

Essay on Development Policy

Reintegration of Ex-Combatants and Reconciliation in Rwanda: A Case Study

Wilma Lötscher

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List of Abbreviations

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandais
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, Republic of Rwanda
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RDF	Rwanda Defence Force
RDRC	Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SEDRP	Second Emergency Demobilisation and Reintegration Project

1 Introduction

"They have spent decades living as part of an armed group not having to worry about paying for food or anything else. Back in the community, he said, they (...) have trouble managing" (Cenegel, 2016). The cited Aljazeera newspaper article from February 2016 describes how ex-combatants returning to Rwandan communities struggle to reintegrate, pointing out the topicality of the subject. Reintegration of ex-combatants in Rwanda has long been a challenge, yet today the small nation's political stability and economic prosperity would suggest it was never a problem.

Rwanda has a long history of political tension and ethnic conflict. In 1994, the country experienced a devastating genocide that left around 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu dead and that destroyed the social, political and economic fabric of the country (RDRC, 2015a). In order to achieve sustained peace and unity among Rwandans, the post-genocide government of Rwanda prioritized extensive peacebuilding efforts that are still on-going today, 22 years after the genocide. In order to rebuild community trust, social cohesion, and to foster peaceful co-habitation, policies and programs in two main areas were implemented. First, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs were established, assisting ex-combatants from various armed groups. Second, reconciliation strategies were implemented in order to build national unity and common for Rwanda's future development. These programs can be deemed particularly important in the Rwandan context due to the duration of the ethnic conflict that affected most Rwandans and that left a traumatized and resentful community.

In October 2015, a magazine published by the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) was titled "Reconciliation among ex-combatants is RDRC's biggest achievement" (RDRC, 2015c). The article opens with a question of how the RDRC's reintegration program was able to help achieve cohabitation, unity, and reconciliation in a process that is praised worldwide. Over the course of the article, the RDRC's activities and its successes are described, reporting that 80% of all ex-combatants, irrespective of their former military affiliation, have been successfully reintegrated. However, the article does not meditate on how this process has any specific impact on or link to broader reconciliation processes (RDRC, 2015c). When reviewing academic literature and publications from organizations focused on peacebuilding, it becomes apparent that even though a large amount of literature on the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation can be found, very little analysis on linkages between both topics has been done. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to investigate these linkages, focusing on the case of Rwanda. The research question is as follows:

How does the reintegration of ex-combatants link in with the wider reconciliation process in Rwanda?

Because this paper is based on a broad understanding of how reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation are related, the wording *link in* and *interlinkage* is used to describe connections between these concepts. The paper argues for a bi-directional relationship with reciprocal influences. Furthermore, it suggests an analysis of interlinkages on different levels (conceptual, theoretical, political and programmatic). The wording of the research question chosen is broad enough to allow analysis on these diverse levels and on different types of connections.

The research question will be investigated on a conceptual and theoretical level before national policies and programmatic approaches are analysed. In order to do so, the methodology used is based mainly on literature research and review. A total of 60 academic papers deemed relevant to the topic were reviewed. Additionally, official documents and national statistics from the Rwandan government, and publications from relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO) were examined. Interviews with officials from the Rwandan government, namely from the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), were also used for supplementary data.

This paper is divided into four main sections. First, chapter 2 will give a short overview of Rwandan history and, in order to have a common understanding of the key concepts, will define Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), and Reconciliation. As an introduction to the case study on Rwanda, it also describes key national DDR and reconciliation policies and programs. Chapter 3 analyses how the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation are conceptually linked. A theoretical approach is introduced that can explain underlying processes, and an overview on research and literature is given. In chapter 4, by means of a case study, it is demonstrated how Rwandan policies, strategies, and programmatic approaches link the concepts of reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation and how they impact each other. Finally, chapter 5 concludes on the main findings and opens questions for further research.

2 Background

2.1 History of Rwanda

In order to unpack the importance and challenges of the Rwandan peacebuilding process, a short overview on the country's history is given in this chapter. Rwanda looks back at a long history of political tension and ethnic conflict that goes back to pre-colonial times when Tutsi herdsmen immigrated to and conquered most of Rwanda, which had been inhabited by Hutu pastoralists up to that point. Over time, the division between Tutsi and Hutu became a social classification, with Tutsi indicating a wealthy person and Hutu a subordinate. This division in the pre-colonial era was fluid; a person could change their status depending on their possession. When Rwanda was colonized by Belgium in 1919 a system of ethnic identity cards was introduced to specify whether one was Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. When Rwanda became independent in 1962, an authoritarian Hutu leadership started to eliminate Tutsi rulers in order to enforce their superiority and violence between the Hutu and Tutsi started. In 1993, ethnic tensions escalated when a Tutsi army killed a Hutu leader. Hutu politicians reacted by using propaganda, spread through radio programs, to encourage violence against the Tutsi community. When Hutu president Joseph Habyarimana's airplane was shot down in April 1994, a previously trained Hutu militia and hardline members of the Hutu community immediately started to kill Tutsi and moderate Hutu citizens. The devastating genocide that followed for the next hundred days left around 800,000 people dead. In July 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took over Kigali, and brought the genocide to an end while establishing a primarily Tutsi-led government (Hong, 2014).

Due to these long-lasting and devastating conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi, the peacebuilding and reconciliation processes are particularly important in the Rwandan context. Most Rwandans were and still are affected by the conflict and have either lost family members during the genocide or have acquaintances who were or are imprisoned as perpetrators. With this context, it is not difficult to see that peaceful cohabitation of genocide survivors, ex-prisoners and ex-combatants is a particular challenge. Because Rwanda is Africa's most densely populated country, people live closely together and farmland as a mean of income-generation is scarce, making reconciliation processes even more demanding. The following chapters will describe Rwandans policies and programs in the two main areas of peacebuilding: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), and reconciliation.

2.2 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

2.2.1 Definitions and conceptual framework

The World Bank defines Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) as "a process that contributes to security and stability by disarming combatants, removing them from military structures, and socially and economically integrating them into society" (Nezam & Marc, 2009, p. 1). According to the UN, Disarmament bundles all activities that include the collection, documentation, and disposal of different sorts of arms both from the combatants and the civilian population. In addition, disarmament also consists of developing responsible arms management programmes. Demobilization is described as the "formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups" (UN, 2010a, p. 4). The first phase of demobilization usually includes the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres where they receive education and training. In addition, short-term assistance is given to ex-combatants that covers basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and medical services during their first year after demobilization (UN, 2010a).

Until recently, reintegration used to be the underfinanced and understudied third element within the DDR processes. It is only in the past few years that the reintegration component has received more interest in both research and practice (Torjesen, 2013). In 2006, the United Nations published the *Integrated Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)* that highlights the importance of reintegration processes and provides guidelines for practitioners and policy makers (UN, 2010b). Reintegration in this context is defined as a process in which combatants (1) change their identity from fighter to civilian and (2) modify their behaviour by ending violence and showing activities that are accepted by the community (Torjesen, 2013). Reintegration projects aim to assist ex-combatants and their dependants in three areas: social (building new relationships and trust), political (become part of the decision making process), and economic (engage in sustainable employment and livelihood) (Buxton, 2008; Torjesen, 2013). Compared to the phases of disarmament and demobilization, reintegration is seen as a long-term process and has often an open time frame (Munive & Stepputat, 2015). Even though reintegration is achieved on an individual level, many authors highlight its contribution to security and stability in post-war societies (e.g., Wilén, 2012). It can therefore be seen as a part of general post-conflict development processes (UN, 2010a). Because of the duration of the reintegration processes as well as its linkages with other development aspects in the post-conflict setting, academics, practitioners, and policymakers agree that it is amongst the most complex, challenging, and critical phases of DDR (Buxton, 2008; McMullin, 2013; Theidon 2009; Zena, 2013). Its importance is demonstrated by studies that showed correlations between delays in or incomplete reintegration processes and an escalation in conflicts and violence (Alusala, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, definitions of reintegration of ex-combatants include social, political and economic aspects (Torjesen, 2013). However, most literature and practical programs focus on economic components such as employment, income generation and sustainable livelihood (Torjesen, 2013; Wilén, 2012). In this context, typical activities include skills training, support with loans, and job placement (Alusala, 2011). The concept of social reintegration was until recently neglected by researchers as well as in practice. On the contrary to economic reintegration, social reintegration is an intangible outcome and quantitatively measuring its success is a challenge (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). However, due to more community and participatory approaches in DDR practice, social aspects of reintegration started to gain importance (Buxton, 2008). Because of the relative novelty of the concept, no clear consensus about definitions or underlying theories can be found. According to Hazen (2005), social reintegration means "the establishment of equal opportunities for all; the harmonization or conformity of individuals; or, the established pattern of interaction in a community" (p. 1). Furthermore, social reintegration implies a situation in which community members share common beliefs, norms, and goals that are enforced through institutions and dialogue (Hazen, 2005). It includes the adjustment to attitudes and expectations (Buxton, 2008) and it rebuilds trust, communication, cooperation, and coordination (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). On an individual level, social reintegration is also connected to coping with war-related mental health problems and trauma (Buxton, 2008).

2.2.2 DDR processes in Rwanda

After the genocide was brought to an end in July 1994, the newly established government started to begin the peacebuilding process. In 1997, the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) was established, complying with a provision leading back to the 1993 Arusha Peace Agreement (RDRC, n.d.). The overarching objective of the RDRC is to contribute to peace and stability in Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region (especially DRC), to foster unity within Rwanda, and to reduce Rwandan Defence Forces. The committee highlights its local ownership and aims to ensure that all demobilized ex-combatants are socially and economically reintegrated successfully into their communities. It achieves this goal by following its guiding principles that include following: That all ex-combatants, irrespective of previous military affiliation, receive appropriate assistance from the programme; that they are free to choose their community of settlement and their path to economic reintegration, and that community participation is sought (RDRC, 2013b; RDRC, n.d.).

DDR activities in Rwanda were and still are addressed to ex-combatants from different armed groups: the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) that defeated the genocidal regime in

1994, the RDF (Rwanda Defence Force) that is the current national army of Rwanda, the FAR (Forces Armées Rwandais) that was the pre-1994 Hutu government army, and various armed groups that consist of Rwandan Hutu rebels in DRC, especially FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) (Edmonds, Mills & McNamee, 2009; Waldorf, 2009). Until November 2015, according to RDRC statistics, a total of 70,000 ex-combatants have gone through the DDR process in Rwanda (RDRC, 2015b), out of which an estimated 80% are successfully reintegrated and accepted in the community (cf. NURC, 2010; RDRC, 2015d).

After the fighters have resigned service in their military group, they are transferred to demobilization centres where they stay for three weeks to three months, depending on their military affiliation. In this phase, they go through an extensive orientation and sensitisation program, learning about government's policies and strategies about poverty reduction, national unity and reconciliation, and national peace. Before ex-combatants relocate to their community, they receive a resettlement package in order to help meet their basic needs and build a civilian household. Furthermore, RDF and FAR ex-combatants receive recognition of service allowances and vulnerability support grants are paid to those with special needs (Edmonds et al., 2009; RDRC, 2015d). After ex-combatants are resettled into the community, the RDRC further supports with the aim to reintegrate them economically and socially and to establish sustainable livelihoods. This is seen as a long-term process and is based on lessons learnt from community-based development projects. Three months after relocation, ex-combatants receive a reintegration grant that they can use for economic or social reintegration purposes such as income-generating activities, vocational training, housing, employment, or children's education. The payment of the grant empowers ex-combatants to choose the option that best matches their living situation. Additional programs, e.g. concerning public work and medical rehabilitation, are also conducted (RDRC, 2015d).

Even though the RDRC focuses on economic reintegration, they also include social aspects in their policies and programs. The commission has stated that: "The programme's mission is to support successful demobilisation, social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants in their respective communities so as to realize national security, reconciliation, and development" (RDRC, 2015d, p. 7).

Social reintegration may be especially difficult in the context of Rwanda as many ex-combatants lost their families during the genocide or have lived a long time in neighbouring countries and return to a Rwanda they are no longer familiar with, while others have committed acts of violence in the communities they are returning to. The participation of community members in the reintegration phase of DDR is therefore critical for its success

(RDRC, 2015d). Under the social reintegration component, some specific activities are carried out, namely: 1) assessments of community perceptions of ex-combatants and ex-combatants' perceptions of communities; 2) expansion of current reconciliation activities; 3) information and sensitisation of ex-combatants and communities; 4) specialized counselling (e.g., HIV/AIDS); and 5) advocacy and support in addressing special needs of vulnerable ex-combatants (RDRC, 2015d). In addition, due to a RDRC study that found ex-combatants likely to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which affects their socio-economic reintegration negatively, the RDRC provides psychosocial support and counselling in the demobilization centres and during the reintegration phase (RDRC, 2015d).

2.3 Reconciliation

2.3.1 Definitions and conceptual framework

After civil war, in order to reach security and peace, the affected society must deal with the wounds of war within local communities, and on a national level. Therefore, the peacebuilding process requires reconciliation between perpetrators and the victims of violence (Alden, 2002; Schafer, 2001). Reconciliation is described as the process that rebuilds relationships after bonds of social cohesion were destroyed through violence during civil war (Lederach, 1997) and as a change in psychological orientation towards each other that leads to a mind-set in which the past does not define the future (Brounéus, 2003; Staub, 2014). According to Brounéus (2003), reconciliation can best be described as “a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace. In other words, reconciliation mainly focuses on remembering, changing, and continuing with life in peace” (p. 20). The different definitions of reconciliation can include a political/structural dimension (truth, justice, reparations, reducing inequalities, understanding the origins of violence) and a psychological dimension that can be divided into personal aspects (healing of traumas of victims and perpetrators) and interpersonal aspects (reconnecting and gaining new trust, forgiveness, common vision for the future) (cf. Brounéus, 2003; Pham, Weinstein & Longman, 2004; Rieder, 2015; Staub, 2014). Many authors agree that successful reconciliation needs to address both, political/structural as well as psychological issues (Staub, 2014). In order to include a wide range of definitions, Crocker (1999) describes a spectrum from *thin* (restore a relationship that is minimally acceptable) to *thick* (restoring relationships through healing and forgiveness) reconciliation. The paper at hand will consider a *thick* definition of reconciliation and includes both, the political and psychological dimension.

2.3.2 Reconciliation processes in Rwanda

The following paragraphs will give an overview on the structures and mechanisms the Rwandan government has implemented in order to facilitate national reconciliation. In 1999, as a response to the devastating 1994 genocide, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) was established with the mission "to promote unity, reconciliation, and social cohesion among Rwandans and build a country in which everyone has equal rights and contributing to good governance" (NURC, 2014, para. 1). The NURC is based on sharing the same land, culture, destiny and rights; its principles include that citizens are characterized by mutual trust, tolerance, respect, equality, complementarity, truth and healing wounds inflicted by history. This leads to a common vision for the future and sustainable development (NURC, 2007). Against the background of Rwanda's history with extended ethnic tensions, this essay considers mutual trust and respect between the ethnic groups as especially critical. In addition, the post-conflict and reconciliation process in Rwanda show some peculiarities and differ from other transitional countries with a similar population structure and history of mass violence, such as Burundi that implemented a power-sharing model with quotas that aim to balance Hutu and Tutsi interests. In contrast, Rwanda decided to follow an idea of de-ethnicizing the country; promoting national identity and implementing a one-nation model of unity and peaceful coexistence of Hutu and Tutsi, now all named Rwandans (Lederach, 1997; Rieder, 2015).

The Rwandan reconciliation process is a top-down process that is handled by various government institutions. As the leading organization, the NURC manages the psychological dimension of reconciliation by promoting community healing, confidence building, and reconciliation through tools such as civic education, sensitization, and advocacy (Nantulya, 2006; NURC, 2007). The most outstanding and frequently discussed post-conflict program implemented is the solidarity camp (Ingando). The government of Rwanda established Ingando after the genocide with the aim to promote reconciliation and to spread the new ideology of unity. Rwandan citizens are encouraged to participate and some subpopulations are even required to take part in an Ingando, for example students before entering university. The duration of the solidarity camps ranges from few days to several months and consists of studying Rwandan history, government programs, and unity and reconciliation (Mgbako, 2005). The NURC cooperates with other government entities in order to promote reconciliation. The main institution that fosters truth telling and restorative justice, the political dimension of reconciliation, is the Gacaca justice system. Rwanda adopted this very unique and widely discussed and praised form of justice after the genocide. The Gacaca court system is a traditional, pre-colonial practice of justice, a locally owned and community-based dispute resolution approach. The system includes the community to participate and

respected community figures serve as judges (Alusala, 2005). Instead of prison time, sentences primarily include community service, especially for perpetrators who confess during their trials (NURC, 2003). It was applied between 2001 and 2012 in order to achieve justice, speed up genocide trials and ensure accountability of many perpetrators in a relatively short amount of time (Wielenga, 2014). It worked alongside the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and is made up of 11,000 jurisdictions (Tobie & Masabo, 2012; Wielenga, 2014). Due to its participatory nature, it also promoted reconciliation and unity (Alusala, 2005; Fullerton, 2003; Oomen, 2005).

3 Ex-combatant reintegration and reconciliation: Interlinkages

After years of ethnic conflict and a devastating genocide, survivors, ex-prisoners and ex-combatants have to learn to live together; a particular challenge as Rwanda is Africa's most densely populated country. Ex-combatants are a critical subgroup in this post-conflict environment: First, ex-combatants who used to fight against each other encounter; second, former combatants who might have committed atrocities in their communities meet their victims or victim's families; third, after years in a military environment, possibly without any contact to civilians, ex-combatants have to assimilate into civil society. These circumstances may lead to tensions and a threat for resurgent violence, especially considering the large number of ex-combatants. Therefore, the successful reintegration of ex-combatants is critical for peaceful co-habitation and the overall reconciliation process.

The paper at hand will analyse interlinkages between the reintegration of ex-combatants and the wider reconciliation process. In chapters 3.1 to 3.3, conceptual interlinkages are identified, possible underlying theories proposed and a short overview on literature and research is given. In chapter 4, the Rwandan case is more closely analysed, looking into national policies and programs.

3.1 Conceptual interlinkages

As described in chapter 2.2.1, successful social reintegration fosters communication and cooperation between ex-combatants and community members that leads to a change of beliefs, norms, and attitudes and that enhances trust and social cohesion (Bowd & Özedem, 2013; Buxton, 2008; Hazen, 2005). In sum, social reintegration fosters the establishment of new relationships on a micro level that, in accumulation, can lead to positive results on a national level. Likewise, reconciliation activities also facilitate the establishment of new relationships after social cohesion was destroyed through armed conflicts. This is *inter alia* achieved through a change in psychological orientation towards each other and the modification of destructive attitudes and behaviours (Lederach, 1997; Staub, 2014).

This paper argues that based on these conceptual definitions, successful social reintegration of ex-combatants will promote reconciliation. Social reintegration can be seen as a strong basis for the reconciliation process through communication and cooperation of individuals and the building of trust and social cohesion. Furthermore, reintegration activities can build social and economic capacities of ex-combatants that enable them to engage in reconciliation processes (Tobie & Masabo, 2012). While this one-way relationship seems to be obvious and has been widely covered in literature, the paper at hand proposes a reciprocal relationship between social reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation. While social reintegration has an implication for the reconciliation processes, reconciliation also facilitates the reintegration of ex-combatants. If a certain level of trust and social cohesion is achieved in society, ex-combatants are more likely to be accepted in the community.

3.2 Underlying theoretical framework

Even though literature acknowledges that interdependencies between social reintegration and reconciliation and its implications are of importance for peacebuilding, little is known about its underlying and subtle processes (Gomes Porto, Parsons & Alden, 2007). Even though verification is not feasible by this paper, some possible theoretical approaches are introduced.

Allport's (1954) *contact hypothesis* is widely used in sociology, psychology and political science to describe relations among groups experiencing conflict. The theory indicates that interpersonal contact between members of conflicting groups leads to reduced prejudice and discrimination between individuals and entire groups. According to the theory, this process is further facilitated when cooperation between the groups take place, common objectives are pursued and when authorities are committed to and engage in these activities (Allport, 1954). Hazen (2005) suggests a very similar theory, arguing that during war, social disintegration takes place while smaller exclusive and new social bonds are constructed (in form of combatant groups). In order to successfully reintegrate ex-combatants, their military bonds have to be broken up before new relationships can be established. During this process, ex-combatants minimize their dependence on the armed group and increase interaction with the civil community. This is seen as a critical process, because reconstructing social structures existing before the conflict may flare up tensions. If managed successfully however, the establishment of healthy relationships leads to sustainable peace, peaceful co-habitation and reconciliation (Hazen, 2005).

Reintegration activities implemented by the Rwandan government incorporate possibilities for contact and cooperation between ex-combatants and civilians and often, involved groups

of the population aim for the same objectives. According to the contact theory, this leads to reduced prejudice and discrimination. It can be hypothesized that subsequently, trust and social cohesion increase, which is a basis for reconciliation.

3.3 Reintegration and reconciliation in literature

Even though academics have engaged in research about Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) since the end of the Cold War, only recently have linkages between DDR and other post-conflict strategies gained in importance and a relationship between successful DDR and sustainable peacebuilding processes has been shown (Özerdem, 2002). However, initial literature has almost solely focused on security aspects and has neglected the field of reconciliation (Theidon, 2009). This goes hand in hand with the fact that ex-combatants are often perceived to be a threat to post-conflict peace. Reintegration was therefore seen as a way to mitigate these threats rather than using the positive impacts of successful reintegration for building social cohesion and reconciliation (McMullin, 2013). Authors who wrote about dependencies between social reintegration and reconciliation agree and acknowledge that social reintegration can contribute positively to social cohesion and reconciliation, and anecdotal evidence for this relationship has been found (Bowd & Özerdem; 2013; Gomes Porto et al., 2007; Hazen, 2005; Tobie & Masabo, 2012). Even the United Nations recognizes the importance of reintegration and its implication for the broader national strategic plan for reconciliation, reconstruction and development (UN, 2000).

Considering that the relationship between reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation is neglected in literature, it is of no surprise that only few studies researched the topic in Rwanda. Tobie and Masabo (2012) evaluated a project implemented by NGOs and found that reintegration activities had a positive effect on the reconciliation process. This was explained through increased cooperation among individuals and changed perceptions towards each other. Bowd (2008) identified implications of social reintegration for reconciliation and used the concept of social capital in order to explain the linkages. While these authors researched the topic by focusing on a specific joining concept or by evaluating an individual project, this paper tries to analyse the interlinkages between these concepts in selected policies, institutions and approaches in Rwanda.

4 Case study Rwanda

The paper at hand proposes that the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation are linked conceptually, and also through Rwandan policies and programmatic approaches. The following chapters will analyse such interlinkages, focusing on the main areas of Rwandan peacebuilding, which are as follows: 1) Rwandan policies and strategies; 2) Gacaca justice system; 3) Ingando solidarity camp; 4) Economic reintegration; and 5) psychosocial support.

4.1 Rwandan policies and strategies

To advance peace in a post-conflict setting, the political will and the commitment of the government is crucial, as it leads to trust between authorities and the population as well as between groups in society (cf. RDRC, 2015a). The government of Rwanda's efforts and successes in reintegrating ex-combatants and achieving reconciliation are attributed to national ownership and political will (RDRC, n.d.) and were shortly described in chapter 2.2.2 and 2.3.2.

In the mission statement of the RDRC, reintegration of ex-combatants is clearly linked to the process of reconciliation: "The programme's mission is to support successful demobilisation, social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants in their respective communities so as to realize national security, reconciliation, and development" (RDRC, 2015d, p.7). Furthermore, the guiding principles adopted by the Rwandan government for the *Second Emergency Demobilisation and Reintegration Project* (SEDRP) includes that in order to foster national security and reconciliation, the program targets all ex-combatants the same, irrespective of their military past. In order to successfully promote reconciliation while implementing reintegration activities, it was determined that the RDRC shall closely collaborate with the NURC to receive guidance how to mainstream reconciliation into its activities (RDRC, 2015d). This evidence shows that while being committed to the peacebuilding activities, the Rwandan government also creates ties between reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation, both on a policy level and through institutional partnerships.

4.2 Gacaca justice system

In this chapter, an interlinkage between reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation through the Gacaca court system is proposed. As described in chapter 2.3.2, Rwanda adopted a very unique and widely discussed and praised form of justice after the genocide. The traditional community-based court system was applied between 2001 and 2012 in order to advance the prosecution of genocide crimes and to support the effort of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (Tobie & Masabo, 2012).

Some literature backs the argument that the Gacaca justice system has an implication for both, reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants. First, as described in chapter 2.3.1, the political dimension of reconciliation implies truth, justice and reparations. The Gacaca system, compared to other forms of justice, uses methods of truth telling and forgiveness. According to literature, forgiveness of victims, but also the payment of reparations, are crucial elements for social cohesion and reconciliation (Rigby, 2001; Tobie & Masabo, 2012). This, in turn, can establish trust between perpetrators and community members, which fosters reintegration and peaceful cohabitation. A field study showed that Gacaca is a key mechanism for trust, forgiveness and social cohesion; furthermore it indicated that through communication and reconciliation, social reintegration is enhanced (Bowd, 2008). Second, in order to relieve the prison system that was overstrained after the genocide, sentences imposed by Gacaca often favour community service. This creates possibilities for interactions between perpetrators and community members (Rigby, 2001) and may demonstrate that perpetrators accept local norms and authority (Duthie, 2010). These processes can lead to trust and re-established relationships and therefore have an impact on social reintegration and reconciliation. Third, according to two studies, the Rwandan population perceives Gacaca courts, and reintegration and reconciliation processes as closely linked. At the beginning of the Gacaca process, 70% of the population believed that perpetrators and the victim's families will be reconciled after the trials and 90% perceived that reintegration would be enabled (NURC, 2003). Another study conducted in 2008 showed that 99% of the population perceived Gacaca to be an important mechanism for peace and reconciliation (NURC, 2008).

However, two critical considerations have to be raised. First, some authors argue that even though the Gacaca courts were closed in 2012, the justice process has not yet ended and open cases may not be addressed anymore. Furthermore, due to a high poverty rate, reparation payments can often not be settled (Tobie & Masabo, 2012). These problems may present a threat to reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation (Nilsson, 2005; Tobie & Masabo, 2012). Second, the interlinkage between Gacaca and reintegration is only valid for certain groups of ex-combatants. While RDRC's reintegration activities are addressed to ex-combatants affiliated with various military groups, only genocidaires are prosecuted in the Gacaca courts, blending out crimes committed by the RPF (e.g. Graybill, 2004).

In sum, literature shows that the Gacaca justice system has an implication for both the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation, and thus links the two concepts. While some results imply that Gacaca has a positive effect on reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants through truth telling, forgiveness and interactions between individuals, some

other findings point in the directions that Gacaca may hinder these processes due to incomplete justice processes and unpaid reparations.

4.3 Ingando solidarity camp

This chapter will shed light on the concept of Ingando, a tool that is used for both the reintegration process of ex-combatants as well as the broader reconciliation effort in civil society. The Ingando program was originally established for the reintegration of ex-combatants in 1996, and today all ex-combatants are going through a process of Ingando ranging from three weeks to three months, depending on their previous military affiliation (Clark, 2010). The objective of Ingando is to prepare ex-combatants for resettlement and reintegration and is a process of changing the identity from combatant to civilian (Bowd, 2008). Chronologically, Ingando takes place before the actual reintegration phase of DDR, but it is still crucial to the success of reintegration and can therefore be seen as one of its components. During Ingando, participants learn about the history of Rwanda, the government's programs to fight poverty, the united identity and future development of the country (Mgbako, 2005). When ex-combatants participate in Ingando, the civilian community changes its perception towards ex-combatants that in turn enhances trust and mitigates risks for conflict (Ruhunga, 2006). Because Ingando was perceived to be a success in the reintegration of ex-combatants and the reconciliation between ex-combatants and civilians the concept was expanded and implemented as a tool in the broader reconciliation effort (Edmonds et al., 2009). Since 2002, the NURC encourages Rwandan citizens such as teachers, students, politicians and community leaders, to participate in Ingando (Melvin, 2010; Mgbako, 2005). In sum, this shows that while Ingando is successfully preparing ex-combatants before they reintegrate in the community, it also promotes stability and reconciliation in the broader social fabric.

4.4 Economic reintegration

The paper argues that social reintegration and reconciliation are linked in. However, social reintegration cannot be analysed independently of economic aspects as economic and social reintegration are connected to each other in a reciprocal relationship. This chapter explains this relationship and describes how it is linked to the wider reconciliation process in Rwanda.

This analysis suggests that successful economic reintegration has implications for social reintegration. When ex-combatants are economically active and self-dependent, they are no burden for the community. In contrary, they may contribute to the common good and overall development. This fosters acceptance and trust from the community (Tobie & Masabo, 2012). Furthermore, when being economically active ex-combatants interact with community

members and new relationships are established and objectives are shared (Verwimp & Verpoorten, 2004). On an individual level, self-dependence leads to increased psychological well-being, which in turn might have a positive spillover effect on social fabric (Tobie & Masabo, 2012). Additionally, through economic sustainability the risk that ex-combatants return to join a military group decreases (Bowd, 2008), indicating a positive implication for security and stability. In sum, the interaction between ex-combatants and community members and the enhanced trust have an implication for social reintegration and build a basis for reconciliation. Reciprocally, successful social reintegration increases the chance for economical sustainability. Being economically active requires a certain level of acceptance and trust from the community in order to find a job or to make business.

Some components of the Rwandan reintegration and reconciliation programs make use of this relationship between social and economic reintegration. In order to bring different groups of society together, the government promotes cooperation between ex-combatants and community members. First, ex-combatants are encouraged by the RDRC to join or establish cooperatives with other ex-combatants and members from the community. The commission supports these efforts technically and financially because while developing economically, unity and reconciliation are promoted through social processes (RDRC, 2013b). Therefore, when evaluating cooperatives the RDRC measures both economic indicators and the social inclusion of civilians (RDRC, 2013a). Second, the RDRC advocates for job placements and the involvement of ex-combatants in community work. For example, ex-combatants were involved in rebuilding basic communal infrastructure that had been destroyed during the war, such as schools and clinics (Alusala, 2011). These initiatives are of importance on an individual level as it provides ex-combatants with income-generating activities and triggers a sense of ownership. On a societal level, it implies an opportunity for healing and for reconciliation within the community (Alusala, 2011). Another form of community work implemented in Rwanda is Umuganda. Once a month, communities come together to clean streets and to do construction work, but also to discuss community issues (Hasselskog & Schierenbeck, 2015). While Umuganda has an ecological and infrastructural relevance, it is also connected to unity and reconciliation.

In sum, economical aspects and economic reintegration have implications for reconciliation, which might be mediated by social factors. While the country is developing economically, social processes (namely trust, cooperation and acceptance) facilitate unity and reconciliation.

4.5 Psychosocial support

After an armed conflict, wide sections of the population often struggle with psychological problems, and both victims as well as perpetrators typically show similar symptoms of anxiety, stress and trauma (Tobie & Masabo, 2012). According to a study conducted 10 years after the genocide 25% of the Rwandan population still suffered from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Pham et al., 2004). As a consequence of trauma, comorbid diseases such as depression, substance abuse and social phobias are common (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes & Nelson, 1995; Schaal & Elbert, 2006; Schauer et al., 2007). Substance abuse is typically a major problem among ex-combatants in different settings; 25%-30% of all combatants are serious drug abusers by the time peace arrives (Mueller, 2003). Even though no exact data is available for the mental health status of ex-combatants in Rwanda, in 2014 the RDRC found a total of 32% were in need of psychosocial assistance while staying in the demobilization centre, with PTSD being the main problem (RDRC, 2014).

The paper at hand hypothesizes that psychological problems have implications for the reintegration process and for broader community reconciliation. First, mental health issues can reduce the social ability to interact with others, to engage in the community and to adjust attitudes and values. Furthermore, it can have a negative impact on cognitive capabilities (Schauer et al., 2007), which leads to a reduced ability to be economically active. This again has social implications as was shown in the previous chapter. When social and economic reintegration is hindered, ex-combatants are more likely to rejoin an armed group or to apply violence in the society (Schauer et al., 2007). This shows that mental health also has an implication for security and stability in a post-conflict society. Second, ex-combatants often experience stigmatization from the community because they are associated with violence and war (Schauer et al., 2007). Because suffering from mental health issues is in many cultures also stigmatised, ex-combatants may experience double-stigmatization that has a negative impact on social relationships and income-generating activities.

The lack of social and economic capacities as well as stigmatization hinders reintegration and the building of new relationships and trust in the community. As a consequence, reconciliation processes are made difficult or impossible (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse, 2003; Nilsson, 2005). Pham et al. (2004) showed that Rwandans suffering from PTSD were less likely to have positive attitudes towards the Rwandan justice system, the community in general, interdependence with other ethnic groups and are less open to reconciliation. As a conclusion, psychosocial support can be seen as crucial for the peacebuilding and reconciliation process after an armed conflict. Even when administered individually, a positive spillover effect on the entire community can be expected.

In the case of Rwanda, the RDRC implies psychological elements in the reintegration phase, offering counselling in the demobilization centres as well as after ex-combatants have resettled in the community (RDRC, 2015a). Furthermore, truth telling and forgiveness are also seen as important for the healing process (Worthington & Aten, 2010). Therefore, the Gacaca courts might have had played a role for psychological healing even though some authors also describe it as a potential threat for peace process through re-traumatisation (Staub, 2006). The significance of trauma and other psychological issues in post-conflict is acknowledged in research. However, not enough individual psychosocial support is usually offered in peacebuilding processes (Lambourne, 2014). In Rwanda, it could be shown that high prevalence rates of mental health issues have remained (Pham et al., 2004), while only one specialized psychiatric clinic exists.

5 Conclusion

Peacebuilding processes in Rwanda are still on-going 22 years after the end of the devastating genocide. Due to the degree of mass violence, resentments are still present and a high number of individuals in the population are traumatized (Uwitonze & Fetzer, 2014). Therefore, rebuilding relationships and peaceful cohabitation remains a challenge. In order to foster peace and security, the Rwandan government implemented policies and programs in two main areas: Reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants. This paper investigated how the reintegration of ex-combatants links in with the wider reconciliation process in Rwanda, and argued for a bi-directional, reciprocal relationship.

Findings show that the Rwandan government is highly committed to both the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation activities. On a policy level, these strategies are linked through mission statements and objectives. Key institutions such as the RDRC and the NURC cooperate to maximize successes. On a programmatic level, interlinkages were found in different areas. First, Gacaca, in contrast to traditional justice systems, aims for forgiveness, trust building, and social cohesion. These are elements of reconciliation and foster social reintegration by imposing community work instead of prison sentences. Second, Ingando, originally established to prepare ex-combatants before resettling in the community, currently involves different subpopulations and promotes stability and reconciliation in the broader social fabric. Third, through economic reintegration activities such as the building of cooperatives, reintegration and reconciliation are fostered through trust, respect and cooperation. Fourth, psychological issues, due to impaired social and cognitive abilities as well as stigmatization, hinder the reintegration and reconciliation process. This paper argued therefore that social reintegration activities are just as crucial for the reconciliation process and peacebuilding in general as economic reintegration projects.

In sum, the paper demonstrated that reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation closely link in, both on a conceptual theoretical level as well as in practice. This was shown through evidence found in Rwanda's policies and programmatic approach. While the majority of the findings imply that the reintegration of ex-combatants influences the reconciliation process, the paper was able to show that also reconciliation fosters the reintegration of ex-combatants, confirming a reciprocal relationship. In addition, the importance of social aspects for a successful peacebuilding process was highlighted.

Some implications for future research and discussion can be drawn from the analysis and findings of this paper. First, it is debatable if *thick* reconciliation that includes forgiveness and healing is at all possible after experiencing atrocities like the Rwandan genocide. In the book *La stratégie des antilopes*, Hatzfeld (2007) argues that instead of experiencing true reconciliation, Rwandans are just condoning cohabitation because it was imposed by the government (cf. Hatzfeld, 2007). This top-down strategy was criticised by others for maintaining social control and reinforcing the regime's power, while hindering true democracy (e.g., Rieder, 2015; Thomson, 2013; Wilén, 2012). Future research should investigate to what extent reconciliation was achieved in Rwanda and elaborate on best practices in peacebuilding processes. In order to do so, the Rwandan approach could be compared to approaches taken by other states with similar ethnical and historical backgrounds such as Burundi. Second, the paper proposed that underlying processes mediate the influences between reintegration of ex-combatants and reconciliation, namely communication, cooperation, mutual respect, trust and social cohesion. Prospective research should empirically test this theoretical approach. Third, on a policy and programmatic level, evidence found implies that instead of perceiving ex-combatants as a threat to the society, activities to reintegrate ex-combatants should be seen as an opportunity for the entire society and the overall reconciliation process. In order to make full use of this potential, social reintegration activities have to be incorporated to a higher extent in future approaches. If this is managed well and embedded in a holistic and multidisciplinary outline, reintegration support and reconciliation activities potentiate each other. Fourth, according to the government of Rwanda, reintegration activities were very effective. 80% of all ex-combatants have been reintegrated successfully (RDRC, 2015c). However, it is not clear how success of reintegration was operationalized and measured. As the paper showed, measuring social reintegration is a particular challenge as it is an intangible outcome (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). Future research should investigate measuring techniques and successes of the reintegration of ex-combatants further.

Even though challenges and open questions for future research remain, the Rwandan peacebuilding process can be seen as a positive experience. Rwanda's approach to DDR and reconciliation including its applied programs are widely praised for their uniqueness and effectiveness. The peacebuilding processes in Rwanda have been arguably the most successful in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Rwandans today live together in peace and harmony without visible tensions. Therefore, Rwanda can be seen as a positive role model for other post-conflict states that develop and manage peacebuilding processes.

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