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Book Reviews

Gendered Reintegration in Liberia: A Civilised '(Kwi)' Failure?

Christopher Hills
University of Sydney

Abstract
This article examines the conspicuous absence of discussion of the civilised/native dichotomy in post-conflict Liberia. While seminal to an understanding of both status and gender relations in the West African state pre-war, the oppositional terms of civilised/native have been very much ignored in analyses post-conflict. The article draws upon the impressive body of literature analysing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)—and gendered reintegration specifically—in Liberia and fuses it with pre-war anthropological work on the civilised/native dichotomy. It is argued that a lack of focus on this seminal dichotomy reflects a pattern of antipathy towards a nuanced understanding of gender in the planning and analyses of reintegration more generally, and poses critical questions on the impact of such neglect.

Introduction

The history of the small West African state of Liberia has hinged upon a seminal divide between settlers and the indigenous population in all facets of society, public and private, soon after its own unique experience of colonisation by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1822. Ever present in pre-war discourse, this 'civilised' vs 'native' divide[1], which some (Levitt, 2005, p.194; Ellis, 2007, p. 117) credit as being central to societal grievances pre-1980, has remained conspicuously absent from most political and gender analyses after the conflict. This article is centrally concerned with illuminating the fluidity of gender roles in Liberian history and the influence the civilised (*kwi*)/native divide has had on gender during the past 200 years, through settler contact and conflict, through to its strange absence after war. It is argued here that the lack of attention paid to this divide since the conflict is symptomatic of the international community's reticence to engage with the local gender realities and roles existent in the unique case of West Africa's only state that was not formally colonised. Such

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[1] This divide is also known colloquially in Liberia as 'Congo vs. Country'.

unwitting ignorance has not been without consequence and reflects another moment on a continuum of attempts to 'civilise' women throughout Liberian history. The post-conflict practice of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), in particular the reintegration of women and girls associated with fighting forces back into communities, will be the prism through which the negligence of the international community in failing to recognise the seminal civilised/native divide, both in its planning and analyses, will be viewed.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) is not *just* another post-conflict process, but rather at times can be more akin to a type of 'social engineering' (Muggah, 2010, p. 4), with the reintegration component in particular representing a moment of 'regendering' societies. Yet such social engineering often remains uncritiqued for the impact it has on gender roles, specifically for women and girls. Indeed, because gender roles have been shaped, challenged and shifted by the seminal dichotomy of the 'civilised/native' over almost 200 years in the small West African state, a look towards history in both planning and analyses would have been prudent.[2] An acknowledgement of the past remains critical to moving forward, as throughout Liberian history gender roles have been fluid and impacted upon greatly by international incursions. While analysts and scholars focusing on Liberia's reintegration efforts have entered the debate from transitional justice, post-conflict peacebuilding, quantitative analytical and UN resolution-related perspectives, none have so far focused purely on the impact reintegration has had on gender roles, in particular with a real look towards the past.

Though a host of impressive gendered analyses of several post-conflict programmes, including DDR, have provided incisive commentary on their respective successes and failures, these analyses have so far not addressed the other major theme common in many Liberian societies—'civilisation,' a marker simultaneously of gender, status and prestige. An intersectional analysis of gender in post-conflict Liberia has been lacking and, as highlighted by Cornwell (2005) when discussing scholarship on Africa, 'gender' often works to obscure "more culturally salient axes of difference" (p. 4). In this instance, this article argues, one such axis is the civilised/native dichotomy. In the process of reintegration in post-conflict Liberia, foreign essentialised notions of

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[2] Indeed one should point out, that notions of the civilised have inevitably shifted since the seminal publications of anthropologists pre-war; however, a lack of historical reflection remains the central point here.

'gender' have masked other concerns salient to and intersecting with gender—especially for women and girls.

This paper argues that the world's first DDR programme to explicitly mainstream gender relegated women and girls to the background via a process of 'civilised' training and educational opportunities which ultimately resulted in a large-scale dependency on males in urban, 'civilised' environments. The argument is critical of both the planning of Liberian reintegration and the analyses of the programme itself, uncovering a reticence on the part of scholars and officials to acknowledge the seminal divide of the civilised/native and its impact on gender in Liberian history and contemporary life. The article proceeds with an overview of the civilised/native dichotomy in Liberian history and its impact upon gender roles for women, and then moves to the problem of reintegration in Liberia. It lastly points to the paucity of focus on the civilised/native divide post-conflict as reflective of a lack of an intersectional approach to gender after war.

The 'Civilised' in Liberian History

The position of the civilised has remained ever tied to Liberia's unique history. Settled in 1822 by a benevolent association from the United States—the ACS—Liberia was distinct in its colonisation by free men and women from across the Atlantic, rather than white imperial conquerors from Europe. These 'Americo-Liberians', as they were to be known, were made up of free people of colour, predominantly from the east coast of the American mainland, who would soon impose their own vices and virtues on the indigenous population. Liberia formally became West Africa's first state to declare independence in 1847, remaining under 'civilised' rule, particularly by the Americo-Liberian True Whig Party (TWP),—for much of the 133 years preceding the Samuel Doe-led coup of 1980.

Just as the coloniser/colonised divide had split relations throughout the rest of the continent, so too did it prove troublesome in Liberia. However, unlike white colonists throughout the rest of the continent, the Americo-Liberian minority could not rest their authority on racial superiority and instead worked within a discourse of 'civilisation' that was "acquired rather than innate" (Moran, 2006, p. 81). This acquired status of 'civilised' was constantly held in polar opposition to the indigenous status of 'native' in all aspects of life. Carter and Mends-Cole (1982) explain *kwiness* (or the 'civilised') as:

> A Liberian expression which refers to a category of 'things'
> and persons which share a configuration of traits regarded

as 'modern', 'western', 'civilized', and so on. The labelling of a person as 'kwi' is relative, but usually includes speaking English, 'knowing book', being Christian, wearing western-style clothing, being married monogamously under statutory law, holding a 'modern' job, and so on (p. 157).

To obtain civilised status in Liberia therefore meant that one must be educated, take part in the wage-earning (modernised) economy, be involved in the worship of a monotheistic deity (generally through Christianity), speak at least a modicum of English, generally live within an urban environment, and owe one's primary allegiance to the nation-state (Moran, 2006, p. 75). In contrast, the 'native' was uneducated, worked in subsistence farming or marketing, invoked traditional religions, and was tied closer to 'tribal' alliances than they were to the state. Obviously ambiguities existed, but in general these distinctions were the basis of the civilised/native (or urban/rural, modern/traditional, *kwi*/country or any other locally termed) dichotomy existent in Liberian history. The Americo-Liberian population automatically held the status of civilised; however, over time, indigenous Liberians too could obtain such a status. Indeed from Moran's (1990) observations in the early 1980s of the Glebo of the southeast, "most Glebo seem to believe that civilized status is worth striving to attain" (p. 3). Brown (1982) went further, stating "no one who has lived anywhere in the country could fail to be aware of the power of its [civilised] imagery as an agency for social differentiation, or as an index of moral worth" (p. 288). Given the significance of this, this author's critique of its absence in post-conflict discourse remains highly pertinent.

The civilised/native divide would shape the evolution of the Liberian state. For over 133 years, no 'native' Liberian would hold the highest office in Liberia, with members of the ruling TWP always members, and descendants, of 'civilised' society. The malcontent of local populations regarding such a divide in politics has been noted previously (Ellis, 2007, p. 117), yet this divide also shaped several other aspects of Liberian societies.

'Civilised' and Gender in pre-war Liberia

Kwi-ness is as much about political and economic opportunities on the national arena as it is about social markers maintained and structured by local communities (Utas, 2003, p. 106).

Along with the political sphere, the civilised/native dichotomy invaded all parts of social and economic life for many Liberians, as Utas alludes to above. Moran (1990) argues that, generally, men's hold on the status of civilised was never revoked, whereas women could lose the status of civilised if they engaged in the 'wrong types' of work—marketing, subsistence farming, etc. (p. 4). Civilised women were therefore expected to essentially resemble a Western-style housewife, thereby remaining almost completely socio-economically dependent on the male 'wage-earner'. In addition to the inculcation of civilising ideals by institutions, the civilised also connoted very specific "standards of dress, personal hygiene, and home decoration" (Moran, 2006, p. 80). In pre-war Monrovia, an individual's social position was theoretically measurable on an invisible scale of civilisation (Brown, 1982, p. 288).

While it may be correct to label Liberian society as generally 'patriarchal' in nature, limiting one's analysis to this level remains a "thought-stopper", to quote Cohn and Enloe (2003, p. 1192). Digging deeper reveals a much more nuanced situation where gender and the civilised remain at the heart of the matter. For example, in the southeast of the country, although most Glebo sought to obtain the status of civilised (Moran, 1990, p. 3), this model of gender-role structuring was almost completely alien to that practiced in pre-settler history. Historically, in the Glebo case, women's socio-economic status was not as tied to their partners', but rather reflected a more common historical trend in West Africa of 'dual-sex' systems of labour and political organisation (LeBeuf, 1963; Okonjo, 1976; Amadiume, 1987). Female leaders and chiefs, women's powers of veto, women's economic independence and women's protest movements were key components of society and an indication of women's historical strength amongst many in the southeast of the country (Moran, 1990). The highlighting of these few historical examples does not seek to 'romanticise the native', but rather to disrupt oft-cited mainstream descriptions of 'traditional' systems of labour—as if 'traditional gender roles' were always under the foot of patriarchal dominance. The evidence clearly points to the contrary.

Yet, the arrival of Americo-Liberian settlers—who brought with them their own version of appropriate gender norms and roles, often emanating from plantations in the south of America—also meant the imposition of a different 'single-sex' system of labour. Over decades, and with the onset of capitalism, this 'single-sex' system of labour meant that the public roles available in the market economy, and positions of leadership and chieftaincies, were primarily awarded to

men. A good 'civilised' woman would stay at home, maintain a 'civilised' abode and remain dependent on her male patron. In this way, traditionally, 'civilised' did not connote any *class* distinction whatsoever, as often a civilised woman was far worse off socioeconomically than a native woman. Rather, civilised connoted a social status, one which often belied the truth of an individual's socio-economic position. More explicitly, this status was relatively synonymous with an individual's prestige or standing within society (Moran, 1990, p. 11) – prestige that was often sought and emulated.

The characteristics of the civilised are based heavily on nineteenth century ideals, transferred from America and happily propagated by missionaries, of white and black descent, particularly in coastal areas. DeLombard (1991) highlights how important missionary evangelism and education were in instilling "appropriate" modes of behaviour for women via Americanised gender roles (p. 333). As education was considered the key component of the status of civilised (Brown, 1982, p. 288; Kollehlon, 1989, p. 151), the divisiveness of post-settlement gender roles was extended by schooling. DeLombard (1991) notes that the sex-based division of labour was passed on from faculty to students, with gender identities differing greatly at times to those of indigenous cultures (p. 333). In the timeframe of pre-war Liberia, most youth were not 'lumpens', as Abdullah and Mkandawire asserted, but rather were attending school; not particularly in order to be enriched with knowledge, but to achieve the social status of the civilised or to emulate a lifestyle similar to that of the Americo-Liberians (Bøås & Hatløy, 2008, pp. 42-43). This emulation would result in an increased commodification and commercialisation of what it meant to be 'civilised' (Moran, 2006), resulting in an increased ambiguity for what 'civilised' urban women's roles were.

Before the conflict, many men and women in different parts of the country were striving for the status of 'civilised'. However, the makeup of Liberian societies prior to the war reflected a broad spectrum of living arrangements and independence. Women often travelled and managed their own businesses and in pre-war Liberia were present in a wide range of households, some headed by single women in places of abode considered both 'civilised' and 'native' (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012, pp. 123-127). Though the number and relative strength of women in political positions prior to the Doe coup of 1980 was impressive (Fuest, 2008), in general women competed for roles within a 'single-sex' system of labour which often preferentially favoured men. It was within these bounds that pre-war gendered society lived, however

conflict soon disrupted much of this, as it did all aspects of Liberian society. The impact of the conflict played out particularly harshly on women and women's bodies, yet in Liberia women and girls were prominent on many front lines and heavily involved in various fighting forces and, indeed, in ending the conflict itself. However, after war, the reintegration programmes designed by the international community imposed very strict ideas of what was appropriate for men and women, thereby repeating earlier failures on the continent through its struggle to see a definition of 'gender' outside its narrow preconceived conceptions. The paucity of post-war commentary on the civilised/native is put forward as emblematic of this.

Gendering the Field of Reintegration: History Repeating

The extraordinary focus on the civilised/native dichotomy pre-conflict in Liberia is perhaps only equalled by its equivalent conspicuous absence from post-conflict scholarly discourse. Tonkin noted in 1981 that almost every commentator in the twentieth century thought the divergent terms salient, as did several others focusing on different aspects of Liberian history (Brown, 1982; Carter & Mends-Cole, 1982; DeLombard, 1991; Fraenkel, 1964; Moran, 1990, 2006 & 2010). What is not evident, however, is how practitioners of post-conflict programmes, DDR in particular, reflected upon the ramifications of this divide both within society in general and also between genders.

Following 14 years of conflict, in 2003 Liberia launched one of the world's largest ever DDR programmes, with some 103,000 individuals formally enrolling—a number equal to approximately three per cent of the population. Liberia's DDR(R)[3] process was unique in its world-first approach to gender mainstreaming United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (hereafter UNSCR 1325), and the relative explosion of numbers of female combatants and women associated with fighting forces (WAFFs) included therein. Compared to neighbouring Sierra Leone, which had commenced its own DDR process just three years earlier, Liberia's inclusion of 24,967 women and girls in DDR was around five times larger. Although successes of the 'DD' phases of Liberia's DDR(R) programme have been noted elsewhere (Specht,

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[3] The second (R) in Liberia's DDRR, rehabilitation, was essentially a non-event, with men and women only ever being availed of very brief psychosocial rehabilitation sessions within cantonment camps. Thus it is not discussed at much length within this paper.

2006; Basini, 2013), the reintegration phase suffered setbacks similar to others experienced over the past two decades on the African continent.

Though it began with a promising mandate for mainstreaming gender concerns, improving access to post-war health services and cantonment sites, Liberian DDR(R) did not have a dedicated department or gender advisor focusing on women and girls, unlike the specific branch (UNICEF) with a committed focus on children. Though Liberian women's NGOs were seminal in kick-starting the disarmament phase, none were consulted for the key area of the implementation of the reintegration process. What resulted was a transplanted design, with staff moved across and training opportunities often copied from the reintegration programme established in Sierra Leone (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012, p. 366). Women and girls were not offered micro-credit for independent business activity, but were rather channelled towards specific 'gender appropriate' activities, such as tie-dying, soap-making and other seemingly supplementary income-generating projects. These reintegration ideas remain firmly fixed and inflexible in their design, and planned around specific ideas of an internationally-imposed "conjugal order" (MacKenzie, 2012, p. 64).

In the Liberian instance, the programme has been argued as being "default male" in design (Jennings, 2009, p. 476) and has been widely cited by others as failing women and girls (Jennings, 2007, 2008; Specht & Attree, 2006; Basini, 2013) in spite of the promising rhetoric surrounding its design and incorporation of gender mainstreaming.[4] These critiques form part of a broader repetitiveness in DDR and reintegration scholarship, with the echoes of many earlier feminist analyses of programmes ranging from Mozambique, to Angola, Eritrea, Uganda and Sierra Leone clearly being heard, but not acted upon (Barth, 2003; Farr, 2003; Veale, 2003; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Bouta, 2005; MacKenzie, 2012).

Yet, although these feminist critiques have provoked much discussion in terms of programmatic design and implementation, assumptions of what gender is and has been in these contexts are often overlooked or taken for granted. These critiques do not address the social dynamics that have constrained and moulded gender roles in many Liberian societies over hundreds of years: and by this, I refer to

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[4] The Liberian instance held much promise for DDR as a positive instance for women and girls as it was the world's first DDR programme to include specific provisions pertaining to gender mainstreaming and mainstreaming all aspects of UNSCR 1325.

the unique dichotomy in the small West African state of the civilised/native.

Gender in this sense obscures many other important identity markers, as gender, status and position in society pre-war were very much interlinked, which means that *status* within society is very much overlooked in analyses of reintegration programmes. An individual's place in society surely impacts both their *choice* of reintegration options and, thereby, their subsequent relative *standing* within societies. The *Escola Cultura de Pau* (2008), has previously linked 'social prestige' directly with social 'reintegration' (p. 28), yet most analyses of gender post-conflict remain devoid of any form of intersectional approach. Here, 'gender,' however it may have been defined or assumed to exist, seems to have masked other concerns important to women within Liberian society—the typification of a lack of focus on intersectionality in this context.

In a country where the social and economic indicators of an individual relate closely to their social status, it remains an astonishing fact that no planning or analyses have focused on issues of the *kwi*/native dichotomy and its intersectional relationship with gender in this setting. Ex-combatants and WAFFs especially, are consistently *the* most ostracised members of communities post-conflict and, by extension in the Liberian sense, could also be viewed as the least 'civilised' and holding the least amount of power (Utas, 2003). The ability, therefore, of the reintegration programmes to improve individuals' status in their respective communities could be seen as paramount for programme recipients, but this is problematic in a number of ways.

'Kwi' Reintegration?

This article argues that an in-depth reading of Liberian history can help to explain the consistent 'failures' of reintegration with respect to women and girls. Paris (2002) argued more broadly that peacebuilding represents a modern, yet slightly more benign, version of the *mission civilisatrice*. In the Liberian instance, this is extended upon here, but with a distinct gendered lens. Reintegration appears to have been merely an extension of the 'civilising' continuum in Liberian history—'*kwi* reintegration'—and it can be viewed as occurring through several different but very specific means. Here, the urban and rural divide is again prominent.

In 1974, prior to the conflict, 29 per cent of the Liberian population lived in urban areas, whereas in 1999 this number had risen to 46 per

cent (African Women and Peace Support Group, 2004, p. 6). Sirleaf claims that the abandonment of rural life in war-torn and pre-war Liberia related to the loss of the very '*moral* fibre of the nation' (Sirleaf, in African Women and Peace Support Group, 2004, p. 6, emphasis in original). After the war, the ease of monetising the concept of being civilised could be seen, as individuals could buy new clothes, and women could dress in t-shirts and jeans and not 'tie lappa' as rural, 'uncivilised', women did. Rural life again was again abandoned by many, this time post-conflict. Yet, those settling in urban areas found reintegration generally more difficult than those in peri-urban or rural locations (Utas, 2003; Pugel, 2007), as the opportunities available upon completion of schooling (the *eminent* civilised option) or training (often civilised pursuits) were minimal (Basini, 2013, p. 554). With a rushed demobilisation period (Basini, 2013, p. 543), and a reticence on the part of ex-combatants and WAFFs to return to a rural setting, only approximately four per cent of the 103,019 programme participants chose agricultural training as their reintegration option (Pugel, 2007). As previous authors have noted (Utas, 2003; Kingma, 2000), the relative success of rural reintegration compared to that in urban areas may be seen as a (civilised) missed opportunity. It is argued here that this missed opportunity relates as pertinently to social status as it does to concerns for personal security, stigmatisation or purely economic reasons.

While it may be obvious that individuals from rural backgrounds may not want to return to their home villages or counties, where they may be known for atrocities committed in the conflict, the alternative mass settlement of these individuals in the capital city has not resulted in productive reintegration or security outcomes, particularly for women (Utas, 2003). In conjunction with agricultural training, diversifying the amount of land available for ex-combatants and WAFFs is one common option trumpeted as important in a post-conflict setting; however this option was poorly communicated at the time of demobilisation. Further investment and research into schooling opportunities outside of Monrovia, and the outcomes of education and training placements in rural settings, is needed to gain more critical insight into urban versus rural settlement choices.

While Farr (2003) suggests the option for women to move to urban or semi-urban areas to escape the strictures of "traditional gender roles" (p. 7), urban reintegration in the Liberian instance has been largely ineffective for females and has essentially homogenised the concept of traditional gender roles. The differences that the civilised/native

dichotomy highlights, however, bring about far greater nuance in localised conceptions of gender. When contrasted with the earlier socio-economic analysis of the civilised by Moran, the critical evaluation of reintegration opportunities as essentially creating dependency in a post-conflict single-sex system of labour becomes apparent. Though the training provided to men was often just as insufficiently designed, and at times even at odds with experts' advice (Utas, 2003, p. 239), opportunities afforded to males post-conflict were never designed as supplementary in nature—whereas those for women were. Women and girls could easily be understood for wanting to elevate their social status in a country in which they remained subjugated and potentially viewed as 'uncivilised' for a lengthy period of time; however, on choosing *civilised* options for reintegration they may have inadvertently exposed themselves to further reliance on male patrons. A lack of critique around female dependency here is at odds with an often touted key focus of DDR programmes—the delinking of rebel structures and systems of command.

As education has previously been put forward as *sine qua non* for the civilised, the choice of education over agriculture by large numbers of individuals in reintegration programmes becomes somewhat inevitable. With the concept of the civilised so central to gender roles in many phases of Liberian history, and agriculture and farming lying at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of 'civilised' occupations, the pitiful number of individuals that would choose this occupation should have been obvious. Ruth Caesar, former Deputy Executive Director of the National Commission for DDRR (NCDDRR) in Liberia, alludes to this fact briefly after admitting that only approximately two per cent of individuals undertook agricultural training in reintegration, and that this was possibly due to not only problems of land ownership, but also to the "intensive nature of work in agriculture" (Caesar, 2007, p. 35). An ex-combatant interviewed in a study completed by anthropologist Sharon Abramowitz (2009), also stated that "because of the war, we don't have a taste for farming anymore" (p. 79). The intensive nature of work in farming occupations lies in direct contradiction to what a 'civilised' individual would seek to be involved in, be it education or very specifically defined gender roles. Though the civilised/native dichotomy has been largely ignored in the post-conflict setting, the path towards upward social mobility—'civilised' status—is a question worth pursuing. Can women, having passed through reintegration, achieve upward social status through their own choices of training? Did status and place in society prove important factors in determining reintegration

opportunities? Questions such as these are important for furthering gender analyses in future.

Importantly, no micro-credit programmes were offered during the reintegration phase of Liberia's DDR(R), thus largely cancelling out the possibility of independent socio-economic advancement for women involved in fighting forces during the war. Further, the economic dimension of Liberian DDR(R) seems to have followed the track of MacKenzie's (2012) hypothesis of 'conjugally ordering' communities, rather than taking a gender-central approach and avoiding perpetuating misguided gender stereotypes. This conjugal ordering reflects neither the historical strength of Liberian women in different societies, but rather looks towards a nuclear-family based model designed and reproduced by Western institutions, reifying 'civilising' discourses both from above and below in the case of Liberia.

Such a line of attack mirrors closely some of the headlines in newspapers in America after World War Two came to a close, such as '16,000,000 Women: What Will Happen After?'; 'Getting Rid of the Women'; and 'Give Back the Jobs' (Fitzsimmons, 2005: 187). As Fitzsimmons (2005) surmises, in that setting "the postwar focus was clearly on creating opportunities for returning soldiers and not on maintaining the ground that women had gained" (p. 187). Fast-forward to a post-Cold War timeframe and, for many women involved in fighting forces and female soldiers in Africa, peace indeed has been viewed as a disappointment (Barth, 2003). The parity of the post-WWII situation for women with that of Liberia over *half a century* later is somewhat synergistic, due in part to the conjugal ordering and 'civilising' of women. It is in this post-conflict moment that the international community, obsessed with 'idle' men and their marriageability, reflects another instance of neo-colonialism. Here, as was the case in early settler times in Liberia, the men were afforded public roles whereas women were expected to assume 'civilised' private duties.

The themes of urbanisation, civilised dependency and educational attainment in a post-conflict setting all reveal the civilised/native dichotomy that has divided the nation far more than any ethnic differences in Liberian history. Reflecting upon such differences supports the hypothesis that reintegration exists for women in Liberia as just another instance on the continuum of the civilising mission throughout history, neither reflecting indigenous historical realities in gender relations, nor forwarding progressive ideas towards true gender equality. A critique that delves into historical gender relations goes

beyond standard post-conflict gender analyses by invoking the concept of social status and drawing out how this may have indeed impacted upon the direction taken by ex-combatants and WAFFs in reintegration programmes.

Conclusion

The civilised/native dichotomy has been central to social relations and status within Liberian history. However, social status—as typified by the civilised/native divide—has been almost completely ignored post-conflict. A lack of analysis from this perspective may have resulted in many women and girls seeking out training and educational opportunities they deemed 'civilised', and indeed may have moved them closer to such a status, yet consistently left them with a dependency on male figures. Damagingly, this dependency results in the possibility of women and girls being reliant on the same captors who held them hostage throughout various periods of the conflict itself.

More research is needed on those few individuals, especially women and girls, who partook in the official DDR programme, but decided to settle in rural areas and chose agricultural training. For, although they may not have achieved the status of 'civilised' via such training immediately, a comparison of their socio-economic independence and wellbeing, and ultimately their successful reintegration into society, may reveal that they have benefited much more than those in the '*kwi*' urban environment.

If reintegration is consistently so far removed from localised conceptions of gender, and devoid of socioeconomic routes to independence for women, how likely is it to be 'successful' in future? Although feminist scholars, amongst others, constantly espouse the importance of the post-conflict moment in creating the possibility for new gender relations, this paper has argued that it is foreign impositions—as much as hyper-masculinised post-conflict societies—that appear to consistently quash such possibilities.

Post-conflict scholars would do well in future to consult further with pre-war anthropological and ethnographic studies, to gain a better appreciation of local considerations of gender and status within societies and to approach the issue of 'gender' from a clearer intersectional perspective: an intersectional perspective that takes into account women's historical position both within war and throughout history. Such a tack would also give credence to postcolonial post-conflict approaches and lead similarly to the impressive array of African scholarship on gender, rarely consulted in the field of reintegration

studies, yet of obvious importance. For, if reintegration is to be the transformative moment for women that it is often espoused to be, a more nuanced approach than that currently under offer is needed. Unpacking assumptions about women in 'traditional' African societies is one way to start.

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