same principle states that, DDR shall be *people-centred*. By people-centred, the primary focus of any UN-supported DDR [shall] be on people. It also invokes non discrimination and also fair treatment of participants and beneficiaries. This means that:

Individuals are not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, class, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political opinion, or other personal characteristics and association; and there shall be differences in the support provided based on the specific needs of each sex and those of differing ages and physical abilities. (For further readings, see pages 26-31 of the Operational guide to the integrated DDR standards, UN 2006, Found online at www.unddr.org). This same operational guide also maintains that special consideration should be given to women and other groups such as children and disabled combatants. This was however not the case with the Cote d'Ivoire DDR programs. From RO4, we find out that right

from the time that the program was conceived, women had never been included in the program. This might have been the main reason why special needs of women were not even included in the kits that were distributed to combatants at the beginning of the program.

The above writings once again draw our attention to the realities of post war situations in African countries and perhaps other countries in the world. Women, who have not only been present but actively participated in military “main business” during the Ivorian civil conflicts, disappear in the aftermath of war. This finding neatly fits into De Pauw 1998 in Goldstein, J. (2001:59) who notes that “*women have always and everywhere been inextricably involved in war, [but] hidden from history... During wars, women are ubiquitous and highly visible; when wars are over and the war songs are sung, women disappear*”.

5.5 Female Ex-Combatants as Social Pariahs within their Communities?

The theme is aimed at revealing the reception and treatments female ex-combatants face or get when they return in their communities in the aftermath of war. This is to get knowledge whether they are welcomed or rejected by their kinsmen in their communities. Below are narratives of female ex-combatants and representatives of organizations.

Angela: Can you tell me the type of reception you got when you returned to your community after the war?

FEC1: *After the DDR program, we were given a package (money) to go and settle back into our communities of origin and carry out what ever activity we wanted to with the money that we received. Returning in our communities, we were welcomed with “open arms” by everyone, most especially by our own kinsmen and family members. We were not rejected or discriminated upon. I think they instead appreciated us and even verbally thanked us for the services we rendered for the nation and particularly for our communities.*

This view of a positive communal reception was also shared by the other female ex-combatant (FEC2). However, she had something different to add.

FEC2: I was welcomed by my family and community, but on the other hand, I could not cope with the new life after leaving the army. I had become use to the life that I missed it and even wished to return to. I think this impacted a lot on my reintegration into my community

Representatives of organizations (RO3 & RO4) also had a similar view and feelings about the type of reception female ex-combatants in their communities. Below is what they revealed to me.

RO4: *I think female ex-combatants are welcomed and loved by their Kinsmen in their communities and their family members. During our follow up programs with ex-combatants in their communities, it was our duty to find out how they felt and the type of treatment they got in their communities. It was interesting to find out from the female ex-combatants that rejection and maltreatment was not part of their daily lives. Here is what RO3 added on this same issue. Female ex-combatants instead felt love from their kinsmen and their communities at large. I know of a particular ex-combatant who sells rice in the market. When you go to her market place, you would imagine she is the only person who sells rice in the market which is definitely not the case. On market days you will find a long queue in front of her just to buy rice where as there are other vendors in the market. I think and strongly believe that it's due to her past experience. If people did not want her in their community, perhaps no one will want to buy from her no matter even how cheap she would have sold the rice.*

Previous researches show that female ex-combatants become social pariahs. Women and girls returning from armed groups are thought to be isolated than males (Corbin, 2008; Denov, 2007; Muzurana, 2005). According to some researches these women are thought less likely to get marry, find livelihood, and are known to have high rates of stigmatization by their own family members and communities, hence forcing them to leave their communities (Mckay et al. 2006). Similarly, Muzurana (2005) maintains that they are even excluded from social networks making accessibility of land and shelter difficult.

Though this research offers a small sample, yet it highlights various problems. From the above narratives, positive communal reception and acceptance of ex-combatants clearly stands out from all the narratives. Thus reintegration of female ex-combatants is not a major problem vis a vis their kinsmen and community members. In contrast to the profound stigmatization and rejections of female ex-combatants as a result of their former affiliation with armed groups, they acknowledge that they are welcomed and loved not only by their kinsmen, but by the community at large. The Ivorian case tally with Blattman (2009) who found out in his research that, women ex-combatants are well received and get social

acceptance in their communities. Despite the positive communal reception, female ex-combatants themselves acknowledge that, they have difficulties adapting back into their communities as their past life in the military or army has impacted heavily on them. An ex-combatant even notes of missing her past life in the military and even wishes to return to it.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING REMARKS.

This research has attempted to investigate the presence of women in traditional “masculine” spheres; military, violence and drugs; female ex-combatants within DDR programs, equality and fair treatment, completion/abandonment, and also if female ex-combatants were considered social pariahs within their communities of origin.

In the theoretical aspect of the study, the research has found the masculinity theory wanting. Despite the fact that proponents of masculinity argue that “masculinity” (war, violence, and strength) is a preserve for men, the research however shows that “masculinity” is not biological as genes are. We find women actively present in the Ivorian conflict. We find women not only present but got actively involved in the conflict voluntarily for varied reasons such as security, for food, and protecting their community and country and learned how to carry out that masculine task such as killing, spying etc. Women joined wilfully regardless of their reasons. None of the interviews fully relates to the masculinity theory. However, part of the data shows that men dominated in wars and conflict but this may be perhaps because of the structuring and teachings of their society. However, these men fought alongside women too. Thus the theory could have better fitted for these interviews if only men were those present in the different armed groups during the Ivorian conflicts. The interviews also tally with literature review materials. The research has shown the presence and active participation of women in conflicts and wars which has been existing as early as the pre-colonial period in African in the Kingdom of Dahomey (Goldstein, 2001:60-64), Vickers, (1993:19).

Soldiering is characterized as a manly activity and as a practice of masculinity. The military is often seen as the ultimate exemplar of masculinity. Although women and girls are usually seen as the predominant victims of violence, and boys and men predominantly viewed as agents, however, the Physical strength and practical competences (masculinities) do not reflect the lived reality of actual men and women. This particular research shows that women are capable of aggression and violence in the Ivorian society.

On the other hand, the gender theory fits well into this study. The study has proven that war, violence (masculinity) is something that can be made and unmade, and learned as gender is. It proves that women can carry out violence if they are allowed and accepted within this social milieu. It may be possible to find communities where war might be relegated for the women

and not men or women working hand in hand with men as it were the case during the Ivorian conflicts where women fought alongside the men. This therefore means that, the community in which one belongs or grows in determines what we are and what we do, can do or cannot do. It is equally important to note that the world is rapidly changing and might have been considered years behind as a male's sphere, may be today a woman's sphere also and vice versa.

In summary, the main focus was of the research was investigate on the combatant roles of female ex-soldiers and their situation with DDR programs and their communities in the aftermath of war in Cote d'Ivoire. It was interesting to find out that women performed varied combatant roles. The research also shows that women are present within DDR programs but are not treated equally as the men. This unequal treatment is said to stem right from the conception of the program. From the interview, it clearly shows that women were only added on to, unlike the men who are initially those, the program was conceived for.

Again, the research shows that women are ex-combatants are welcomed within their communities by the kinsmen and communities. This case contradicts cases where women are often rejected or isolated due to their past experience.

Another significant result of this research is the use of drugs within the military or armed group which was unanimously noted by the interviewees. Also the research also notes cases of sexual violence which is used as a weapon by armed groups on civilians though not on women soldiers themselves.

Also the research echoes cases of child soldiery which is rampant in Africa. One of the ex-combatants approves to have joined the armed group as early as sixteen shattering her dreams of becoming a significant figure in the future.

Finally another significant finding is that reintegration of female ex-combatants was done or carried out both socially and economically- through inscription and training which ends up with obtaining a reintegration card which gives the former combatant the right for financial supports that is handed to them after completing the program to build up their life in their different communities. The interviewees acknowledged the fact that they received this support which they used to start up their businesses but however complained that the amount of

money was not enough to start up a business on a bigger scale since they themselves had to depend on this same money for their livelihoods. Interviewees also mentioned that most of the programs or skills being taught to them in the reintegration programs are usually short term which does not give them ample time to thoroughly carry out the training. Hence most of them leave or even abandoned the programs which they complained dwell in areas they were not interested in such as agriculture.

THINKING BEYOND

As a novel approach to studying female ex-combatants in Cote d'Ivoire in relation to conflict and reintegration, this study attempted to examine the position of women within conflicts and reintegration programs. This will hopefully track down the lives of female soldiers both in conflicts and reintegration programs. It would be important to track down women who join armed groups and also investigate the backlashes of the reintegration programs in order to come up with better solutions how these programs can be ameliorated in other not only to better the lives of female ex-combatants but also for the development of their nations.

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Appendix 1. QUESTION GUIDE FOR RESEARCH

To Representatives of Organizations

What is your name? (optional)

For how long have you been working with Ex-Combatants?

What is your organization doing working with ex-combatants?

Do you have any reports on it?

Are there any differences between female and male ex-combatants?

Are these ex-combatants treated equally?

How do you deal with the male ex-combatants vis a vis the female ex-combatants?

Do you gather them in the same group?

Why so?

Are there any types of problems you face working with ex-combatants?

What is your organization doing to address these issues?

Can you tell or give the history of women in violence in Cote d'Ivoire?

How did they become involved in the armed group(s) during the civil violence?

What are some of the arm groups that existed during the Ivorian Civil conflict?

What are the aims of these groups?

Where are they found or located?

Are there any records of internal violence within the arm groups?

What type of violence (roles) did female combatants perform Vis a Vis male combatants?

In your experience, who those who participated mostly in the combatant roles?

Did women get pregnant within the groups?

Was it by choice or by or rape?

What happened to their children?

Has there been any record of drug use within the groups?

How did women get out of these groups?

Will these women not fall back to their previous life given some of the relationships they have already established?

To Female Ex-Combatants

Why/How did you join the armed forces?

How old were you when you joined the group?

What are the roles (combatant) you performed while in the group?

Have you been a victim of sexual violence? Do you know of any female(s) who was a victim of sexual violence within the arm group?

Did women get children in the group? If yes, what happened to the women and their children?

How did you get out of the group?

What are the types of treatments you received while in the reintegration program?

Did you face any problems while in the reintegration program?

Was your life better before you came to the reintegration program?

Were they boys in the same reintegration as you? If yes, were you treated the same as the men? If NO can you suggest why?

How has your civil life been like since you left the reintegration camps?

How were (are) you welcomed and treated by your kinsmen in your community?

How will you like your life to look like both in the reintegration programs and your community?

REPUBLICQUE DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE

PROGRAMME NATIONAL DE REINSERTION
ET DE REHABILITATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

CARTE DE DEMOBILISE



N° Personnel
Nom
Prénoms
Date de Naissance: 01/01/1986
Lieu de Naissance: BOUAKE
Sexe: M
Nationalité: CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Lieu de Résidence: BOUAKE

N° de Série : 04140 01927 3900023674 9