

WHAT THE FIGHTERS SAY
A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone
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by

Macartan Humphreys
Columbia University
New York, USA
mh2245@columbia.edu

Jeremy M. Weinstein
Stanford University
Stanford, USA
jweinstein@cgdev.org

In partnership with

PRIDE
43 WATERLOO STREET, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE
PRIDESALONE@YAHOO.COM

With the support of

The Earth Institute
Columbia University
New York, USA

DDR Coordination Section
UNAMSIL
Freetown, Sierra Leone



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

PRIDE THE POST-CONFLICT REINTEGRATION INITIATIVE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the initial findings of a survey of a representative sample of 1043 combatants from Sierra Leone's civil war. It presents information on the demographic profile of the combatant population, their motivations for joining and incentives for staying within the different factions, and their attitudes about the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process.

Among the main findings are the following.

- There is a striking consistency in the demographic profiles of the different warring factions. While CDF members were somewhat more likely to be male and to be older than RUF soldiers, the differences are small. More importantly, contrary to common perception, there were no large differences across factions along ethnic, regional, or religious lines, or in terms of political party affiliation.
- The vast majority of combatants across factions were uneducated and poor. Many had left school before the conflict started either due to lack of fees or because schools had closed down. Many others were still students when they joined the factions. While there may have been a small class of intellectuals that formed the core of the RUF at the start of conflict, the average level of education of fighters declined continuously throughout the course of the conflict. Moreover, though young at the start of the conflict, many combatants had lost one or both parents *before* the start of the fighting.

Despite the demographic similarities of the members of each faction, there were very strong differences in individuals' motivations for joining and in the ways that various factions were organized.

- The RUF was a group of mutual strangers, largely recruited by force. The CDF, on the other hand, originated from tight networks of families, friends, and communities. It had much higher levels of voluntary recruitment and new members integrated into units in which family members and friends were already active.
- Across factions, both political and material motivations mattered for the recruitment of fighters. RUF combatants claimed that they fought to express dissatisfaction, to root out corruption, and to bring down the existing regime. CDF fighters argued that they aimed to defend their communities from the violence brought by the war. Political motivations notwithstanding, there were strong material incentives as well. RUF combatants were promised jobs, money, and women; during the war, they received women, drugs, and sometimes more valuable goods. The CDF helped to meet the basic needs of the members and provided increased security for their families.
- Material benefits however, both those promised and those received, were typically at best sufficient to satisfy basic needs. Most fighters were not directly engaged in the lucrative natural resource trades and when the groups encountered valuable

resources, these were sent upwards through the organization. If leaders of the factions did in fact make large fortunes from these industries, these profits do not help to explain the motivations of the vast majority of combatants.

- Throughout the conflict, the interests of most fighters, particularly those in the RUF, remained focused on basic needs—access to security, food, and education—and not on the political agenda of the movement or on control of lucrative resources. Incentives also included access to drugs, and for some, license to engage in sexual exploitation and violence.
- At the time of the peace negotiations at Lomé, most members were unaware of the political provisions of the accords. Combatants were focused instead on aspects of the agreement that would affect their welfare directly: the cessation of hostilities, efforts to provide jobs for ex-combatants and amnesty for fighters. But combatants in no way supported the continuation of the conflict: they favored hypothetical agreements that brought security first over strategies that would yield greater material gains over security. There was no support in *any* faction for continuing the conflict to make gains from the war economy.

Given the size of the UN mission in Sierra Leone and the investments that have been made in post-conflict reconstruction, important questions are now being asked about whether this process should serve as a model for future interventions. The survey gathered detailed information about the DDR process to help address these questions. Among the findings described in this report are the following.

- Many combatants voiced dissatisfaction with the DDR program in their open-ended responses. Common complaints fell into two categories: first, there were significant and unpredictable delays in the delivery of allowances and toolboxes; second, too little support was provided for finding or creating jobs. More broadly, significant numbers complained that they or members of their communities were not able to gain access to the DDR process at all.
- Despite these specific complaints, the DDR programs received very positive overall reviews from ex-combatants. Importantly, while there was variation in the satisfaction of fighters with regard to DDR, this variation was not related to faction, gender, ethnicity, or region. Even if the process was not always viewed as efficient, there is no evidence that it was subject to, or viewed as subject to, any form of political manipulation or favoritism.
- Respondents also identified a clear set of priorities for improving DDR: more support for finding jobs after training (54%), longer periods of training (47%), support to start small businesses (30%), and larger allowances (15%).

Finally, the report includes findings on the successes (and failures) of the reintegration process and describes the current political attitudes of the ex-combatant population:

- There were strong differences across factions in the ease with which individuals reintegrated. Close to 75% of CDF fighters returned to the communities in which they had lived before the war began. Only 34% of RUF combatants returned home. Importantly, abductees were on average less likely to go home to their own communities than individuals who claimed to join voluntarily. These decisions can be explained in part by the willingness of communities to accept returned fighters. 13% of combatants reported difficulties in finding acceptance from their neighbors at the end of the war. In most cases these situations improved—at the time the survey was conducted, only 5% of respondents reported ongoing problems of this form. Among the population of abductees, there was an especially high chance of improving relations with their home communities over time, between the end of the war and the time the survey was completed.
- While ex-combatants have ongoing concerns about access to education and the availability of jobs, many now hold positive perspectives on the activities of the current government and the prospects of the country. Moreover, as difficult as conditions are, most believe they are better than before the conflict began. This suggests that some of the conditions identified by combatants that help to explain the onset of the conflict are no longer in place. Ex-combatants are most upbeat about the successes of the government in meeting basic human needs. 83% of respondents believe that access to education is better now than it was before the war. 65% say that access to medical care has substantially improved. While RUF and AFRC ex-combatants exhibit slightly higher levels of discontent, majorities in both groups embrace this broader view of progress.
- Finally, most ex-combatants reject violence as a strategy for achieving political change. They reject their factions as major political actors. Instead, they see that they can have impact in Sierra Leone's new democracy: by organizing peacefully, voting in elections, and holding officials accountable for results. But the massive international intervention has come at a cost. Ex-combatants have faith more in outsiders than in their own government. The experience with UNAMSIL has been a positive one, but ex-combatants see appeals to the international community and to NGOs as the best ways to hold their government accountable and to achieve positive results. This may be a cause for concern as the UN mission comes to a close.

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I Purpose and Methodology of the Study

Recognizing a window of opportunity between the ending of Sierra Leone's war and the beginning of trials by the International Special Court for Sierra Leone, Columbia University's Earth Institute provided expedited support for a data-gathering project to better understand the causes and consequences of Sierra Leone's civil war, the internal dynamics of the fighting groups, and the best strategies available to the international community to respond to the security concerns raised by civil conflicts.

In partnership with a Freetown-based NGO, the Post-conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development and Empowerment (PRIDE), a large-scale survey of ex-combatants was conducted during the summer of 2003, collecting information on all stages of the Sierra Leone conflict. Four months of intensive data collection on the ground yielded surveys of 200 non-combatants and over 1,000 ex-combatants from all factions and regions of Sierra Leone.

The data offers a systematic, quantitative, and representative assessment of the dynamics of the conflict and the post-conflict period. It provides a key source of information that can help contribute to a more complete history of the conflict, evaluate the prospects for continued peace, and influence appropriate policies for intervention and post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone and other regions of civil conflict.

This interim report provides a first-cut at the evidence on how the factions were organized, how combatants experienced the demobilization process, and trends in post-conflict reintegration. Because interest within Sierra Leone is presently focused on peacebuilding and the reintegration process, this interim report focuses especially on parts of the survey related to demobilization and reintegration.

I.1 Purpose of the Study

The ex-combatant survey was designed with three broad goals in mind.

- First, to explore the motivations of those who participated in political violence in an effort to develop a more complete understanding of the origins of the conflict;
- Second, to collect systematic information about the organizational structures and economic behavior of the warring parties and;
- Third, to gather representative data on how combatants experienced the demobilization process, how successfully they reintegrated into their communities, and what perspectives they hold on the post-war political situation in Sierra Leone.

The questionnaire—designed with the input of academics and policymakers in the U.S. and Sierra Leone—gathered information in eight major areas:

1. Demographic data on both combatants and non-combatants

2. Mechanisms for recruitment, motivations for participation, and political preferences, before the war and during peace negotiations
3. Incentive systems and organizational structures for each faction
4. Economic and social conditions enjoyed by fighters during the conflict
5. Patterns of interaction with civilian populations during the war
6. Experience of the peace negotiations
7. Evaluation of the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration program, and
8. Trends in post-war reintegration and current views on political expression and participation

The survey results—the first of their kind investigating the internal dynamics of warring factions—have the potential to inform policymakers working on issues critical to conflict resolution including:

- *Economic Responses to War Economies.* A richer understanding of how financial incentives within a rebel organization are structured, how income is distributed, what sources of funding are tapped by different factions will allow for the design of more appropriate economic policy responses. In particular, a better micro-level understanding can help policymakers as they consider decisions about how to deliver aid, to employ economic sanctions, and to design programs that reintegrate soldiers into productive sectors of the economy.
- *Peace Negotiations.* Sierra Leone is a case in which international actors have attempted to engage in conflict resolution by encouraging and facilitating peace negotiations. But the sad result is that, while multiple efforts to design a settlement have yielded agreement, few have been successfully implemented. The survey seeks, in part, to identify the features of the rebel organizational structures that made these agreements unworkable. The results can help to inform negotiators in future conflict resolution situations regarding how best to engage elites and fighters in implementing and sustaining a peace agreement.
- *Peace Building.* Sierra Leone's demobilization and reintegration program is currently being used as a model in neighboring Liberia and elsewhere. The survey examines whether aspects of this process are working to dissuade re-mobilization, which projects and programs were most useful to ex-combatants, and how well this program was integrated into the overall national recovery strategy. Uniquely, the study can be used to relate the characteristics of individual fighters, their factional membership, and their experience of the conflict, to the success of different types of demobilization and reintegration programs. These results can be used by national governments as well as international organizations in the design of future demobilization programs.

I.2 Research Methodology

The study targeted 1000 ex-combatants and 250 non-combatants in 33 chiefdoms and in the western area of Sierra Leone. The main method for gathering information was through the administration of a closed-ended questionnaire by an enumerator in the respondent's local

language. Interviews were conducted at DDR training programs and in community centers. The following section describes the protocols used to achieve an unbiased and representative sample.

I.2.1 Defining the population

UN DDR and NCDDR programs use the term ex-combatant to refer to those who have been officially demobilized and registered in Sierra Leone. In order to be registered and considered for a reinsertion benefit, subsistence allowances, and training programs, an individual was required to either hand over a weapon or be claimed by a commander (demobilize with your unit). This definition may have excluded many ex-combatants who no longer had their own weapons, could not afford to purchase one, or whose commanders failed to demobilize or claim them. In particular, this policy may have discriminated against women, children, and others who participated in the conflict primarily as forced labor or sex slaves, and who may have participated in active conflict when defending their bases or villages from attack.

It is difficult to know the total number of ex-combatants who participated in Sierra Leone's ten-year conflict. However, the DDR programs were designed to target 75,000 ex-combatants when demobilization began in 1998; over the three phases of the disarmament process a total of 76,000 combatants were disarmed and registered by NCDDR. While this represents a large share of the total combatant population, a number of combatants chose to remain outside of the DDR process or were unable to join for other reasons. Although neither NCDDR nor UN DDR could determine the whereabouts or characteristics of these additional ex-combatants, it is assumed that some died in the latter years of the conflict, some migrated across borders to fight in other regional conflicts, and some refused to disarm or were urged by their communities not to enter the DDR process. In the course of the survey, teams identified a number of respondents who claimed that they were prevented from joining the DDR program because they did not possess a weapon to turn in.

For the purposes of this study, the population of ex-combatants was defined independently of their participation in the DDR process. The definition was broadened to include any individual who lived or worked with a fighting faction for at least one month during Sierra Leone's conflict. As the survey looks in detail at recruitment, command structures, resource collection and distribution, interaction with civilians and the effectiveness of DDR, it was determined that individuals who participated in the conflict for at least one month would be able to give the most complete picture of how the fighting factions operated and shed light on the patterns of post-war demobilization and reintegration. Among the advantages of this approach is that it allowed us to survey both those who participated and those who did not participate in the DDR process and to compare their experiences.

I.2.2 Sampling Strategy

The survey targeted a sample of 1,000 of the population of over 75,000 ex-combatants. Ultimately 1,043 surveys were completed. The survey targeted an additional 250 non-combatants who resided in the same areas as the ex-combatants but did not live or work with a fighting faction for at least one month. Data on non-combatants is crucial for

understanding the different demographic characteristics of those who joined versus those who remained outside of the conflict.

To ensure as unbiased a sample as possible, the survey employed a number of levels of randomization. First, the geographic locations and chiefdoms in which the teams enumerated surveys were randomly selected.

Estimates of the population of ex-combatants presently residing in the chiefdoms were made based on NCDDR and National Statistics Office data. These statistics were out of date and only recorded where ex-combatants intended to migrate at the time of demobilization (demobilization began in 1998 and continued in three phases through July 2003). There has been substantial migration of Sierra Leone's population within the country, particularly since January 2002 when peace was declared. Neither UN DDR nor NCDDR tracked the movement and migration of ex-combatants following their registration into the DDR program, except to prevent multiple claims for reinsertion benefits or subsistence allowances by ex-combatants in various regions. These estimates of the distribution of the population were then updated with local knowledge of population movements gathered in the course of their work by PRIDE workers.

The estimates of the population distribution were used to generate weights that were used to draw 63 clusters of 17 subjects throughout the country. These clusters fell within forty-five chiefdoms or urban localities and these forty-five localities formed the basic enumeration unit. Random selection resulted in chiefdoms that varied in the following ways:

- Presence or absence of DDR programs, government, and social services;
- Levels of ex-combatant presence, and variation in faction membership;
- Diversity of ethnic groups, language groups, and economic activity;
- Accessibility due to lack of roads and weather conditions

Within each enumeration unit, sites were randomly selected, with both urban and rural areas represented. It should be noted that this survey was implemented during the rainy season. Most roads in the country and even some areas of the main highway are unpaved and ungrated. During the rainy season, entire chiefdoms became inaccessible. As teams were dependent on public transport or support from UN DDR or military observers, they often had difficulty reaching remote areas and chiefdoms. Nevertheless, the teams ultimately traveled by helicopter, pirogue, canoe, motorbike, foot, tractor, tiller, bus, commercial truck, army transport, police car, van, and assorted other means to reach *every* targeted chiefdom.

For each enumeration unit, specific numerical targets were set for the major factions, based on the randomization and the estimated national distribution of faction members. Broad goals were provided to guide survey teams in meeting gender and age targets based on the estimated national share of women and children in the groups: enumerators were instructed that on average one in twelve individuals interviewed should be a woman, and one in nine should have been under the age of 16 at the end of the conflict. Enumerators were instructed to compare actual numbers of children and faction members to target goals each day.

Within each unit the subjects were identified as follows. Prior to traveling up-country, project staff and PRIDE representatives met with NCDDR and UN DDR staff and asked for their assistance with the identification of possible respondents. NCDDR provided a letter of support asking that implementing partners assist the survey in any way possible. In addition, UN DDR staff were informed of the project and also asked to assist by helping to identify ex-combatants to be interviewed and arrange for transport and interview locations.

However, to ensure that the project accessed both individuals within and outside of the DDR program, letters were sent to District Officers, Paramount Chiefs, and sometimes village chiefs, asking them to identify a sample of ex-combatants. These local experts were asked to ensure that, insofar as possible, the respondents should exhibit variation consistent with the variation of the ex-combatant population in the enumeration unit along the following dimensions:

- Faction
- Rank
- Gender
- Age
- Urban/Rural Origins
- Education
- Attitudes About the War

The strategy of using local contacts to identify possible participants prior to arrival was employed for a number of reasons. First, it helped to ensure that respondents were not selected solely from networks previously known to or employed by PRIDE, the local enumerating partner. Second, it reduced the time required to identify ex-combatants for participation when the teams arrived in chiefdoms. Third, it helped to sensitize and give ownership to local leaders and individuals working with ex-combatants who might otherwise disagree with or feel threatened by a survey that was in part a review of their programs and services. Finally, particularly in rural or more remote areas, the teams had to gain consent from local officials prior to conducting interviews, as part of tradition or protocol.

While those involved in identifying respondents locally were given guidelines to help ensure that the sample would be representative of the ex-combatant population of that specific enumeration unit, some biases may arise in this stage of the sampling procedure. To address this potential bias, teams identified pools of candidates in a chiefdom from more than one source: some from the town or village Chief, some from the village youth coordinator, some from various DDR and NCDDR skills training centers, and so on.

To further reduce the risks of bias, the teams aimed to identify two to three times the targeted number of potential respondents and then to randomly select respondents using a variety of methods. In most instances, Chiefs and DDR staff asked a number of ex-combatants to meet at a public location such as a Court Barre or skills training center and teams selected candidates randomly from that pool (by choosing every third person or selecting numbers from a hat). For example, in Upper Banta, the teams had the ex-combatants number their houses. The numbers were written down and put into a hat and the ex-combatants themselves were asked to draw which houses would be selected for an

interview to help maintain randomization within the population. While this method worked well overall, in some areas less than twice the target population was identified, particularly in very remote rural areas, areas with small ex-combatant populations, and areas with polarized communities.

I.2.3 Enumeration Strategy

Over thirty candidates were interviewed in Freetown for positions as enumerators of the survey. Eleven enumerators were selected on the basis of their education, language skills, familiarity with regions outside of Freetown, willingness to work in difficult conditions at flexible hours, comfort level in interviewing ex-combatants, work experience such as survey enumeration, human rights background, interview skills, and to ensure a gender balance within each team of enumerators.

These candidates were required to participate in an intensive two-week training developed by the principal investigators, project manager, project intern, and PRIDE executives which included a variety of aspects of survey enumeration: random sampling, human subjects training, confidentiality, and interview techniques. Particular attention was given to special issues involved in interviewing vulnerable populations. In addition, enumerators were trained on the various survey instruments and came to a common interpretation of questions to ensure they understood the meaning behind each question, whether and how to prompt each question, and how to mark it appropriately. Trainees also participated in developing the consent and exit scripts in Krio.

Following the training, candidates were given an exam with three sections to assess the training and to select the final set of enumerators. From the pool of candidates, PRIDE and the project staff selected nine enumerators and two enumerator alternates. The selected candidates underwent an additional week of training and pre-testing. This allowed candidates to become more familiar with the survey, experiment with interview techniques, practice survey administration in the field, follow protocols, administer sub-samples, use randomization protocols, and stay abreast of any changes in the survey. Pre-testing was conducted for two days with ex-combatants from various factions. One day of pre-testing was conducted in the PRIDE offices and focused on familiarity with the survey instrument. On the second day, teams traveled into urban and rural Freetown to practice field protocols and logistics.

During the final days of training and pre-testing, teams of four were created based on the enumerators' language skills, familiarity with different regions, gender, and personalities. Each team consisted of one team leader, who was a PRIDE executive, and three individuals, each assigned a team role. Each team also had at least one woman and one person who spoke the language of the chiefdom to be visited. The teams assisted in planning the field schedule, drafting budgets, planning transport logistics, identifying and purchasing field materials, and finalizing protocols during this time.

I.3 Capturing Variation in the Course of the Conflict

Sierra Leone's conflict lasted for over a decade and involved five primary factions, numerous sub-factions and various external actors. Over the course of the conflict, the government

changed hands four times (twice by coup) and two peace accords were negotiated and failed. At times, the fighting engulfed the entire country, displacing large portions of its population. Some ex-combatants were involved in the conflict for short periods of time, while others entered early in the conflict and stayed to the end. Some changed sub-factions or primary factions during the conflict and almost all moved locations.

The survey asked detailed questions about what acts were punished within units, how commanders were selected, how resources were gathered and distributed, how civilians were treated, and so on. These aspects undoubtedly varied between time periods, across factions, and in different locations. Asking questions about these aspects without making explicit reference to time periods would yield a set of “average” answers that would mask the temporal variation in the conflict.

To ensure that the survey collected information from various time periods and that respondents were answering questions about one specific time period with one faction, the principal investigators developed randomization protocols within the survey. This protocol worked as follows.

Section two asks respondents to map their involvement in the conflict by giving their location and faction membership for seven designated time periods, marked by major events in the history of the conflict. For each respondent, the survey recorded the number of periods in which the respondent was active. The enumerator selected one of these periods of activity using a randomization protocol on the cover sheet of each questionnaire. The randomization cover sheets were weighted toward the respondents’ first experience in the faction to gather more information on earlier time periods in the conflict, given an expectation that most respondents would have joined at later stages of the war. Enumerators were trained to remind the respondent throughout the survey that they were to answer questions about the specific time period selected by the randomization protocol.

I.4 Description of the Sample

The sample of respondents is broadly representative of the total population of ex-combatants registered by NCDDR as part of the disarmament process.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Faction

	NCDDR Totals		Survey Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
SLA/AFRC	8869	12.1	91	9.1
RUF	24,338	33.1	367	36.8
CDF	37,216	50.6	530	53.2
Others	448	0.6	9	0.9
Total	70,871	100.0	997	100.0

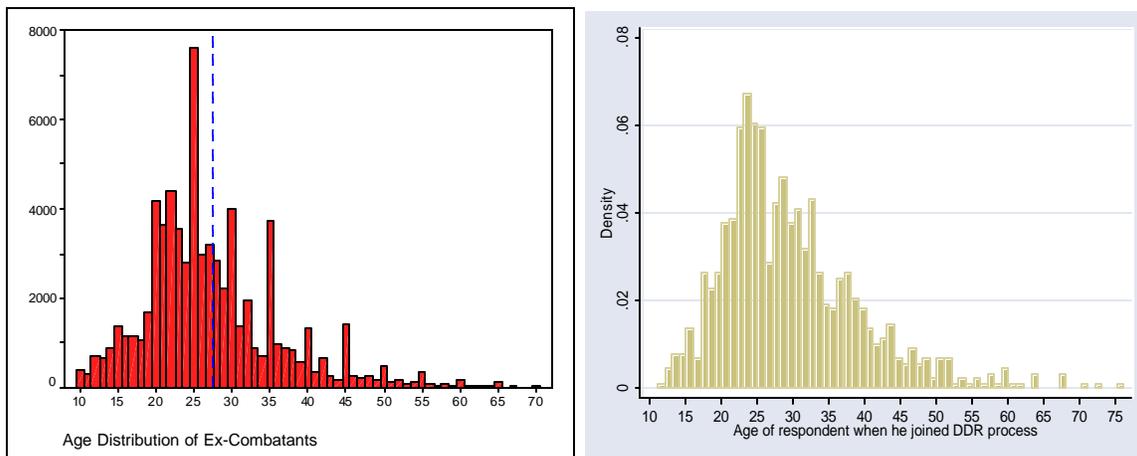
Table 1 presents the breakdown of membership in factions. The survey sample tracks faction membership in the broader ex-combatant population closely. The SLA/AFRC is slightly underrepresented in the sample.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Number of Women Ex-Combatants by Faction				
	NCDDR Totals		Survey Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
SLA/AFRC	571	6.4	8	8.8
RUF	4361	17.9	89	24.4
CDF	303	0.8	10	1.9
Others	40	8.9	1	11.1
Total	5275	7.4	108	10.9

In Table 2, the distribution of women ex-combatants is presented. The sampling method yielded a larger percentage of women than the number registered as part of disarmament. Given concerns that women were underrepresented in the disarmament programs, it is possible that the sampling strategy employed for this survey captured a more accurate picture of the distribution of women ex-combatants. Most women surveyed were members of the RUF. Although the sample yielded a larger percentage of women in the CDF, it is likely that the true number of women who participated in the CDF is still understated.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Sample



The panel on the left of Figure 1 presents the age distribution of those combatants registered by NCDDR (at the point of entry into the DDR program). The panel on the right presents the age distribution of ex-combatants in the survey sample that joined the DDR process, at the time of joining. The overall age distribution of the sample accords well with the

NCDDR population figures, although it is apparent that the survey sample slightly under represents the population of child-combatants at the time of demobilization.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Region

Region	Region where Respondent Joined Faction		Region where Respondent Demobilized		Region where Respondent Surveyed (2003)	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
South	181	18%	80	9%	96	9%
East	508	50%	449	50%	484	46%
North	247	24%	306	34%	307	29%
West	84	8%	56	6%	156	14%

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the sample by region. The first two columns present data on the distribution by region in which the combatants joined the factions. The next two columns present data on the regions in which combatants demobilized. The final two provide data on where the combatants were surveyed. The shift over time is apparent, as combatants moved away from the South and to the North in significant numbers over the course of the conflict and to the West in more recent times. The percentage of combatants in the East remained fairly consistent over time.

I.4.1 Potential Sources of Bias

Survey research introduces a number of sources of bias that must be considered when evaluating the findings presented in this report.

The process of building a representative sample is difficult. The best planning is often not enough to overcome logistical considerations or simply bad luck. While survey teams made it to each of the targeted chiefdoms, some teams encountered problems in building large lists of ex-combatants from which to sample respondents. People’s concerns, in particular protecting the privacy of former fighters, sometimes made it difficult to identify the full range of combatants in a community.

Two factors in particular must be assessed in judging how representative this sample is of the ex-combatant population. First, NCDDR acknowledges that the disarmament process missed a sizeable number of former fighters. Estimates tend to congregate around 3000 or so. Many of these fighters fled across the border to fight in conflicts in neighboring countries; others, particularly from the CDF, self-reintegrated into their home communities. The sampling methodology likely picked up some of the respondents that self-reintegrated. Indeed, 138 respondents did not participate in the DDR program. This may explain, in part, the higher percentage of CDF fighters in the sample as compared to NCDDR statistics. It is unlikely that survey teams captured ex-combatants across the border or another population of former fighters—those that passed away during the conflict.

A second factor is the potential non-random selection of respondents. By working through NCDDR officials and local partners, a potential bias toward DDR participants is introduced.

Efforts to communicate with Paramount and local chiefs in building lists of contacts helped to minimize this source of bias. But a fundamental characteristic of all respondents was that they self-identified as an ex-combatant. To the extent that individuals participated in the war but did *not* see themselves as fighters, it is unlikely that survey teams were able to identify such individuals and recruit them to interviews. Moreover, to the extent that factions or communities successfully put pressure on particular populations, such as women and young children, not to identify themselves as fighters, these groups will be underrepresented.

Naturally, the survey also does not capture the population of combatants that died during the war. This population could differ in systematic ways from the population that survived. Perhaps, those that passed away were more likely to be in high-risk situations for example. As a partial test for the existence of these biases, the survey collected data on the number of times that participants were wounded during the conflict. This is a potential proxy for the extent to which individual respondents were at risk during the war.

Another possible source of bias lies not in the sample but in the individual responses. The most obvious one is a concern with truth telling. Respondents may have strong incentives to misrepresent the facts. With the Special Court operative in Sierra Leone during the administration of the survey, some respondents might have been concerned that their answers could be used as evidence for the prosecution. In the training, a script was developed for enumerators to help allay these concerns. Respondents might also be influenced by the presence of community members during the enumeration of the survey. Consequently, survey teams administered the survey in private, in an effort to protect people's privacy. The survey avoided asking questions whose answers could be incriminating.

With a long survey, exhaustion may also be a concern. Survey enumerators made sincere efforts to move quickly through the questions and to allow respondents the opportunity to take a break when necessary. Related to truth telling, one must be concerned with the impact of memory: do respondents remember clearly incidents that took place years before? Is their memory shaped by subsequent events? Do particular factions have a stake in telling a different story, constructing an alternative memory of the past? Undoubtedly, such considerations must be taken seriously. But the honesty with which respondents answered difficult questions—about violence in particular—increases confidence in the accuracy of the results. A final concern raised by the structured nature of the questionnaire is that respondents may not have had the freedom to provide the whole story, to raise all of the issues that concern them. Nonetheless, the structured approach offers a number of benefits: increased control over the enumeration, comparability of responses, and data amenable to statistical manipulation.

I.5 The Research Team

Two principal investigators led the research effort: Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein. Together with the executive committee of PRIDE-Salone, Humphreys and Weinstein conceptualized the project, designed the survey, led the research in the field, and coordinated the analysis and drafting of the interim report.

Macartan Humphreys is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, New York. His research focuses on economic development and rebellions in West Africa, where he has undertaken field research in Senegal, Mali, Chad and Sierra Leone. Ongoing research includes experimental work on ethnic politics and econometric work on natural resource conflicts. He is a research scholar at the Center for Globalization and Sustainable Development, a Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, and a member of the Millennium Development Goals Project poverty task force. He holds a PhD in Government from Harvard University and an MPhil in Economics from Oxford.

Jeremy M. Weinstein is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Stanford University. Previously, he was a research fellow at the Center for Global Development, where he directed the bipartisan Commission on Weak States and US National Security. While working on his Ph.D. he conducted hundreds of interviews with rebel combatants and civilians in Africa and Latin America for his forthcoming book, *Inside Rebellion: The Political Economy of Rebel Organization*. He has also worked on the National Security Council staff; served as a visiting scholar at the World Bank; was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; and received a research fellowship in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University.

The survey project was managed on the ground by Alison Giffen, in partnership with PRIDE, a Sierra Leonean NGO. Giffen played a major role in coordinating the implementation of the survey, developing the protocols for the field, and drafting significant parts of the methodology section. She was supported by Richard Haselwood from Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs, who played a central role in managing the data collection activities on the ground and led the development of the survey databases.

Alison Giffen received a Master's Degree in International Human Rights at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Giffen has also served as project manager for a nationwide survey on decentralization and women's political participation for Oxfam GB, Sierra Leone. In 2003 she worked with the Campaign for Just Mining in Sierra Leone. Prior to her work in Africa, she founded and directed the US Office on Colombia, a non-profit advocacy organization working with over 100 human rights, development, labor, and indigenous organizations in Colombia, Europe, and the United States.

The Post-Conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development and Empowerment (PRIDE) is an NGO founded by three Sierra Leonean youth: Allan Quee, Patrick Amara and Lawrence Sessay. PRIDE advocates for ex-combatants and youth. They have conducted a series of survey projects with the International Center for Transitional Justice and UN agencies. Their most recent report, "Ex-Combatant Views of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court of Sierra Leone," was released in 2002.

The enumerators of this survey included: Violetta Conteh, Francis Gbaya, Sia Eva Gbomor, Neneh Jalloh, Titti Jalloh, Max Katta, Hassan Konneh, Daniel Rhodes, Ibrahim Seibureh, Emmanuel Stafford, Yaya Sidi Turay.

II Profile of the Combatants

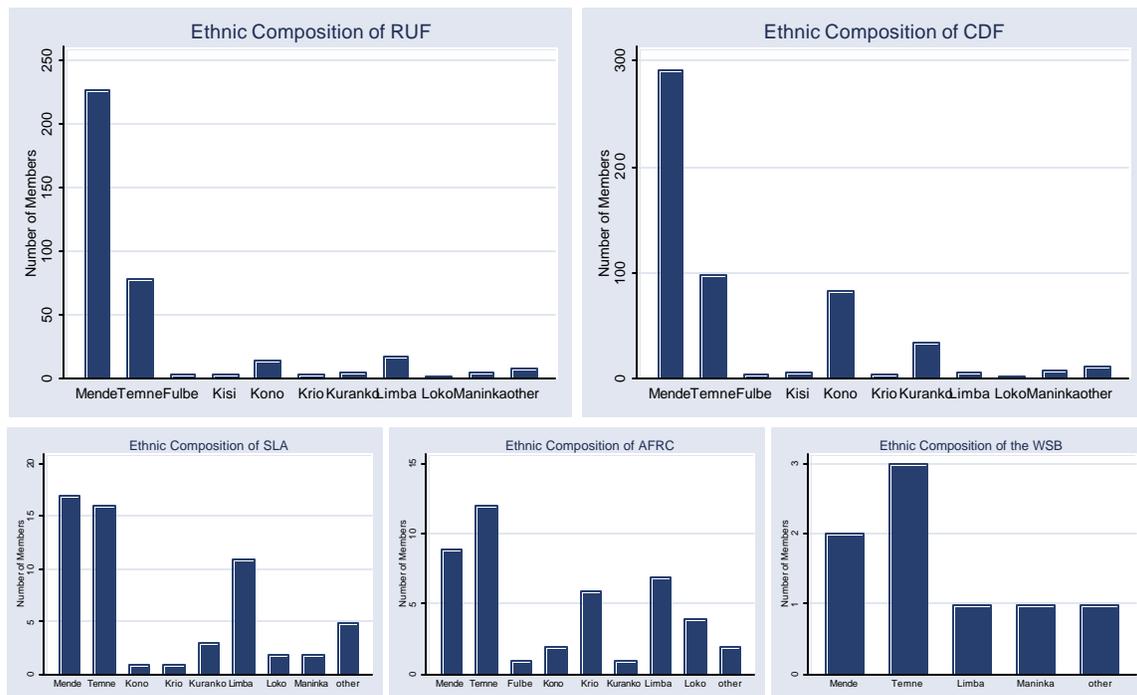
This section provides basic data on the pre-war profile of the combatants in each warring faction. Respondents were asked detailed questions about their background, ranging from basic demographic data to political allegiances before the onset of the conflict. This data was collected because systematic demographic data may be useful in understanding the origins of the conflict and identifying the factors that may explain variation in the success of post-war reintegration.

Data on the pre-war profile of combatants reveals an important pattern. The demographic profile of the combatants is strikingly similar across the two major factions—the CDF and RUF. From ethnic group membership to educational background, and socio-economic status to political affiliation—there are no appreciable differences in the demographic make-up of these factions. The AFRC and SLA have demonstrably different demographic profiles.

II.1 Pre-war Profile

Figure 2 presents data on the ethnic group membership of the five warring factions. The CDF and the RUF—which represent the bulk of the sample—merit the most sustained attention. Contrary to common perceptions, the data suggest that the ethnic breakdown in the two groups was nearly identical with respect to the major ethnic groups in the country, namely the Mende and the Temne. In both groups, 50-60% of the membership was made up of Mende and 20% of Temne.

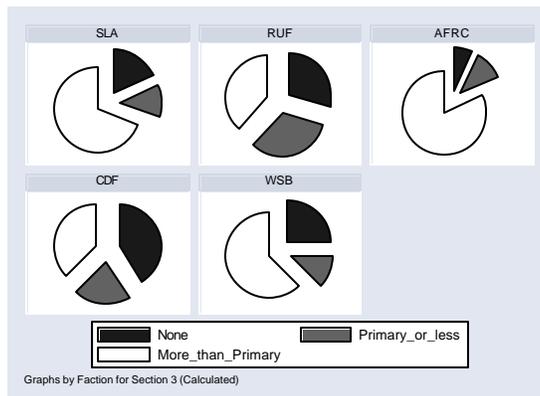
Figure 2: Ethnic Group Membership of Factions



The data also make clear that the AFRC, SLA, and WSB were more diverse factions. In particular, the AFRC and SLA included strong Limba contingents not present in the two main factions.

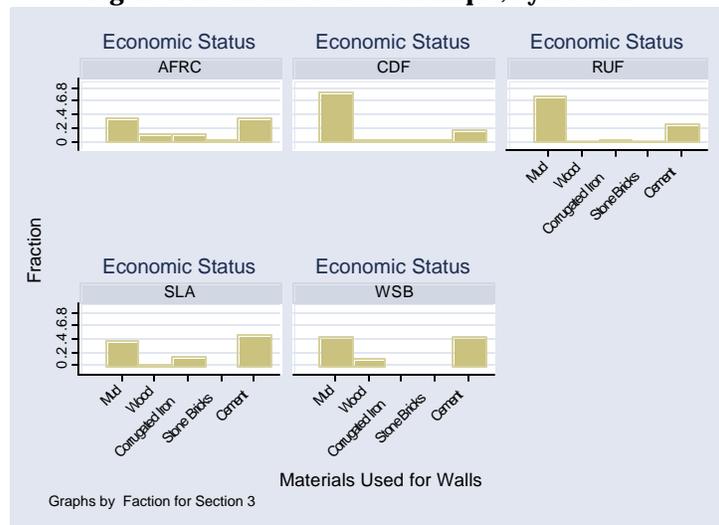
In both the CDF and RUF, more than 30% of the combatants had *never* attended school. Both factions maintained a small core of educated members—with 6-8% of participants having completed secondary school. The AFRC and SLA, by contrast, exhibited higher rates of primary school completion, in particular, and some secondary school attendance. The major trends are represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Educational Profile of Sample, by Faction



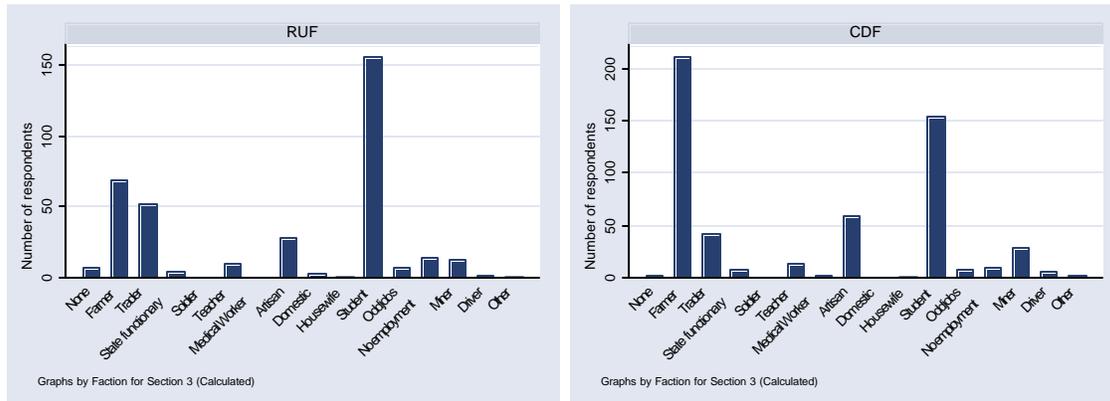
Drawing on a question employed in national household surveys in Sierra Leone, the questionnaire sought to gauge the socio-economic status of combatants at the time they joined the fighting. One rough measure of income is the material of which the walls of one's home were made. Figure 4 presents the breakdown of answers by faction. In the CDF and RUF, the bulk of combatants were living in mud homes at the time the war began. 20-25% of combatants in those factions came from homes with cement walls—indicative of a far higher standard of living. The SLA and AFRC, however, exhibit a flatter distribution of wealth with nearly equal percentages coming from the richest and poorest households.

Figure 4: Economic Status of Sample, by Faction



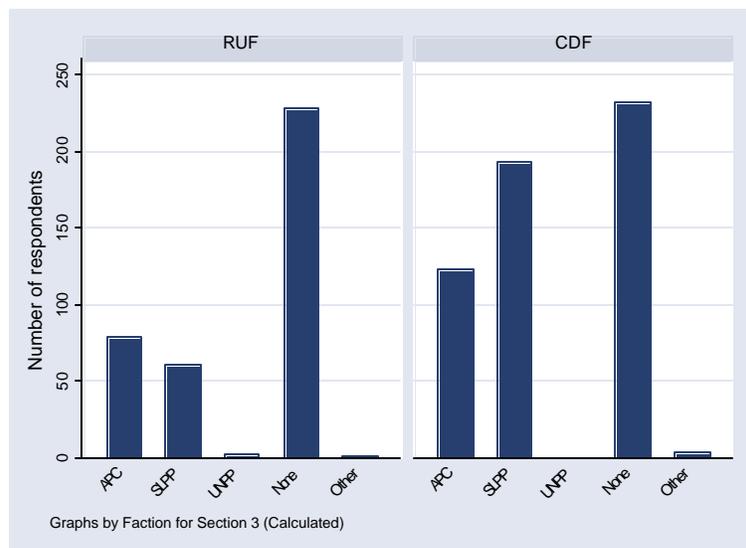
The survey also assessed the occupational status of ex-combatants before they joined a faction. Overall, 35% of fighters were in school before participating. 27% were farmers. Here, there are some clear differences across the two major factions. 42% of RUF combatants described themselves as students—this fits with the younger age profile of RUF fighters. Close to 40% of CDF combatants, on the other hand, were farmers.

Figure 5: Occupational Status, by Faction



Finally, the survey looked at pre-war political allegiances in an effort to uncover the fault lines that may have shaped participation in the various factions.

Figure 6: Party Affiliation of Respondents, by Faction



It is striking that the majority of fighters described themselves as having *no* political affiliation before the war. The percentage of disengaged people is slightly higher in the RUF, although this may be nothing more than a reflection of a younger age profile. But the patterns of disengagement are similar and high across groups. Unsurprisingly, support for the SLPP is higher in the CDF than in other factions; however this difference in support is not dramatic, and a high level of SLPP support is also found among members of the RUF.

II.2 Key Patterns

A number of patterns emerge from data on the demographic profile of combatants—patterns that may be important in understanding how the factions organized and how they experienced the demobilization process.

First, the vast majority of combatants were uneducated and poor. Most were students or farmers before the war began. Only a small number came from wealthier backgrounds and had higher levels of education. This socio-economic profile undoubtedly shaped what the combatants demanded from their factions and from the international community as part of the DDR process.

Second, the majority of combatants were not engaged in politics before the war began. This result might follow from the age profile of the fighters. It also might be reflective of a pattern of disengagement among youth in the country—one that may have fed the conflict, and could continue to create risks for political stability in Sierra Leone in the future.

III Dynamics of the Factions

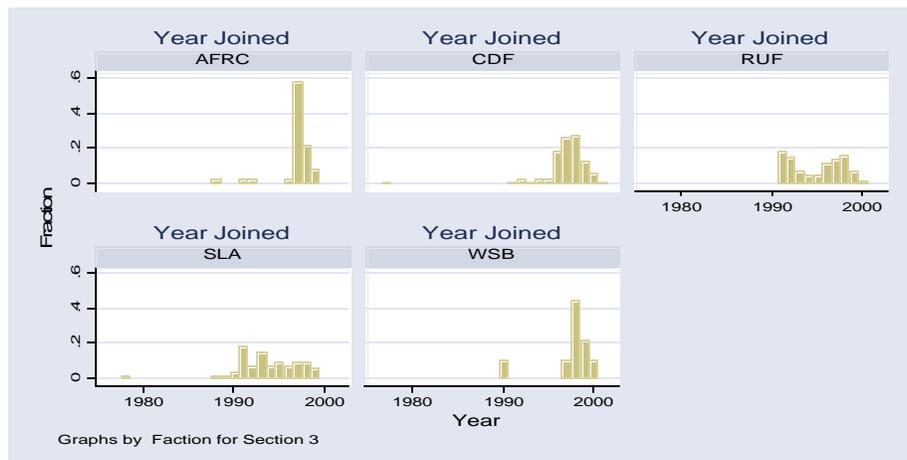
This section presents data on the internal dynamics of the warring factions. It begins with basic information about the temporal and geographic origins of each faction's membership. It then provides data on the social origins of the membership, the mechanisms of recruitment, the incentives offered to potential participants, and the strategies factions used to maintain their membership.

While the previous section documented the demographic similarities of the CDF and RUF, this section highlights fundamental differences between the two main warring factions in their recruitment patterns and incentive structures. In particular, respondents from the main groups differed in their answers about why they participated, how they were recruited, what networks existed within the group, and what expectations they held about the rewards they would receive for participation.

III.1 The Basics

Figure 7 presents data on the temporal origins of the warring parties. This data is generally reflective of the dynamics of the conflict over time.

Figure 7: Year of Recruitment to Faction



The SLA exhibits the flattest recruitment profile. With the exception of some bumps in the early 1990s, to respond to the growing insurgency, its participants were recruited consistently throughout the decade of conflict. The RUF recruited the majority of its fighters in the first years of the conflict in 1991/92 and then again in 1996/97/98. It is unsurprising that the bulk of CDF recruits joined in the late 1990s, as the militias were mobilized to counter the RUF's continued advance.

Recall that Table 1 described the regional origins of the factions. More than 60% of RUF combatants hailed originally from the East. Close to one-half of CDF combatants also came from the East. Of course, the CDF recruited larger numbers from the North and South as well. Fighters from the Western area tended to participate in the AFRC, SLA, or the WSB.

Despite these trends, there are members in all factions from all regions. This is important for statistical analysis, allowing an estimate of the effect of region independent of any impact of faction membership.

III.2 Social and Political Origins of the Factions

A number of theories have been articulated about the causes of the war in Sierra Leone. Some suggest that the war reflected a disengaged, discontented population of youth, many with little hope for the future. Others argue that the state infrastructure had basically collapsed, so that many in the country saw little benefit in preserving the status quo. Still others believe the war had its origins in the desire of an excluded class to reap the benefits of the diamond trade—resources that had been hoarded by the government and a small elite.

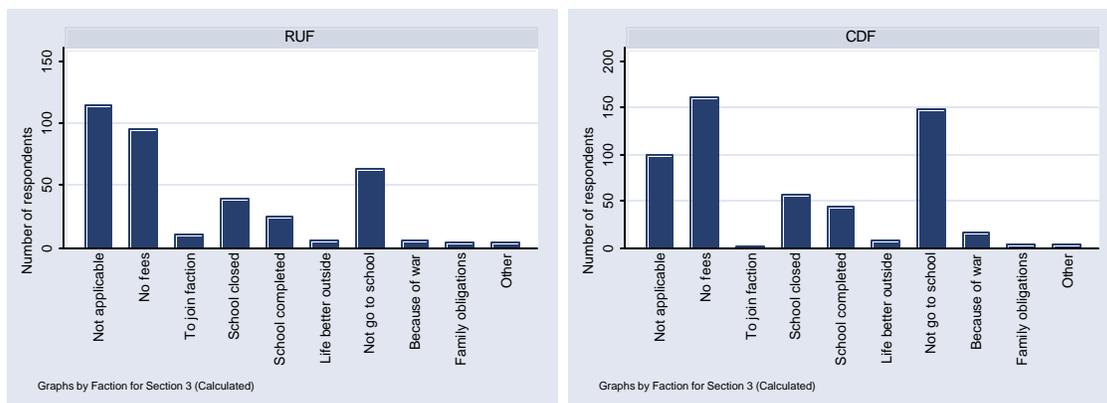
The data gathered as part of the survey offer some new perspectives on the social origins of the warring factions. Overall, the data support the view that the fighters in the conflict were largely underprivileged individuals who had been failed by the Sierra Leonean state.

Over one-quarter of fighters came from households in which the father had passed away before the war; fully one third had lost at least one parent by the time the war started; and almost 10% had lost both parents at the start of the fighting. Controlling for age, lower ranked combatants were especially likely to be drawn from cohorts that had lost their mothers before the conflict started. These patterns are consistent across the five factions and provide support for the notion that fighters in these factions were “loose molecules.”

Moreover, nearly 60% had been displaced from their homes before they joined a faction. These figures are much higher for the CDF—where more than three-quarters of the combatants had been forced from their homes *before* they decided to join. Particularly for the CDF, the uprooting of their lives caused by the war was an important part of their story of participation.

Figure **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.8** shows that the breakdown of the state—as represented by the extent to which individuals had access to education—may be critical to understanding the roots of the conflict.

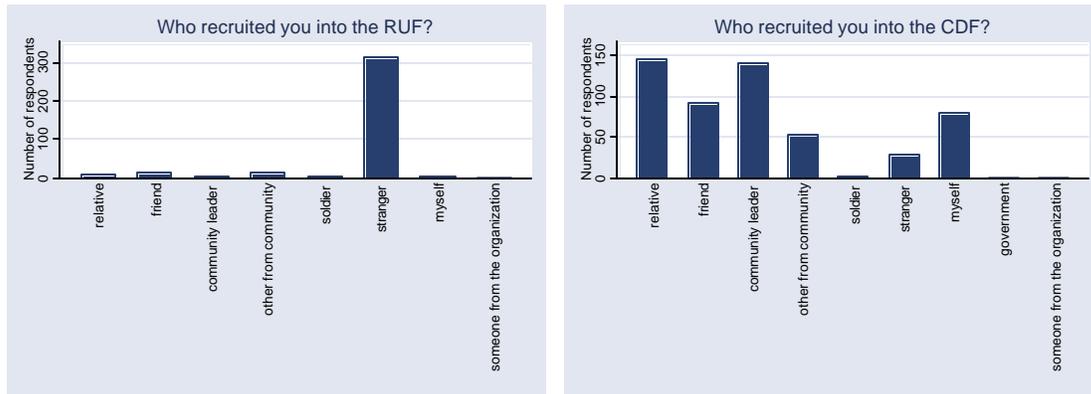
Figure 8: Reasons Why Combatants Left School, by Faction



Close to 80% of fighters had left school *before* joining a faction. Many never went to school in the first place; others left for a lack of fees or because the schools had closed. Again, the less educated people made their way into the lower ranks of the factions.

Yet, despite some common themes of displacement and state breakdown, the path into a faction varied in important ways across groups. When asked to identify the individual(s) who introduced them to the faction, pictures of very different recruitment patterns emerge.

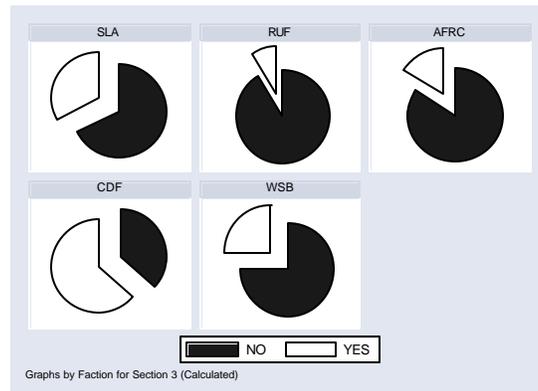
Figure 9: Who Recruited Combatants into the Factions



Strangers were responsible for recruiting 85% of RUF combatants. This pattern remains consistent over the entire time period of the conflict. There is little evidence that different recruitment patterns were at work in the early stages of the conflict for the RUF. In the CDF, on the other hand, 77% of respondents reported being recruited by a friend, relative, or community leader. 15% joined of their own accord. The AFRC and SLA also exhibit a recruitment profile more like the CDF than the RUF, with most recruited through relatives and friends.

Moreover, new members of the CDF typically joined units in which they had family members, friends, or members of their communities. New RUF recruits typically knew nobody in their factions (see Figure 10).

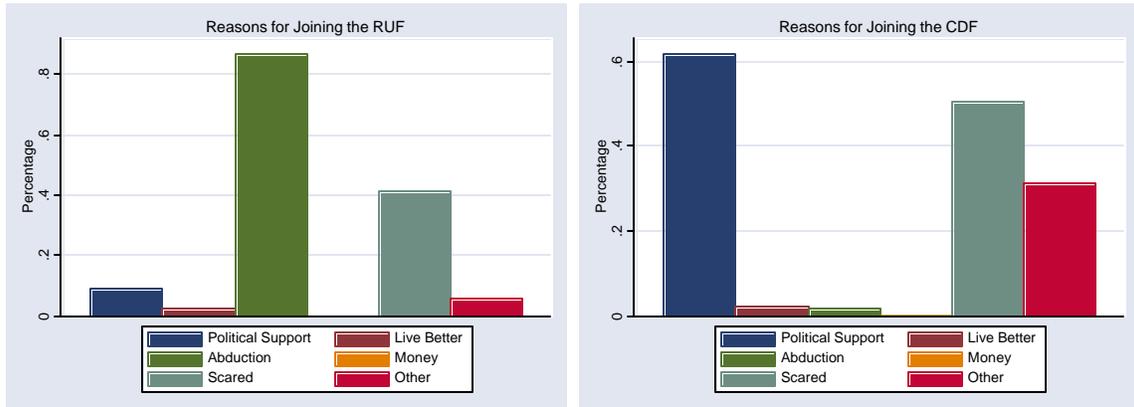
Figure 10: Did combatants have family members in the faction before they joined?



Differential patterns of entry are reflected in how individuals described their motivations for participation. These varied considerably over the sample of respondents, from those that joined to reduce their personal risks (“I joined the CDF because I wanted to protect my body from bullets”), to those looking to take revenge or looking for new experiences (“[I joined] Because I was being humiliated by Sierra Leone soldiers”, “I was idle and the group was looking for village people”) to those that sympathized with the politics of the factions (“I was interested in the ideologies they preached”).

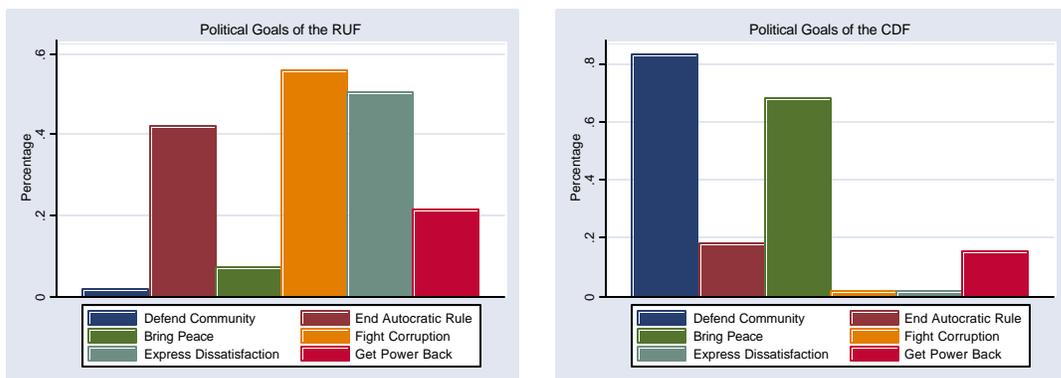
These differences are large across factions. 87% of RUF combatants reported being abducted into the faction and only 9% suggest that they joined because they supported the group’s political goals. In the CDF, on the other hand, 62% of combatants reported joining because they supported the group’s political goals. Many participated because they were scared of what would happen if they did not join or to take revenge on the RUF. Only 2% suggested they were forcibly recruited, however.

Figure 11: Reasons for Joining the RUF and CDF



The survey also asked respondents to describe the main political goals of the faction in which they participated. Again, there are striking differences across the two main factions.

Figure 12: Political Goals of the RUF and CDF



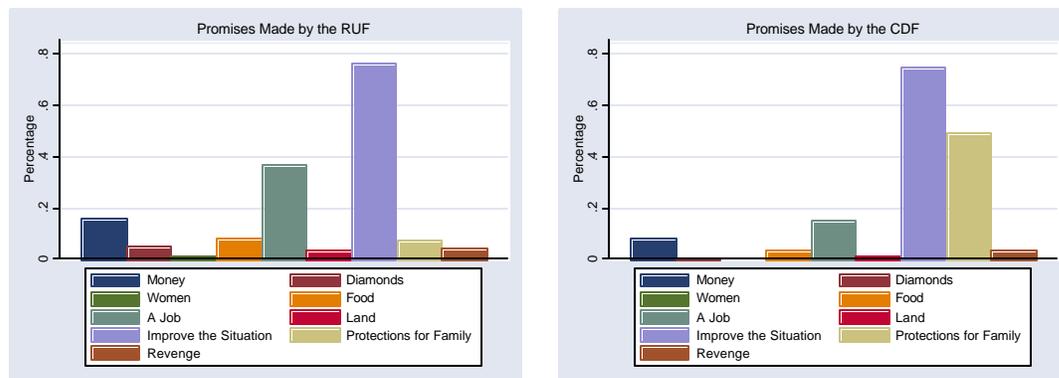
Combatants from the RUF saw themselves fighting corruption, expressing dissatisfaction with the government, and seeking an end to autocratic rule. CDF fighters, on the other hand, reported fighting to defend their communities and to bring peace to Sierra Leone.

III.3 Incentives to Join, Incentives to Stay

The focus of the international community on conflict diamonds and their role in fueling the war in Sierra Leone helped to draw attention to another set of motivations—material motivations—that may have been driving participation in the conflict.

The survey teams asked ex-combatants about the incentives various factions offered to convince them to participate in the conflict. Figure 13 provides data on these incentives for the RUF and CDF.

Figure 13: Incentives for Participation in Factions



Combatants in both groups were promised a way of improving the situation in Sierra Leone. Many respondents saw their factions as engaged in a political project, whether they volunteered or joined by force. Yet, individuals in both factions were offered more concrete incentives as well. For the RUF, jobs, money, and food topped the list of promised benefits. For many RUF members, the prospects of future educational opportunities—in some cases scholarships abroad—were prominent enticements. Indeed, even though the survey did not list education as one of the possible responses to this question, 10% of respondents—including 17% of RUF respondents—indicated that promises of education was a prominent incentive.

For individuals in the CDF, protections for their families, jobs, and money were offered on a consistent basis. Perhaps surprising, given the amount of attention it has received internationally, diamonds did not figure as an important incentive for participation at the individual-level. Instead, more mundane goods such as bicycles, zinc, or other building supplies were promised to recruits. Of course, this does not mean that the RUF played no role in the diamond trade. It merely suggests that respondents were not offered the promise of diamonds as an incentive to join the faction.

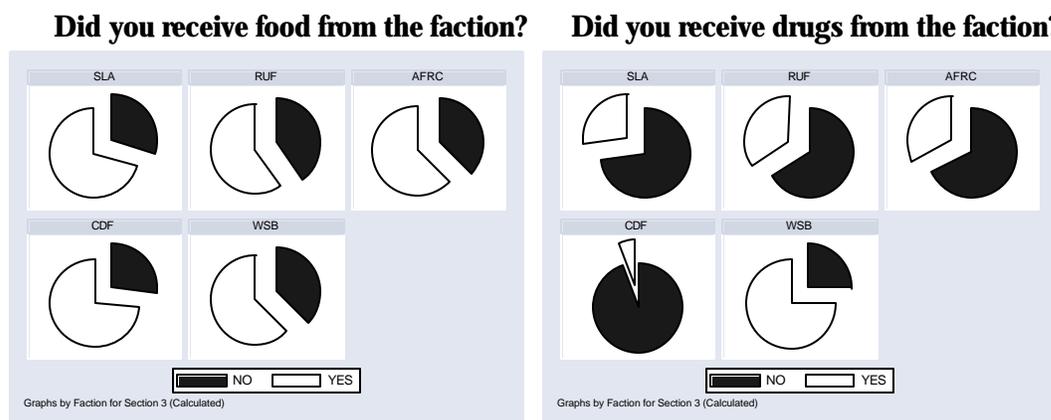
While promises may have been influential in shaping the decisions of a potential recruit, what combatants actually received was far more important in enabling the factions to

maintain their membership over time. The survey asked respondents to describe the benefits they received for participating in the faction.

Incentive structures again differ across factions. While diamonds were not a prominent incentive offered or received by combatants in any of the five factions, access to women (or men) for marriage and sex was undoubtedly a critical benefit of participation for some. For the RUF, close to a quarter of respondents admitted receiving wives/husbands after military operations. Smaller, but significant numbers of combatants in the AFRC and SLA also said they had been able to choose wives (or husbands) after attacks on villages.

While many promises made were never met, combatants did report receiving basic necessities, such as food, and desired items, such as illegal drugs from their factions (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Incentives to Remain in the Faction



Food was a prominent incentive across all five factions. Drugs were much more important in the AFRC, RUF, SLA, and the WSB. In the RUF, more than 30% of combatants said they received drugs on a regular basis. CDF combatants overwhelmingly reported not receiving drugs from their faction.

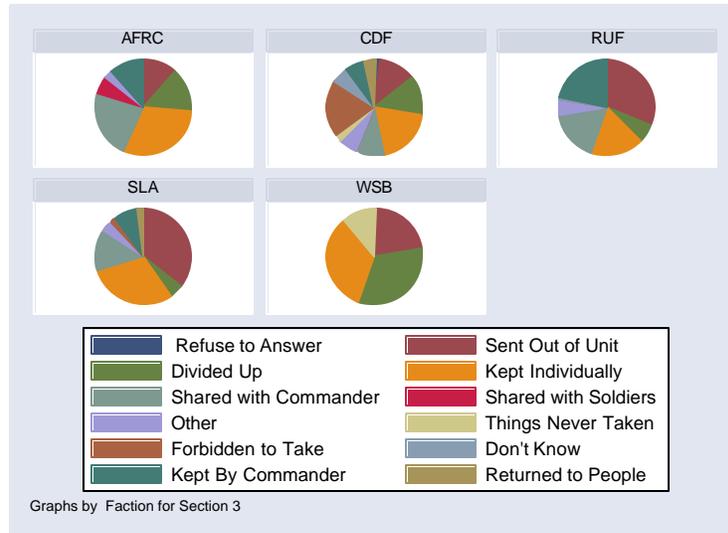
The basic data suggest that material incentives played some role in eliciting and sustaining participation. The material incentives received by combatants, however, tended to be of lesser value than what one might have expected from discussions about conflict diamonds and the like.

This does not imply however that these resources played no role in the political economy of the conflict. Figure 15 provides evidence of the dynamics of the internal faction economies. This evidence indicates that valuable resources (e.g. money or diamonds), when captured, went to the top of the chain of command.

Overall, 50% of respondents said that valuable goods were sent out of the unit or kept by the commander. RUF combatants reported in larger numbers (over 70%) that valuable goods were shared with the commander, kept by the commander, or sent out of the unit. Close to a quarter of CDF combatants explained that they were forbidden from taking any

valuable goods, although those that admitted taking things said that the goods were divided up and kept individually.

Figure 15: Approaches to Handling Valuable Goods, by Faction



A very different picture emerges with respect to non-valuable goods (food, clothing, etc.). Close to 70% of combatants said such goods were kept individually or divided up amongst the unit. This pattern is consistent across factions, including the CDF.

III.4 Key Patterns

While the socio-economic profile of the combatant population is similar across factions, the internal dynamics of these groups differ in important ways. Paying attention to the unique characteristics of the armed groups may be important in understanding differential patterns of success in post-conflict reintegration.

Two major patterns stand out from this analysis.

First, groups vary in the extent to which existing social networks helped to define the organization. The RUF was a group of strangers, largely recruited by force. The CDF, on the other hand, originated from tight networks of families, friends, and communities.

Second, the motivations and beliefs expressed by the combatants—how they understand their own participation—varied in important ways across factions. In all cases, both political and material motivations mattered. RUF combatants fought to express dissatisfaction, to root out corruption, and to bring down the existing regime. CDF fighters joined up to defend their communities, in response to the displacement and violence wrought by the war.

But political motivations notwithstanding, the role of material incentives cannot be minimized. Material incentives were particularly important in motivating participation within the RUF. RUF combatants were promised jobs, money, and women; during the war, they

received women, drugs, and sometimes more valuable goods. CDF combatants, on the other hand, were expressly forbidden from taking valuable goods. The CDF helped to meet their basic needs, but few expected much in the way of material benefits from their participation in the faction.

Evaluating the relative importance of political and material motivations is clearly a difficult task. Moreover, within the class of material motivations, it is difficult to distinguish between desires for lucrative assets and the desires of combatants to have their basic needs satisfied. Some preliminary evidence, however, can be gleaned from data on combatants' knowledge of and attitudes toward the peace negotiations that aimed to conclude the war.

The survey asked respondents about their perspectives on the Lomé Accords (see Table 4 below). Strikingly, the survey results suggest that combatants' knowledge of the most significant political agreement in the course of the conflict was largely limited to those aspects that would have a direct material effect on their well being. Combatants did not consider the substantial political gains of the RUF to be important aspects of the accords; few were aware, for example, that Foday Sankoh won the Vice Presidency. Similarly, few were conscious of the implications of Lomé for the diamond sector, or, in principle, of the RUF's role in reconstruction and development. Even within the RUF, only 12% knew that Sankoh was to be offered control of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction, and Development as part of the accords.

Instead, the combatants were aware of three elements, all of which affected them directly but did not relate to the war economy: the cessation of hostilities, efforts to provide jobs for ex-combatants and amnesty for fighters. A similar pattern emerges when combatants were asked to rank different types of hypothetical peace agreements. Overwhelmingly, the fighters preferred deals in which their group sacrificed control over natural resources for a peace that could be achieved immediately, to accords in which their group won control over natural resources but had to endure an extra year's worth of fighting.

Table 4: Lomé Accords: Who Knew About What?

	Ceasefire	Jobs	Amnesty	Sankoh for Vice Presidency	Sankoh Control over Mines
RUF	56%	49%	35%	16%	12%
CDF	59%	37%	21%	10%	9%
SLA	50%	43%	43%	22%	19%
WSB	33%	89%	56%	33%	33%
AFRC	51%	54%	43%	16%	16%
Total	57%	43%	28%	13%	11%

These results point to a consistent pattern. Certainly, by the late stages of the war, political motivations took a back seat. But the potential wealth that could be gained from lucrative natural resource industries in Sierra Leone was not a core concern for most fighters. Their concerns were typically more mundane, focused on ensuring personal security and meeting basic needs.

IV Perspectives on the DDR Program

The survey also sought to assess how ex-combatants experienced the DDR programs implemented by the Government of Sierra Leone in partnership with the United Nations. In particular, survey teams asked a series of questions developed by evaluation teams working for NCDDR in their preliminary assessment of reintegration completed in September-October 2002. A similar set of questions was also asked as part of the Tracer study completed in December 2003. This survey offers complementary results to previous studies—based on a nationally representative sample and using richer information on combatants' experiences during the course of the conflict. Moreover, survey results gathered on participation in DDR training programs can be usefully compared to actual participation numbers recorded by NCDDR.

This section highlights three significant findings. First, ex-combatants generally express high levels of satisfaction with the DDR programs in which they participated. Since the surveys were structured interviews, respondents were limited in the set of responses they could give. When provided with a set of potential responses, most indicated their positive views of the program *overall*.

Second, and in contrast to their overall evaluation, the teams found that multiple complaints about specific aspects of DDR, centering on two issues: the timing of delivery of allowances and toolboxes and the lack of support for finding or creating jobs.

Third, the results suggest that, although there was variation in the level of satisfaction with the DDR process, there was no evidence that levels of dissatisfaction were significantly higher across factions, regional, political, or gender groups. This is a powerful finding, in part because the factions differ from one another in such important ways. It is also a testimony to the fact that, even if delivery of DDR benefits was not always efficient, it did not appear to have been politically manipulated in any way.

A key caveat is in order. When the survey was completed in June-August 2003, 57% of respondents were *still* in training. Consequently, the results presented here provide an evaluation of what was a “work-in-progress.” Moreover, the findings on the transition from DDR to employment emerge from a much smaller sample of respondents.

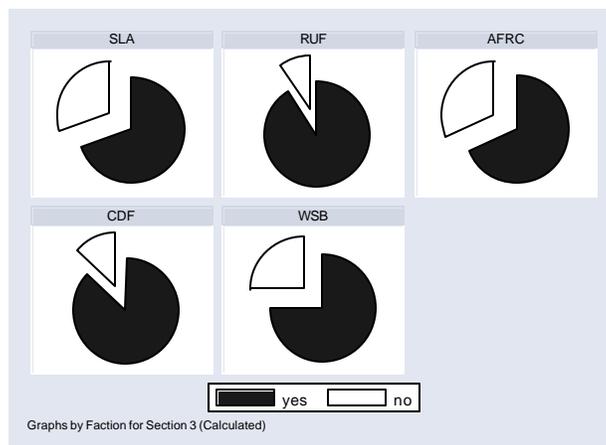
IV.1 Participation Rates

In this sample, 87% of respondents entered the DDR process. What this suggests is that the effort of the survey teams to reach beyond DDR programs in identifying ex-combatants was successful. Data on the 13% that did not participate in the DDR provide a useful comparison group when looking at issues of post-conflict reintegration.

Importantly, participation rates were not substantially different across the two main factions. In both cases, close to 90% of respondents entered the DDR program. Rates of non-participation were much higher in the AFRC and SLA, in particular.

In the course of the analysis, statistical tests were undertaken to identify the factors—controlling for other influences, such as ethnic group and faction—which made it more or less likely that individuals entered the DDR program.

Figure 16: DDR Participation Rates, by Faction



Large and statistically significant differences were found in the regions of origin of individuals who joined the DDR program. Combatants from the South were least likely to join the DDR; the combatants most likely to join were from the East and the North.

Moreover, the statistical tests show that Muslims were more likely to join; Temnes were more likely to participate, unmarried people were less likely to join, and lower ranked combatants were less likely to join.

The majority of ex-combatants demobilized by turning in a weapon (57%). Overall, only 22% demobilized with their unit. Significantly more ex-combatants demobilized by turning in other’s weapons in the RUF, AFRC, and SLA than in the other groups.

For those respondents that did not enter the DDR program, a number of different reasons were given. Nearly three-quarters of the CDF combatants that did not enter DDR lacked a gun. In the RUF, less than 50% faced that same problem. Among SLA respondents that did not enter DDR, more than 40% were reinstated into the army.

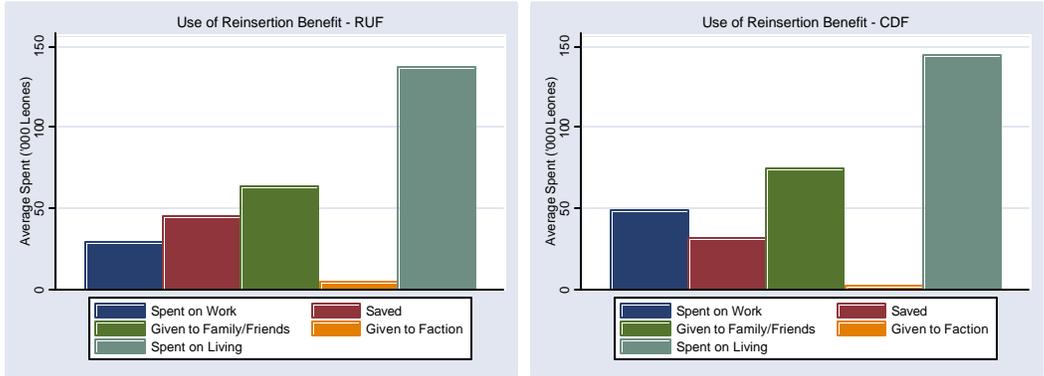
IV.2 Reinsertion Benefits

Of those who entered DDR, 93% received a cash reinsertion benefit. The non-recipients were fairly equally spread across the combatant groups, suggesting that the DDR programs did not discriminate in practice.

Because cash reinsertion benefits have become so fundamental to peace processes and DDR programs, the survey set out to evaluate how ex-combatants used their cash benefits. Overall, across factions, the reinsertion benefit was spent mostly on living expenses and family needs. On average, 144,000 Le were spent on living expenses and 71,000 Le given to family. By contrast, ex-combatants saved less than 40,000 Le to help meet future needs.

Figure 17 compares how the reinsertion benefit was used across the two major factions. The data suggest that living costs were the most important expense for members of both factions. CDF combatants tended to spend more on work-related activities, while RUF combatants exhibited a higher savings rate. Interestingly, few combatants from either group said that they gave a portion of their reinsertion benefit to their faction.

Figure 17: Use of the Reinsertion Benefit by RUF and CDF combatants

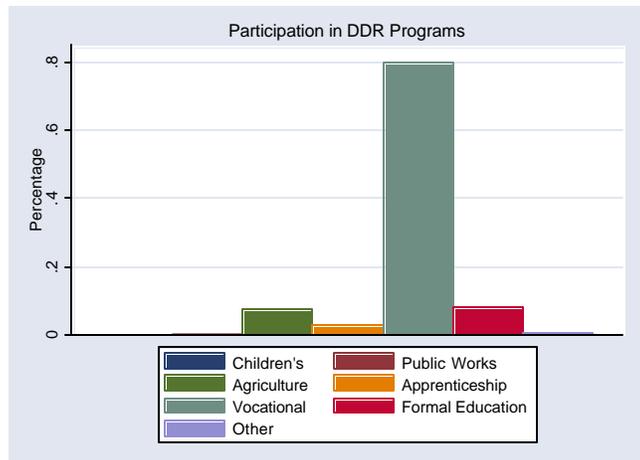


IV.3 Training Programs

About one-quarter of those that entered DDR did *not* participate in a training program. Rates of non-participation were slightly higher in the SLA, and lower in the AFRC, but in general were fairly equally distributed across factions. Again there were no apparent regional differences in participation rates, although this may reflect a bias due to the difficulty of accessing certain regions of the country. It was far more difficult to do interviews in inaccessible areas, although teams tried valiantly. Inaccessible areas, particularly in the East, were also less likely to have active DDR programs.

The vast majority (over 80%) of ex-combatants participated in vocational or skills training programs.

Figure 18: Type of DDR Training Program in which Sample Participated



The remainder took part in agriculture (7%), apprenticeships (3%), and formal education (9%). Those participating in formal education demobilized largely in the West and the South. Few formal education participants were reported in the East and North. Moreover, agriculture was a more important training program in the South than in other regions.

A number of questions examined the operations of the training programs in more detail. Training programs averaged seven months in duration. 94% of respondents expected to receive a toolkit; 71% had not yet received one at the time of the survey, although many were still in training. Ex-combatants reported that subsistence payments were rarely delivered on time. The average delay was two months.

At the time the survey was enumerated, close to 40% of the respondents had completed their training—providing a useful sample for looking at post-DDR prospects. CDF fighters were most likely to still be in training at the time of the survey.

IV.4 Ex-Combatant Evaluations

“Thank God for DDR training—but we need our toolbox.”

The survey instrument provided ex-combatants with an opportunity to evaluate the training programs. Respondents were able to make general statements about the DDR program as part of an open question and also to respond to a set of structured questions included in the survey.

Many respondents answered the open-ended question, and many of these detailed negative experiences with the DDR process including complaints of incompetence, un-kept promises, inefficiency and delays in the provision of toolkits and allowances. In some instances, there were allegations of corruption.

Some respondents had general, fundamental complaints:

“I’m not happy with DDR because they lied to us. Promised to have us enrolled in schools, I have not seen any such. We need education and jobs. DDR has not registered a good number of us. They promised us educational materials but none has been delivered.”

“Treatment by the [DDR representative] employed to give us training in animal husbandry is not good. No benefit and allowance from this man. We know DDR might have given him the money, but he just disappeared.”

And a number related these problems to future conflict risks. One combatant from Senge argued that:

“DDR should keep to their promise if they don't want more problems in the country. The bad thing is, if there is a reoccurrence of war, you will find it very difficult to disarm the combatants because they will think that they are lying to them the second time.”

Many had highly specific complaints and made requests directly to NCDDR:

“Before disarming DDR promised to give us materials to help build our houses we have not seen that up till now.”

“DDR promised us free choice of areas of training but we are now being forced to accept already chosen areas.”

“DDR to please speed up the skill training in Kpeje Bongre chiefdom”

“DDR to start our own skill training in this chiefdom (Mandu chiefdom Kailahun)”

“DDR to help us get the zinc they promise”

In many instances, these complaints were in fact requests for *more* DDR—numerous respondents complained that many in their communities were left out of DDR and needed the skills training and support that DDR offered. Others requested that the length of the DDR programs be extended.

The results suggest that the most common complaints typically fell into two categories. First, there were significant and unpredictable delays in the delivery of allowances and toolboxes. Second, too little support was given for finding or creating jobs. Regarding the delivery of allowances, one ex-combatant from Kpeje West complained “All I want is to remind the DDR people for our allowances. This is the seventh month now we have been attending this program and nothing has been given to us and imagine we come to this place from 7:45 to 4:30 without anything in our hands.”

Because of a shortage of employment opportunities, many complained of idleness after the completion of training, “The DDR programme has ended and we have completed the training without receiving tools to do the work, this making me idle. All we are asking now is for job facilities or empowerment by giving one my tools so that I can work and receive income.”

While the open-ended responses record a number of sustained and evocative criticisms of the DDR process, the structured questions provide a clearer sense of overall trends within and between factions. They also paint a very different and more positive picture. For each structured question, respondents were read a number of statements and they were asked whether they agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion. This approach pushed respondents to make an overall judgment about their experience in the DDR program.

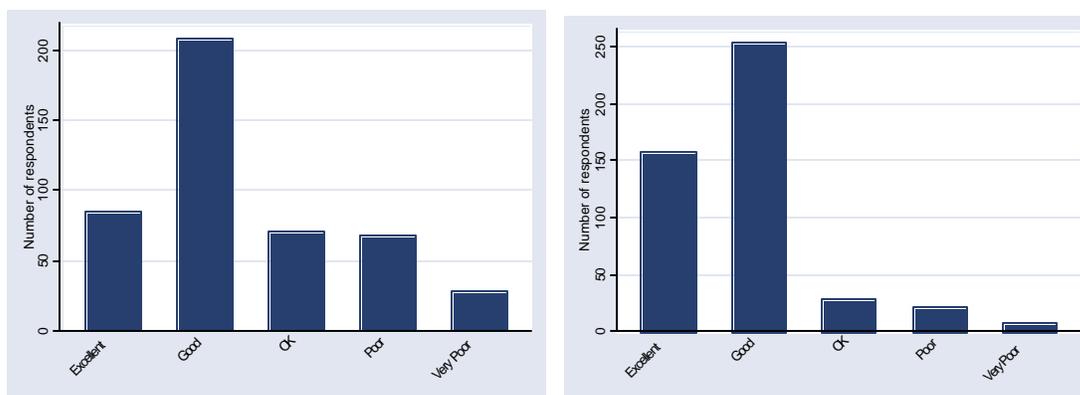
Table 5 presents some basic results on how combatants evaluated the training programs.

Table 5: Ex-Combatant Perspectives on Training

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	No. of Respondents
The training I received has prepared me well for my work.	75.8	19.2	5.0	318
The skills I learned are needed by employers in this region.	91.5	4.7	3.8	339
I am better socially because of the training I received.	87.1	7.1	5.9	340
The training I received was responsible for the job I have.	42.9	51.6	5.5	219

Overall, ex-combatants expressed positive opinions about the training. More than three-quarters agreed that training has prepared them well for their work. Over 90% believe the skills they were taught are needed by employers in the region. 87% think they are better off socially because of the training they received. Less positive views were expressed only with respect to the issue of post-training employment. Less than half of respondents believe the training programs were responsible for the employment they now have. Again, there were no significant differences in these ratings by faction.

Figure 19: Overall Ratings by Respondents of DDR Process



Overall perspectives were similarly positive. 63% of respondents rated their training course as excellent or good. 87% rated the quality of the trainers as excellent or good. Respondents shared these positive assessments across factions and in every region that was surveyed.

Statistical tests were undertaken on a composite index of satisfaction to identify the factors, controlling for other influences, which impact a combatant's happiness with the DDR programs. Importantly, there was *no* evidence of systematic differences across groups in their satisfaction with DDR, nor any significant religious, regional, age, political party or gender variation. The evidence seems to suggest that DDR programs did not systematically

favor different groups and that variation in satisfaction depended on idiosyncratic features of the participants, or perhaps the specific programs in which they took part. While there was some dissatisfaction with DDR nationally, we find that this dissatisfaction is not systematically related to politically relevant groupings.

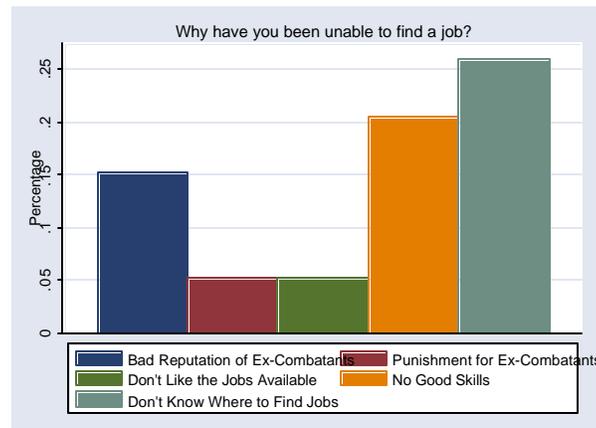
IV.5 Post-DDR Employment

A critical challenge for DDR programs is the transition from DDR training to sustainable employment. Approximately 40% of the sample had completed training, and on average, these respondents had been out of training for six months. This group provides at least some preliminary evidence on the prospects for post-DDR employment.

42% of those that had completed training have found jobs since finishing. Of those that found work, 72% did so in the first three months after training. And about half of those with jobs are working for someone else—in a more formal employment arrangement. Importantly, 74% believe that their current job is directly related to the skills they received in training.

For those that have been unable to find a job, multiple reasons are offered.

Figure 20: Reasons for Lack of Employment



One-quarter of respondents say they have not found work because they do not know where to look. 20% believe it is because they don't have the right skills. 15% think it is because ex-combatants have a bad reputation with employers.

Importantly, in the demographic section of the survey, only 25% actually report that they have no employment. Many of those indicating that they do not have a job in answering questions about DDR are actually farmers and artisans—perhaps underemployed, rather than unemployed. Regardless of their level of employment currently, however, over 90% believe that the skills they learned in the DDR training programs will be useful in the future.

IV.6 Gender Differences

A special concern of the DDR programs was dealing with women ex-combatants. As already discussed, the actual numbers of female fighters was likely underestimated. In an effort to establish whether there have been important differences in women's experiences of the post-conflict period, the survey strategy employed in this study sought to identify a large number of women ex-combatants—many of whom might have been left out of the DDR programs.

In short, the results suggest that there are very small differences in women's experiences of DDR as compared to men. Women entered programs at a slightly higher rate (in this sample), although in the population at large, the best guess is that the total number of women ex-combatants is understated. This is because, to a large degree, women did not self-identify as ex-combatants and/or they lacked a gun in order to be registered into DDR programs. In this sample, women were more likely than men to enter with someone else's gun, rather than their own, lending support to this guess about the population at large.

Conditional on their entry in DDR, women exhibited slightly higher participation rates in training than men, and were more likely to have completed training at the time of enumeration. Importantly, however, women were less likely to have found a job after training—perhaps reflective of the employment environment and expectations about women's roles.

These results tell only part of the story when it comes to women's experiences of DDR. Enumerators in the field learned a great deal about the trauma involved in being abducted as a sex slave to service male commanders in many of the fighting factions. It is believed that large numbers of these women were not able to participate in the DDR programs. When they did, they were often in a position of needing to disarm and demobilize with the unit into which they had been abducted. Further, the shortage of psychological services in the post-war period has undoubtedly had an impact on the post-conflict experience of these women. These perspectives may not be captured in the aggregate results presented here, but they are nevertheless important for understanding the successes and failures of the DDR program.

IV.7 Key Patterns

DDR programs received very positive reviews from ex-combatants in general. Interestingly, experiences and perspectives do not differ appreciably across factions or regions, despite the fundamental differences discussed previously in the make-up of the warring groups. These group differences do not appear to have impacted participation rates or the participants' evaluations of the DDR process. A more fundamental question remains: have some groups more easily reintegrated than others? That will be addressed in the next section.

It is also important to keep in mind that the survey was enumerated too early to judge the success of efforts to transition from training to employment, although the early signs are good. Many of those without jobs are actually under-employed, as they have returned to their traditional work as farmers or artisans. Most still believe, however, that the training

they received is demanded by employers in the region, and is likely to be useful to them in the future.

Looking forward, when asked what could be improved about the DDR program, respondents exhibited a clear set of priorities: more support for finding jobs after training (54%), longer periods of training (47%), support to start small businesses (30%), and larger allowances (15%).

V Post-Conflict Reintegration

Disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating ex-combatants is a critical part of a broader strategy of post-conflict reconstruction—a strategy that aims to lay the foundation for peaceful coexistence and to reduce the risk of renewed conflict. Often, ex-combatants are a key cause for concern in post-conflict environments. If they are not successfully reintegrated into the civilian community, former fighters have the military know-how, the experience, the tools, and often the will to turn again to violent means of achieving change. Reintegration is perhaps the toughest part of a DDR effort.

This study sought to assess the risks of renewed violence in Sierra Leone by examining the post-conflict reintegration of ex-combatants. The big message is clear: ex-combatants are reintegrating into civilian society, although their strategies differ markedly across factions. Moreover, most ex-combatants reject violence as a strategy for achieving political change. They see that they can have impact in Sierra Leone's new democracy: by organizing peacefully, voting in elections, and holding officials accountable for results.

At the same time, ex-combatants have faith more in outsiders than in their own government. The experience with UNAMSIL has been a positive one, but ex-combatants see appeals to the international community and to NGOs as the best ways to hold their government accountable and to achieve positive results.

Perhaps most surprising is the finding that non-participants in DDR have reintegrated as successfully as participants. Making sense of this finding requires a more nuanced analysis—one that will be discussed in the conclusion to this section.

V.1 Reintegration into Communities

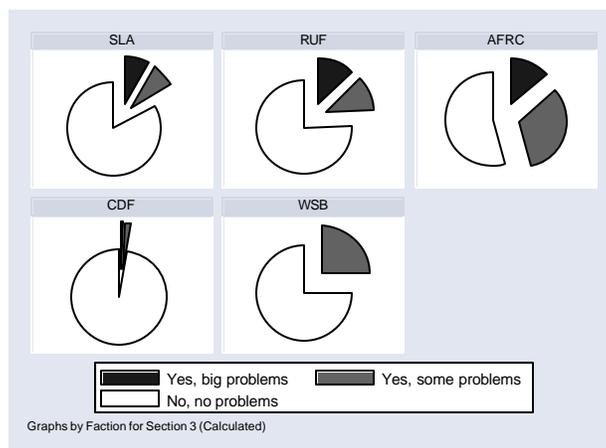
It is important to examine first, the choices combatants made about which communities they would live in after the conflict. Overall, 52% of ex-combatants returned to their home communities. But this average obscures important differences across factions. CDF combatants went home in much larger numbers. Close to 75% of CDF fighters returned to the communities they had lived in before the war began. The RUF exhibits a different pattern. Only 34% of RUF combatants returned home, with most instead choosing to live in new communities. The AFRC, SLA, and WSB were not unlike the RUF in this respect. Strikingly, abductees were on average less likely to go home to their own communities than individuals who claimed to join voluntarily, this pattern was particularly pronounced within the sample of SLA members interviewed.

This sorting—CDF fighters returning home, most others going elsewhere, volunteers returning home, abductees staying away—raises concerns about the degree to which ex-combatants were *accepted* by their families and communities in the post-conflict period. As one would expect, the results suggest a strong correlation between the decision to return home and the degree to which combatants believed they would be accepted by their families and neighbors.

Overall, when asked whether their families accepted them when they returned from fighting, over 90% of fighters encountered no problems in gaining acceptance. But there is evidence of systematic variation across the factions. RUF and AFRC combatants, in particular, experienced problems at a much higher rate. 16% of RUF fighters experienced “some” or “big” problems in gaining acceptance from their families. Abductees too, had greater difficulties with neighbors and families, even after controlling for the faction in which they fought. This might results from a strategy in which abductees were forced to commit violations against their own communities.

The experience was similar in gaining acceptance from the communities in which they chose to live. Figure 21 compares ex-combatants’ experiences with acceptance at the community level across factions.

Figure 21: Community Acceptance of Ex-Combatants, by Faction



Many respondents had problems reintegrating, and some expressed their challenges in specific detail. One respondent complained: “People cast all sorts of blame on me for being an ex-RUF. They say we destroyed lives and property. They provoke me. I am not happy about my life. People talk about me.”

However, the quantitative results suggest that a large majority of former fighters— 86%— had no problems when returning to their former communities or entering new ones. But as Figure 21 makes clear, some factions struggled more than others. In particular, combatants in the AFRC and RUF—many of who did not return home—encountered problems in their new communities.

Statistical methods enabled systematic tests of the factors that impeded reintegration at the end of the war, controlling for other influences. RUF combatants, and Temnes from all factions, faced the greatest problems with reintegration. CDF members, and Mendes from all factions, found it less difficult to reintegrate. There were also regional determinants in the multivariate analysis. Combatants from the East found it less difficult to reintegrate. Lower rank combatants had an *easier* time reintegrating, while higher rank commanders found it hardest to gain acceptance. Notably, combatants who had been abducted into the factions

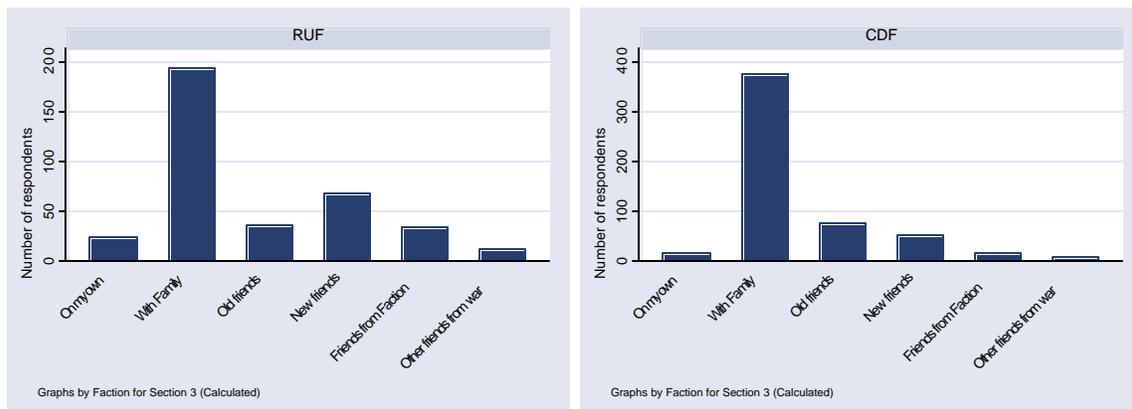
found it no easier to reintegrate than those that had joined voluntarily—even within the RUF. Finally, controlling for other factors, the difficulties that abductees had in gaining acceptance among their neighbors appears to have declined considerably between the end of the war and the enumeration of the survey. That is a particular note of good news.

The high rates of acceptance of CDF fighters should not come as a surprise given the tight social networks that gave rise to this group—networks rooted in the communities from which they came. The struggles of the RUF and the AFRC, both of which lacked solid community ties, are also not surprising. Yet, they represent a cause for concern moving forward.

An additional measure of reintegration comes from a question about with whom combatants choose to spend their free time in the post-war period.

As Figure 22 demonstrates, CDF fighters spend most of their time with family and with friends they made before the war (82% in total). RUF fighters, on the other hand, spend somewhat less time with their families, and have established networks with friends from their faction, others they met during the war, and people they have met in the post-war period. The same pattern is evident in the behavior of former AFRC fighters.

Figure 22: How Ex-Combatants Spend Their Free Time, by Faction



V.2 Post-War Political Perspectives

Are these different patterns of reintegration reflected in how ex-combatants think about the political situation in the country? One might imagine that CDF combatants, given that they have returned to welcoming communities, might be much more optimistic about the progress Sierra Leone has made since the end of the war.

Importantly, while members of different factions have found distinct ways of reintegrating, they tend to share a largely positive assessment of the progress made by the government in addressing fundamental economic and political challenges in the country.

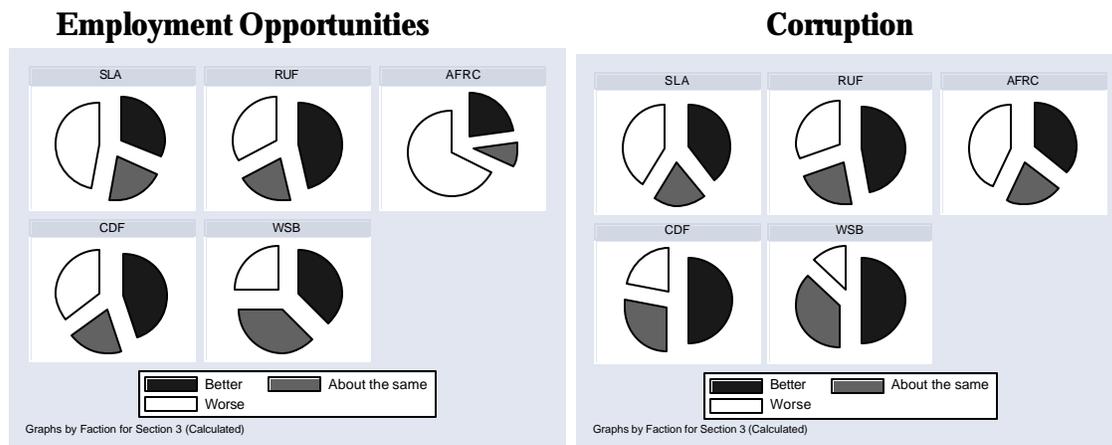
Ex-combatants are most upbeat about the successes of the government in meeting basic human needs. 83% of respondents believe that access to education is better now than it was before the war. 65% say that access to medical care has substantially improved. While RUF and AFRC ex-combatants exhibit slightly higher levels of discontent, the vast majority in both groups embraces this broader view of progress.

Similar results emerge with respect to improvements in the provision of law and order and popular participation in decision-making. 78% of respondents believe the country is better off in terms of safety and security. Three-quarters feel that they have a much more active role to play in the government’s decision-making. Again, while there are small differences between factions, the vast majority of combatants share these views.

On two fronts, however, the perspectives of ex-combatants are less upbeat. These two areas are critical, in part because they motivated so many to take up arms in the first place.

With respect to employment opportunities, more than 50% of respondents think things are about the same or worse than before the war. Given that so many were promised jobs as an incentive to fight, a failure to deliver on this issue has potentially important consequences in the longer term. As Figure 23 makes clear, this issue is of particular concern to AFRC combatants, but is broadly shared across the factions.

Figure 23: Ex-Combatants’ Perspectives On Employment and Corruption



A similar pattern is evident in how respondents thought about corruption. More than half believe things are about the same or worse than before the war. This view is more widely held among RUF, AFRC, and SLA combatants, but again, is shared even by CDF fighters. Tackling corruption, and the perception of corruption, remains a fundamentally important task.

Looking forward, ex-combatants have a clear set of ideas about how the government should prioritize its resources. Even though most think the government has made progress in rebuilding the educational infrastructure, education remains far and away the most important priority (48%). It is particularly important for *both* CDF and RUF ex-fighters. Employment appears as the second most prominent concern (23%), followed by corruption (11%).

Importantly, combatants across factions broadly accept this set of priorities, whether they have returned to their home communities or entered new ones in the post-war period.

V.3 Attitudes About Achieving Change in Sierra Leone

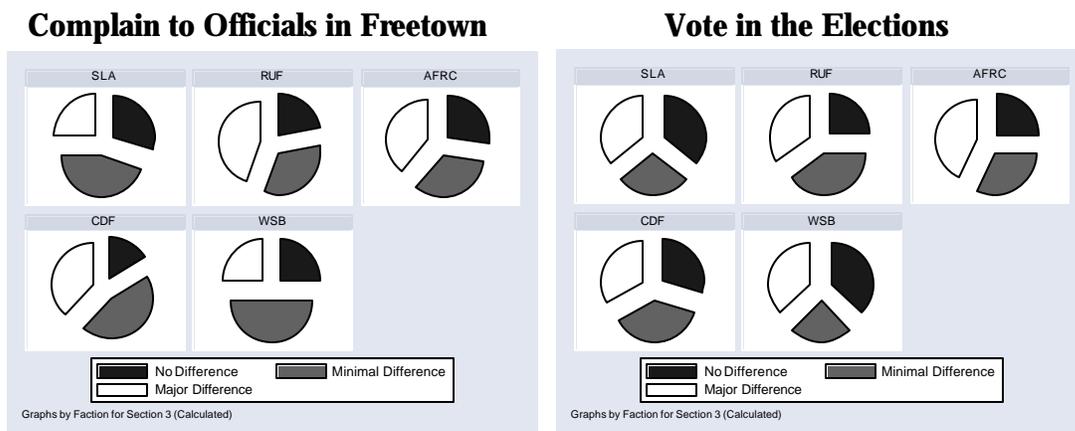
How do ex-combatants think about the channels for achieving political change? Although individuals entered the factions for different reasons, political motivations played a role for many. An important issue in the post-war period is how to develop alternative channels of influence for those who wish to be heard.

It is clear that ex-combatants are reengaging in politics. Over 90% are now active in supporting political parties. Many were disengaged before the war began—some because of their age, others, perhaps, because of disillusionment. And support for the SLPP is overwhelming (75% of the respondents). Interestingly, support for the SLPP crosses faction lines. While 87% of CDF fighters support the SLPP, 64% of RUF ex-combatants also support the party in government. Moreover, support for the RUF is slim at 6% overall and at only 16% of former RUF combatants.

As ex-combatants think about the avenues available to them in order to influence government policy, one thing is abundantly clear: their factions are no longer seen as important political actors. Nearly 80% of respondents believe that complaining to a faction leader would make *little or no* difference in helping to change government policy. 98% believe that returning to the bush to fight would make *no* difference at all in changing policy. Ties to the faction remain stronger for the CDF and the SLA than for other groups, but the vast majority sees their factions as organizations from the past.

Most ex-combatants believe they can effectively shape government policy through non-violent means. Figure 24 presents individuals' assessments of how likely it is that various strategies of influencing government might change policy.

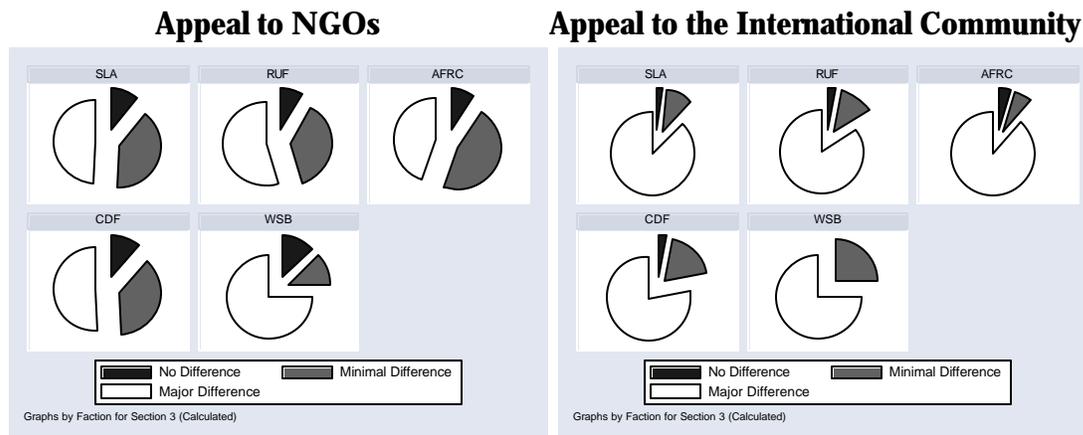
Figure 24: Respondents' Attitudes About How to Influence Government Policy I



More than 80% believe that it would make a difference in government policy if they complained to officials in Freetown. This positive assessment of the government’s responsiveness is largely shared across factions. Nearly three-quarters of respondents believe that voting in an election can help to change government policy—an indication of confidence in the democratic process. Importantly, all five factions see these channels as viable means of achieving real change.

One cause for concern comes from an examination of how respondents think about the role of international actors.

Figure 25: Respondents’ Attitudes About How to Influence Government Policy II



Ex-combatants believe quite seriously that the most effective means of changing government policy is through pressure from the outside. Internal accountability mechanisms are not seen as credible, when compared to the potential influence of NGOs and the international community more broadly. 52% of ex-combatants believe that appealing to local NGOs will make a *major* difference in government policy. 81% think that appealing to the international community will bring about a *major* change in government policy.

This faith in the international community is hardly misplaced, given the experience of people in Sierra Leone. The role of the British government and the United Nations in ending the war and bringing about a stable peace is undeniable. But mechanisms of internal accountability will have to become the primary means of achieving change if Sierra Leone is to avoid a return to war, as UNAMSIL withdraws and the international community turns its attention to other conflicts in neighboring Liberia, in Sudan, and outside of Africa.

V.4 Gender Differences

Just as women may have experienced DDR programs in a different way, it is important to examine more closely how female fighters reintegrated into the community. As with DDR, the experience of women is not significantly different than men on most important questions of reintegration.

Women were less likely to return to their home communities and faced more problems in gaining acceptance from their neighbors. But given the concentration of women respondents in the RUF, this may simply reflect the faction differences described earlier.

More broadly, women share the same political priorities as men—believing that the government should focus its attention on investments in education, first, and employment creation, second. Female ex-combatants also have rejected their factions in the post-war period, seeing non-violent approaches as the best avenues for influencing the political process in Sierra Leone.

V.5 The Impact of the DDR Program

It is apparent from the data that non-participants in DDR did not fare any worse in reintegration than those who disarmed and participated in DDR training programs. Non-participants were no less likely to gain acceptance from family and neighbors; to return to their home communities; to reject their factions as major political actors in the post-war period; or to embrace non-violent means of affecting political change. In fact there is evidence that among those that had a problem gaining acceptance from their communities, those that did not take part in DDR actually resolved these problems more quickly than those that did.

Is this evidence that DDR programs do not play an important role? Indeed, one possible explanation for this finding is just that. Success in post-war reintegration is largely the result of the war coming to an end. The RUF was defeated decisively; the country was tired of fighting; and there was broad acceptance of the terms of the peace. DDR programs, while important, may not have been determinative in giving rise to a stable post-war outcome.

But there are reasons to be extremely cautious in jumping to that conclusion. First, it may be the case that non-participants in DDR were different from participants in very important ways that influenced their reintegration prospects. For example, perhaps non-participants were more likely to be from the CDF and faced a far easier time gaining acceptance in their local communities. They self-reintegrated by choice, knowing that the resources and training of the DDR programs were unnecessary for them as they planned to return to their pre-war lives.

A second potential explanation for the finding is that non-participants did just as well as participants because of the positive spillover effects of the DDR programs. Since most combatants took part in disarmament and training, the vast majority of returnees and new community members had gone through a process of transition from war fighting to a post-war life with the assistance of the government and the UN. In this respect, DDR programs had a spillover effect—creating positive conditions for the return of non-participants to these communities.

The fact is that the only way to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of DDR programs is through a randomized controlled evaluation. If it could be implemented in a way that would not create inequities, this model—in which disarmed soldiers would be randomly assigned to different types of DDR programs, and some to no program at all—could generate very

precise estimates of the impact of DDR in general, and specific interventions in particular, on the prospects for post-war reintegration.

VI Conclusions

Survey results on the prospects for post-war reintegration provide a great deal of good news, and some important causes for concern.

The signs that a post-war, inclusive democracy is taking hold are generally positive. Across factions, most ex-combatants have rejected violent means of achieving change. They are active in politics and see their local and national officials as accountable to them through the electoral process. Most ex-combatants have been accepted back into their families and communities and are beginning to make a new life in the post-war period.

At the same time, members of different factions face distinct challenges in this period of reintegration. RUF combatants, in particular, have faced greater struggles in returning to their families and communities. They have tended to build social networks composed of people they met during and after the war. Many are isolated from the communities and networks in which they were embedded before the war began. The good news is that this distinct strategy of reintegration has not given rise to significantly higher levels of discontent, or to a desire to continue identifying with the faction. RUF combatants, like those in other groups, see democratic processes as the best hope for achieving political change in Sierra Leone.

A final cause for concern, especially in light of the imminent withdrawal of the UN mission, is the strong belief on the part of ex-combatants that the international community is the key disciplinary agent capable of making the government accountable to the demands of its constituents. Again, this finding is not surprising given the enormous role of the international community in shaping post-war Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, the primary means of holding politicians accountable must come through internal mechanisms of influence and control, rather than from the intervention of outsiders. As the international community shifts its attention to other conflicts, drawing in outsiders to influence the government will become more difficult and could potentially require a return to violence. It is a good sign that faith in elections is high. For a stable peace to persist, one must hope that the relationship between the government of Sierra Leone and its constituents will continue to grow stronger.