Lost in transition: between prejudice and protection. Perspectives on the challenges and complexities of Kadogos' reintegration in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Abstract

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to be ensnared in a relentless cycle of violence and instability, with former child soldiers, referred to as Kadogos, embodying the deeper struggles for peace within the nation. Their experiences of reintegration illuminate the complex challenges that pervade the DRC: the ineffectiveness of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs, societal stigmatisation, and the persistent risk of re-recruitment. Research conducted in 2023 across both the volatile eastern provinces and the comparatively stable western regions reveals stark regional disparities in reintegration outcomes. In North Kivu and South Kivu, chronic insecurity and ethnic fragmentation stand in stark contrast to the relative calm of Congo-Central and Kinshasa, underscoring the urgent need for equitable resource allocation. The findings shed light on the harsh realities faced by Kadogos: prejudice, economic exploitation, and the lasting effects of psychosocial trauma. Yet, amidst this adversity, potential pathways to healing emerge, community acceptance and protective networks can facilitate meaningful reintegration.

The study posits that sustainable reintegration is not merely a humanitarian obligation but essential for breaking the cycle of violence and fostering enduring peace in the Great Lakes region. It advocates for context-sensitive DDR interventions that prioritise community reconciliation and economic empowerment. Using a multi-theoretical framework, encompassing Human Security, Social Identity, and Postcolonial Theory, the research situates Kadogos' experiences within broader narratives of historical injustice and governance failure. Concluding with evidence-based policy recommendations, this research challenges scholars and practitioners to reconceptualise reintegration as a holistic, community-driven process vital for restoring dignity and hope to a generation affected by war. It calls for a collective commitment to transform the narrative, viewing former child soldiers not as threats, but as essential agents of peace and reconstruction in a nation yearning for a brighter future.

Dedication and Acknowledgement

"Only stop when you know everything… until then, keep learning, then pass your knowledge on to others; keep searching, then share your findings with others… it is the way to better yourself and those around you." These were the words my beloved father, whose faith in education was boundless, whispered into my life like sacred truth. His voice, though stilled by time, remains a compass that continues to guide my every step. This work is for him, for the dreamer who saw beyond my limitations, and for my mother, the quiet warrior whose love became sacrifice. She uprooted the beauty of flowers from our garden, replacing them with vegetables so she could sell them, so that I might sit in a classroom and chase the horizon of knowledge. To you, my parents, my eternal guardians, this PhD belongs as much to you as it does to me. No words can measure my gratitude, no ink can capture the depth of my love.

My soul also bows in reverence to the Kadogos, to every child whose laughter was stolen and replaced with the echoes of gunfire, to every child forced to carry the burden of wars not of their making. Being among former child soldiers carved scars upon my understanding of humanity. In your eyes I saw pain, but I also saw the flicker of defiance, the stubborn will to live, to hope, to dream of gentler days. You have taught me more about courage than any textbook ever could. This research is a humble offering to your resilience; may it carry your voices a little further into a world that too often refuses to listen.

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And finally, to you reading this, though it may sound like a cliché, it is the most honest truth I can give: I only dared to write these words because I once read someone else's. Their courage to write gave me the courage to begin. If you take anything from this thesis, let it be this: pick up your pen, or sit at your keyboard, and write your own. For each thesis/book/paper written inspires another; each word read births another voice. The more we read, the more we write, the more we learn, and in doing so, we make our lives, and the lives of those around us, richer, deeper, and brighter.

From the depths of my heart, thank you.

Key Words

Armed Conflict, Former Child Soldiers (Kadogos), DRC, Reintegration, Prejudice, Economic Exploitation, Protection and Community Acceptance.

Glossary

ANR - Agence Nationale de Renseignements (Congolese intelligence agency).
CONADER - Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion (Congolese agency).
DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo.
DDR - Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.
FARDC - Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo.
M23 - Mouvement du 23 Mars.
EUPOL - European Union Policing mission.
IOM - International Organization for Migration.
Kadogo - Swahili for little child (derogative), but in DRC it most exclusively means former child soldier.
Sheggue - generally means abandoned/street kids of Kinshasa.
Kuluna - highly derogatory term, meaning thug street kids of Kinshasa.
MONUSCO - the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC.
PN-DDR - Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion (Congolese agency).
PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
Wazalendo - Congolese rebel coalition based in the eastern DRC. Made up of rebel groups allied with the FARDC and opposed to the M23.

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Chapter I: Foundations

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's powerful condemnation of the use of child soldiers resonates with undeniable moral clarity: "We must not close our eyes to the fact that child soldiers are victims…It is immoral that adults should want children to fight their wars for them...There is simply no excuse, no acceptable argument…" (Washington Post, November 1996). Nowhere is this stark reality more evident than in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where children, known as Kadogos, have been systematically drawn into cycles of violence since the onset of the country's brutal conflicts in the 1990s. Despite constituting up to 60% of some armed groups' fighting forces (Verhey, 2001), their reintegration remains fraught with systemic failures, social rejection, and economic marginalization. This study critically examines the reintegration in the DRC, investigating the multifaceted challenges, successes, and structural limitations of existing Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs, by asking what factors determine success or failure of the reintegration of Kadogos in DRC?

Despite extensive global literature on child soldiers, the specific experiences of Kadogos in the DRC remain underexplored. Persistent stigmatization and community rejection are among the greatest barriers to their reintegration, undermining psychological recovery, economic stability, and increasing vulnerability to re-recruitment (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2013). Addressing these dynamics is not only a humanitarian imperative but also a strategic necessity for long-term peace and stability in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region (Autesserre, 2021). The repeated failures of reintegration programs highlight the complexity of these processes. Reintegration is not merely logistical, but deeply social and political, shaped by historical grievances and structural inequalities (Gislesen, 2006). Preliminary findings indicate stark regional and intra-community disparities: while some areas show modest reintegration progress, others reveal entrenched exclusion and cyclical violence. Understanding these differences is essential both to disrupt the recruitment pipelines of armed groups and to foster sustainable peace.

This chapter lays the moral and analytical ground from which the thesis proceeds. It locates the study within the conflicted geography and polity of the DRC; states the central research question and aims; explains why a focused study of Kadogos is both urgent and necessary; offers a field-grounded, comprehensive definition of Kadogos, one that centres their extreme vulnerability and gendered suffering; summarises the methodological logic behind the mixed-methods fieldwork; and points toward the theoretical framing that follows in subsequent chapters.

Studying Kadogos matters for three reasons. First, scale and impact: Kadogos constitute a large share of combatants in many militias; failure to reintegrate them helps sustain conflict (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2013). Second, policy neglect: reintegration programming often privileges technical delivery over social processes, stigma reduction, trust building, and sustained protection, precisely the elements that determine whether packages translate into belonging (Autesserre, 2021; Blattman, 2016).

Third, gendered suffering: girls' experiences are distinct and frequently under-counted; without explicit attention to their harms and needs, reintegration fails many of its intended beneficiaries (Machel, 2001; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Ethically, researchers and practitioners carry a duty of care. The testimonies collected for this study are not abstractions. They are the trembling voices, the quiet refusals, the small acts of dignity that survive amid persistent insecurity.

The word Kadogo is often rendered as "child soldier," but this translation alone flattens the lived realities. Drawing on field research, survivor testimony, and the literature, the thesis uses a more precise, human-centred definition: A Kadogo is a child or adolescent who has been associated with an armed group or armed political actor and, from a young age, has been systematically used in multiple roles, combatant, scout/spy, porter/carrier, camp labourer/builder, patrol, and, in the case of many girls, subjected to routine sexual exploitation or forced domestic servitude. (Adapted from Wessells, 2009; Machel, 2001; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Betancourt et al., 2013). This definition foregrounds five interlocking realities:

1) Kadogos rarely served only as fighters. They were lookouts and spies, carriers for ammunition and loot, builders of trenches and camps, messengers and human shields. These multiple roles produce a complex repertoire of skill, trauma and social meaning that simple "combatant" labels miss (Wessells, 2009; Blattman, 2016).

2) The fieldwork underpinning this thesis encountered striking, consistent testimony: many girls reported being used as sexual slaves, subject to repeated rape, forced "marriage," and domestic servitude within armed groups. This is not incidental; it is structural. The literature corroborates that female Kadogos experience high rates of sexual violence and that, on return, these scars are compounded by blame, ostracism and loss of social standing (Machel, 2001; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Betancourt et al., 2013). Consequently, girls' paths back into communities are often more fraught, requiring confidential psychosocial support, childcare services, and anti-stigma strategies.

3) The tasks Kadogos were compelled to perform, sometimes against kin or neighbours, inflict deep moral injury. Communities may remember the harm before they remember coercion; Kadogos often internalise shame, which erodes agency and hope (Wessells, 2006; Betancourt et al., 2010). Reintegration thus demands bearing witness, restorative rituals, and programs that explicitly address moral rehabilitation alongside technical training.

4) Many Kadogos lack identity documentation, schooling records or apprenticeship credentials. This administrative invisibility constrains access to services and formal employment, pushing many into precarious or exploitative labour (Stys et al., 2020; Thill, 2021). The fieldwork encountered consistent testimony: Kadogos working in mines illegally and without any protection; working as underwater sand diggers (especially in Kinshasa, extremely dangerous undertaking, as most of them can't swim and often drown); for female Kadogos, at best work as maid or worse as prostitute, regardless of their age. Reintegration that ignores this administrative reality is, therefore, shallow at best.

5) Recruitment severs kinship ties and community supports. Without such networks, social protection evaporates. There is no one to vouch for a Kadogo at the market, no relative to co-sign for a loan, and no customary authority to mediate disputes (Putnam, 2000; Wessells, 2009). Rebuilding social capital is therefore central to durable reintegration.

This definition refuses binary labels, victim or perpetrator, and insists that reintegration policy treat Kadogos first and foremost as vulnerable human beings whose needs are multiple, layered and gendered. It requires programming that centres safety, psychosocial care, gender-sensitive services, economic inclusion and, crucially, community co-ownership. To capture both patterns and meanings the thesis uses a convergent mixed-methods design: parallel quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews conducted across six provinces (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tshopo, Kinshasa, Kongo-Central). Sampling sought variation across conflict intensity and urban/rural divides. Interviews were conducted in French, Lingala and Swahili; ethical safeguards, trauma-informed consent and referral pathways were implemented throughout. I carried this project as a Congolese researcher, where positionality opened doors of trust and language familiarity but also demanded reflexive caution to avoid uncritical familiarity. Methodological transparency, regular supervisory triangulation, and detailed coding memos mitigated, but did not eliminate, the interpretive responsibilities inherent in ethically researching suffering.

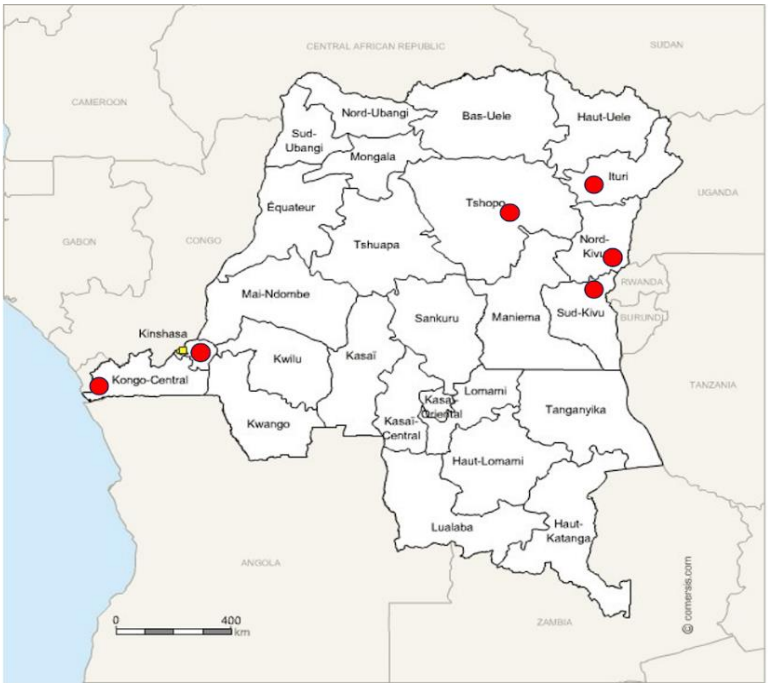
This study, based on extensive fieldwork conducted between July and September 2023, provides a grounded analysis of Kadogos' transition to civilian life. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews across six provinces, it interrogates the shortcomings of existing DDR programs, the societal rejection Kadogos often face, and the broader socio-cultural and economic forces shaping reintegration. The field-based approach was necessary given the paucity and unreliability of secondary data and the reluctance of local communities to openly engage with reintegration debates. Figure 1.1, below, illustrates the six field sites, chosen for their historical, political, and conflict-related significance, and for the contrasting reintegration dynamics they represent.

Figure 1.1, below, shows six provinces covered in field research: Kinshasa, Kongo-Central, Tshopo, Ituri, Nord-Kivu, and Sud-Kivu. Sites were strategically selected to capture contrasts in conflict exposure, cultural and linguistic diversity, and socio-economic conditions. Eastern provinces, predominantly Swahili-speaking, taller and more robust in build, cereal and bean-based diets, remain conflict-prone and host higher concentrations of ex-combatants. Western provinces, mainly Lingala and Kikongo-speaking, with cassava and fish-based diets, are more stable but exhibit strong social prejudices towards Kadogos. This east–west divide is central to analysing reintegration outcomes, as cultural identity and security environments shape both program delivery and community reception.

The decision to juxtapose conflict-affected eastern regions with relatively stable western areas was not incidental. In doing so, the study interrogates one of the examiners' core concerns: whether DDR outcomes are being overly generalised in the literature without attention to spatial variation. As

will become clear, the data reveal that location matters not just as a logistical detail, but as a determinant of both program design and reintegration success.

Figure 1.1[1]. Field research sites



- Eastern Provinces (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tshopo): Regions marked by persistent armed group activity (ADF[2], M23[3], and the FDLR[4]) and severe insecurity (Stearns, 2011). There, child soldier recruitment persists, reintegration is precarious, and stigma is acute (Wessells, 2009). These sites highlight risks of re-recruitment and the fragility of community acceptance.

- Western Provinces (Kinshasa, Kongo-Central): Areas less directly affected by active conflict but crucial to policy and programmatic oversight. Kinshasa captures the perspectives of policymakers and DDR administrators, while Kongo-Central, used as a relocation site for Kadogos from 2006-2014, offers insights into long-term outcomes of reintegration efforts (Autesserre, 2021; Blattman, 2016), but there too, stigma remains acute.

The east-west contrast is not a mere demographic curiosity; it is central to understanding reintegration dynamics. Reintegration is shaped not just by security conditions but also by local norms,

[1] Figure 1.1 illustrates the geographical distribution of field research sites in the DRC, highlighting key provinces where data was collected. The selected locations, Kinshasa, Kongo-Central, Tshopo, Ituri, Nord-Kivu, and Sud-Kivu, reflect regional disparities in reintegration experiences, capturing perspectives from conflict-affected eastern regions and relatively stable western areas. This spatial approach provides a comparative framework for analysing local variations in reintegration challenges, community acceptance, and security concerns.
[2] ADF (Allied Democratic Forces)
[3] M23 (the 23 March Movement) – the largest and most powerful rebel group in DRC
[4] FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)

linguistic identities, and perceptions of "outsiders", all of which differ sharply between these regions. This comparative lens reveals the spatial disjuncture between policy design (concentrated in Kinshasa) and field realities (eastern provinces). Reintegration is not a uniform process; it is fractured along regional lines, mediated by insecurity, socio-political structures, and community acceptance. By documenting these divergences, the thesis advances both academic debates and practical policy responses to one of the DRC's most urgent peacebuilding challenges.

This chapter introduces the thesis by laying out the research problem concerning the reintegration of Kadogos. It establishes the study's academic and practical relevance by situating it within the complex historical and socio-political landscape of the DRC. The chapter is organised into the following sections: 1.1 Aims and objectives - clarifies the research purpose and specific goals. 1.2 Research questions and factors influencing reintegration - details the core research questions, and key variables explored. 1.3 Previous research on Kadogos' reintegration - reviews the existing scholarly literature and identifies gaps. 1.4 Background and context of the research - provides essential historical, political, and socio-economic context. 1.5 Rationale and significance of the study - discusses the academic contributions and policy implications. The chapter concludes in 1.6 Chapter Summary and Transition to Chapter II with a summary, an outline of the structure of the thesis and a transition to Chapter II, which reviews the existing literature.

1.1 Aims and objectives

The reintegration of Kadogos into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the DRC is not merely a technical policy goal; it is a profoundly human and political challenge. This research aims to interrogate, with depth and nuance, the conditions under which reintegration efforts succeed, falter, or become counterproductive in the complex post-conflict landscapes of the DRC. The overarching aim of this study is to critically evaluate the reintegration process of Kadogos in the DRC by analysing both structural and lived realities. In doing so, the research moves beyond superficial programmatic assessments and delves into the interplay between political instability, socio-economic marginalisation, cultural perceptions, and the enduring legacies of war.

In the context of this research, reintegration refers to the complex and multifaceted process through which Kadogos transition from their roles within armed groups back into civilian society. This definition emphasizes the interactions between them and local communities, underscoring the importance of addressing perceived threats, prejudice, economic exploitation, protection, and community acceptance in the reintegration process (Alipanga & Luberenga, 2023; Amade, 2018; Agnew-Blais et al., 2013). The satisfaction with reintegration is measured by assessing factors such as community acceptance, the quality and extent of social relationships, employment status, economic stability, mental health and well-being, security, cultural assimilation, and a reduction in experiences of stigma and discrimination.

The process is especially complex for Kadogos, who have experienced significant trauma, stigma, and often a lack of social belonging. Many, recruited at young age, missed out on learning 'normal community custom', making their reintegration particularly difficult, as under pressure and scrutiny they had to learn to live in a civilian society without a militaristic hierarchy dictating their place. Thus, their understating of normalcy, wrongness or morality, often clash with the community's, leading to rejection rather than acceptance. Consequently, the study argues that reintegration requires comprehensive support mechanisms that address individual needs as well as foster community acceptance and cohesion. The comprehensive mechanism should, at minimum, include addressing prejudice and discrimination, family and community reconciliation, economic and social support, and sustained reintegration efforts.

In the DRC, the legal definition of a child soldier aligns with international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, both of which define a child as anyone under the age of 18. However, in practice, this definition is often undermined by socio-political realities, cultural interpretations, and the practical limitations of demobilization and reintegration programs. While international law emphasizes the protection of all children associated with armed groups, many Kadogos who were recruited as children, often forcibly, are not officially recognized as child soldiers when they demobilize and attempt to reintegrate into Congolese society.

One of the core challenges Kadogos face is the way they are perceived by local communities upon their return. By the time they demobilize, disarm, and attempt reintegration, they are physically adults, having spent years within the armed groups. During this time, they have often undergone profound psychological and emotional changes, shaped by prolonged exposure to violence, rigid military structures, and survival-based socialization. However, instead of being seen as individuals who were forcibly recruited as children, they are viewed solely as adult ex-combatants, stripped of the protective status that comes with being recognized as a child soldier. This perception erodes public sympathy and exposes them to heightened discrimination and marginalization.

Building on this central aim, the research pursues the following specific objectives, while contributing to theoretical debates on reintegration by applying and critically assessing frameworks such as Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Human Security Theory (HST), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT) in the context of the DRC:

The first objective of the study is to investigate the impact of conflict on Kadogos and how it affects their reintegration process. This includes assessing the prevalence of prejudice and evaluating the effectiveness of existing mental health support services. Betancourt et al. (2010) emphasize the need for targeted psychosocial interventions to address the mental health needs of former child soldiers. This study explores how trauma manifests in Kadogos and how the presence or absence of mental health support affects reintegration outcomes. Inadequate psychological support not only hampers their ability to reintegrate but can also increase their vulnerability to re-recruitment by armed groups, especially in

conflict-prone regions like the east, where the ongoing presence of groups intensifies the psychological burden.

The second objective is to analyse the socio-economic barriers hindering successful reintegration. This includes exploring the role of education, vocational training, and economic opportunities in facilitating or impeding reintegration, as well as identifying gaps in current programs. McKay and Mazurana (2004) highlight the importance of vocational training and education for long-term economic reintegration. The study examines whether they have access to sustainable livelihoods and how economic empowerment plays a role in preventing re-recruitment. Access to economic opportunities is crucial in reducing the likelihood that Kadogos will view armed conflict as a viable option, as they gain the resources and skills necessary to build a peaceful future, particularly in areas affected by protracted conflict and economic instability.

The third objective is to examine the role of community acceptance and social stigma in the reintegration process. This objective studies how community perceptions, prejudice, and discrimination impact both their willingness to reintegrate and the willingness of communities to accept them. Wessells (2009) underscores the importance of community engagement in reducing stigma and fostering social inclusion. The study focuses on identifying successful community-level initiatives that have bridged trust gaps and facilitated their acceptance. Given the fragile nature of peace in many regions of the DRC, especially in the east, community-level interventions are essential for breaking down fears and facilitating meaningful reintegration.

The fourth objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of current reintegration programs and policies in the DRC. This objective includes reviewing the design, implementation, and outcomes of existing reintegration frameworks, assessing their alignment with the specific needs of Kadogos. Child Soldiers International (2018) emphasizes the importance of robust legal frameworks and coordinated efforts in supporting reintegration. The study evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of current reintegration strategies and identifies areas for improvement, particularly in the context of eastern DRC, where security concerns and the presence of armed groups complicate the effectiveness of reintegration programs.

The fifth objective is to develop policy recommendations to enhance the reintegration process. Based on the findings, this objective proposes actionable recommendations for policymakers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to improve reintegration outcomes. Annan et al. (2011) emphasize the role of security, stability, and community trust in successful reintegration. The study provides evidence-based insights for designing responsive and context-specific reintegration policies that contribute to broader peace-building efforts in regions where conflict remains entrenched.

Each objective is designed to intersect with the others, recognising that the reintegration of Kadogos cannot be compartmentalised into discrete policy interventions. For example, the socio-economic reintegration of a former child soldier is inseparable from community acceptance, which in turn is influenced by the level of protection provided against threats and stigma. Moreover, the DRC's

volatile security environment means that reintegration is not a linear process but a continuous negotiation between vulnerability and resilience. The focus on multiple, overlapping dimensions avoid treating reintegration as a purely programmatic or technical issue and instead present it as an interdependent process shaped by structural, cultural, and psychological factors.

1.2 Research questions and factors influencing reintegration

At the heart of this study lie questions that seek to uncover not only the technical performance of reintegration programmes for Kadogos, but also the lived truths of those who pass through them (Autesserre, 2021; UNICEF, 2019; and Betancourt et al., 2013). The reintegration of Kadogos cannot be understood solely through policy outputs or numerical targets; it must be interrogated in terms of human security, social belonging, and the capacity to rebuild lives in fractured environments. The study is guided by the following core research questions:

(1) How effective are reintegration programmes for Kadogos in the DRC, considering political, social, economic, and cultural contexts? (2) What are the key protection mechanisms that help prevent re-recruitment and support sustainable reintegration? (3) How do community perceptions and levels of acceptance influence the reintegration outcomes for Kadogos? (4) What socio-economic barriers persist after reintegration, and how do they differ across regions of the DRC? (5) To what extent do international experiences of child soldier reintegration offer applicable lessons for the DRC? (6) How can theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Human Security Theory (HST), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT) help explain both successes and failures in reintegration efforts? The questions are anchored in an understanding that reintegration in the DRC is shaped by a constellation of interdependent factors, each exerting its influence within a volatile socio-political landscape:

1. Political and security context - the DRC's fragile security situation, marked by recurring armed conflict, contested state authority, and porous borders, creates an environment where reintegration is precarious. Protection is not merely about safety from violence; it is about the possibility of living without the perpetual fear of re-recruitment, retaliation, or displacement. In areas such as North Kivu and Ituri, the presence of armed groups and limited state reach undermines even well-designed programmes.

2. Economic stability and opportunity - socio-economic reintegration is not simply a question of providing vocational training; it requires genuine economic pathways that align with market realities. In the DRC, high unemployment, inflation, and the scarcity of formal jobs often mean that ex-combatants are left with few alternatives to illicit or militia-based economies.

3. Community acceptance and social capital - reintegration depends on the willingness of communities to view Kadogos not as perpetual threats, but as potential contributors to collective life.

SIT and SCT both suggest that without trust and mutual recognition, former child soldiers remain at the margins, socially, economically, and psychologically.

4. Protection mechanisms - formal protection (e.g., legal safeguards, community policing) and informal networks (e.g., religious groups, elders, peer support) act as buffers against vulnerability. However, regional disparities in protection infrastructure mean that some returnees enjoy relative safety while others remain exposed.

5. Psychological recovery and identity reconstruction - reintegration is as much a psychological process as it is a socio-economic one. The trauma of recruitment, exposure to violence, and forced displacement leaves deep emotional scars. HST emphasises that safety and dignity are inseparable from mental well-being, and PCT alerts us to the structural neglect that exacerbates this suffering.

These factors provide the analytical backbone of this thesis. They are not treated as isolated variables but as interconnected forces that both shape and are shaped by the reintegration process. The research questions deliberately weave together structural, community, and individual-level dimensions, ensuring that findings are grounded in a multi-layered understanding of reintegration. This approach addresses the need to integrate micro-level human experiences with macro-level political and economic structures, producing a more complete and nuanced analysis.

Reintegration is not merely a return to civilian life but a comprehensive process that encompasses social, economic, psychological, and cultural dimensions (Bartusevičius, 2015; Grétry, 2011; Autesserre, 2010; Amnesty International, 2006). The process is constantly complicated by the enduring awareness of conflict and the persistent presence of armed groups like M23 in the eastern DRC, which serves as a constant reminder of the fragile peace. This ongoing conflict complicates reintegration efforts, as the continued presence of armed factions and the unpredictable nature of conflict in regions such as Ituri, Nord Kivu, and South Kivu leave both Kadogos and the communities in a state of vigilance and distrust. The overall satisfaction with reintegration is a complex and highly subjective process, varying not only between individual Kadogos but also between different communities based on their experiences, expectations, and perceptions of security (Wagner, 2022; De Simone, 2020; Marriage, 2007). This study explicitly measures reintegration satisfaction from both perspectives, that of Kadogos themselves and the communities receiving them, recognizing that their assessments may differ significantly.

1.3 Previous research on Kadogos' reintegration

The reintegration of Kadogos forcibly recruited into armed groups in the DRC has been the subject of sporadic but growing academic and policy attention over the last two decades. Existing research is fragmented, often tied to specific DDR project cycles, and rarely follows returnees beyond short programme timelines (Autesserre, 2010; 2014; 2021). This has left considerable gaps in

understanding the long-term trajectories of these young people and the communities they re-enter. In the broader child soldier literature, seminal works (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2010; Boothby, 2018) emphasise the multi-dimensional nature of reintegration, linking economic inclusion, community acceptance, and psychosocial recovery as inseparable. Comparative research from Uganda (Annan et al., 2011), Sierra Leone (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007), and Colombia (McEvoy-Levy, 2011) illustrates that community reconciliation mechanisms and context-sensitive livelihood support often determine whether reintegration endures or fails.

The reintegration is shaped by a range of factors, all of which influence the effectiveness of reintegration programs in the DRC. Nduwimana (2017), Kiyala (2015, 2019, 2021, 2022), Betancourt et al. (2008), Denov and Marchand (2014), Trenholm et al. (2013), and Autesserre (2010, 2014, 2021) have all highlighted the compounded challenges, including fragmented identities, deep psychological trauma, and the social divisions exacerbated by decades of armed conflict. This creates substantial barriers to full reintegration, and often leading to social rejection, economic exploitation, with a heightened vulnerability to re-recruitment by armed groups.

A major obstacle to reintegration is the widespread prejudice and stigma directed at Kadogos, largely due to their association with armed groups. The legal definition of a child soldier, which is meant to protect minors under the age of 18 from exploitation, is often inconsistently applied in the DRC. Children aligned with state-supported militias, including groups like Wazalendo[5], are sometimes seen as "patriots," while those linked to rebel factions, including groups like M23[6], are often stigmatized as violent perpetrators (Grétry, 2011; Hinton & Good, 2010). These moral distinctions create a paradox that exacerbates the challenges faced by Kadogos, who are frequently viewed as dangerous or morally corrupt. As a result, they face significant barriers to reintegration, including social exclusion and economic marginalization, which prevent them from accessing educational and vocational opportunities necessary for sustainable livelihoods (Blattman, 2016).

In the DRC context, studies such as Autesserre (2021), Thill[7] (2021), and Stys et al. (2020) have underscored the structural weaknesses of DDR programmes: A) Short-term funding cycles that end before sustainable livelihoods are established. B) Weak coordination between national authorities, NGOs, and UN agencies. C) Urban-rural disparities in programme reach, with most resources concentrated in North Kivu and Ituri. Although these works provide valuable snapshots, they often treat the reintegration process as an event rather than a continuum, overlooking the evolving nature of both individual and community adaptation.

Three key lacunae emerge from the existing body of research: (1) Lack of Longitudinal Data. There is a scarcity of studies that track Kadogos over extended periods. Betancourt et al. (2013) call for multi-year follow-ups to assess economic stability, mental health, and social integration beyond initial

[5] Congolese rebel coalition based in the eastern DRC, supported by FARDC.
[6] The most powerful/feared rebel group, operating in eastern DRC, suspected of being a proxy and supported by Rwanda.
[7] Thill looks at DDR processes and reintegration from 2019 to 2021 in DRC specifically.

programme completion. (2) Regional and Cultural Variation. Many studies generalise reintegration experiences across the DRC, ignoring significant ethno-cultural diversity, local conflict dynamics, and resource distribution patterns. These risks misaligning interventions with the realities on the ground. (3) Gender-Specific Analysis. Female Kadogos, often survivors of sexual violence, face additional reintegration barriers, from stigma to exclusion in male-oriented training schemes, yet they remain underrepresented in the literature (Wessells, 2009).

Previous research has too often been conducted in parallel to policy design, rather than in dialogue with it. DDR programmes are frequently conceived within donor frameworks that privilege quick, measurable outputs, the number of demobilised fighters, the completion rate of vocational courses, over qualitative measures of well-being such as community trust, self-worth, and resilience. This disconnect reinforces what Postcolonial Theory (PCT) warns against: a reliance on externally imposed models that insufficiently account for local histories, colonial legacies, and indigenous coping mechanisms. Reintegration, in DRC, is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, including social stigma, economic hardship, community acceptance, ongoing insecurity, and institutional weaknesses. Overcoming these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that includes policy reforms, community engagement, and sustained financial and political support.

While this section reviews the academic landscape, Chapter II deepens the inquiry, mapping the theoretical frameworks, Social Identity Theory, Social Capital Theory, Human Security Theory, Contact Theory, and Postcolonial Theory, onto both global and DRC-specific reintegration experiences. By grounding the literature review in the limitations and strengths of prior research, the study builds a theoretical lens capable of analysing not only what has happened, but why it has happened the way it has, and what that means for the future of reintegration in the DRC.

1.4 Background and context of the research

The DRC stands as one of the most resource-rich yet persistently unstable countries in the world, a paradox that has shaped every aspect of its history and continues to define the experiences of its people (Kasongo & Sebahara, 2006). Stretching across 2.3 million square kilometres at the heart of Africa, the DRC is home to more than 95 million people and over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, making it both a geopolitical crossroads and a complex mosaic of identities. This complexity has profound implications for Kadogos' reintegration: the patterns of conflict, the political economy of war, the geography of displacement, and the diversity of cultural norms all intersect to shape what reintegration means, how it is attempted, and why it so often falters (Ndikumana & Emizet, 2003).

The DRC's post-independence history is marked by a series of overlapping crises, political authoritarianism under Mobutu Sese Seko, two devastating wars (1996-1997; 1998-2003) that drew in multiple neighbouring states, and the persistence of armed conflict in the eastern provinces despite

successive peace agreements. These wars entrenched the militarisation of society, institutionalised violence as a means of survival, and normalised the recruitment of children into armed groups (Wessells, 2006). The 2003 Sun City Peace Agreement and subsequent DDR programmes were intended to break this cycle, but political instability, corruption, and regional insecurity have consistently undermined them (Autesserre, 2021; Thill, 2021). Armed groups remain deeply embedded in local political economies, exploiting mineral resources, manipulating ethnic divisions, and offering a perverse form of security and livelihood to vulnerable populations (Humphreys, 2008, and Machel, 2000).

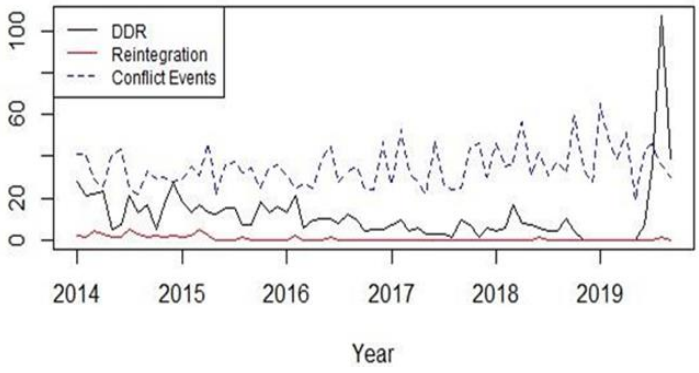
Economically, the DRC's vast natural wealth in cobalt, coltan, gold, and diamonds has fuelled both hope and conflict (Bwatshia & Katumumonyi, 2017). While foreign investment and resource extraction generate state revenue, they also create zones of exclusion where local communities see little benefit, intensifying grievances and competition. Poverty rates remain among the highest globally, and in conflict-affected provinces, formal employment opportunities are almost non-existent (Johnson, Scott, Rughita & Kisielewski, 2010; War Child, 2018). For Kadogos, this means that reintegration into the civilian economy is not only a personal challenge but a structural one, requiring transformation of the broader political economy of insecurity (Kiyala, 2021). Social services, healthcare, education, and psychosocial support are chronically underfunded, especially outside provincial capitals (Betancourt et al., 2008). Mental health provision is minimal, meaning that trauma from years of violence often remains untreated, eroding the prospects for sustained reintegration.

Between 2014 and 2019, the dynamics of conflict and reintegration in the DRC reveal sharp contrasts between conflict persistence and DDR participation. Figure 1.2, below, based on merged United Nations Joint Mission Analysis Centre (UN-JMAC) and Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) data, shows three trends: fluctuating conflict events, modest enrolments of rebels into DDR, and a near-flat line for Kadogos' enrolment. Periodic spikes in violence, especially in late 2019 during the political transition following President Félix Tshisekedi's election, reflect broader instability and shifting power dynamics (Autesserre, 2021; Stearns, 2020). Although rebel enrolments rose slightly in 2019, overall low participation underscores systemic weaknesses in DDR programs, including resource shortages, mismanagement, and insecurity (Thill, 2021).

The line chart, below, compares three indicators over time: Kadogos entering DDR, overall rebels entering DDR, and recorded conflict incidents. Data reveal that Kadogos' participation in DDR remains consistently lower than adults', suggesting barriers such as stigma, eligibility constraints, or re-recruitment during demobilisation. Peaks in DDR enrolment do not correspond to reductions in conflict, indicating that DDR has not been fully integrated into broader security stabilisation. Some peaks occur during periods of continued or escalating violence, pointing to program–conflict misalignment. This reinforces the thesis argument that DDR must be embedded within wider peacebuilding and protection frameworks to achieve sustainable results. The evidence confirms what some practitioners in the field have quietly admitted: DDR in the DRC too often treats reintegration as an *administrative endpoint*, not

a *social process*. It ignores the complex web of community perceptions, economic realities, and personal trauma that frame the Kadogos' return.

Figure 1.2: Kadogos entering DDR vs overall rebels entering DDR programs vs conflict reports.

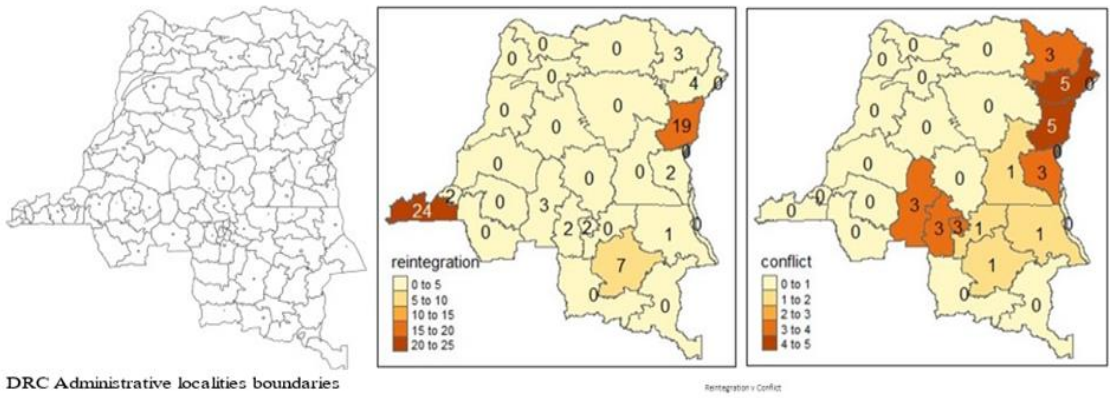


Most strikingly, reports of Kadogos entering reintegration programs remain negligible, despite their estimated share of nearly 60% of fighting forces (Wessells, 2009). This exclusion highlights persistent barriers such as stigma, lack of tailored support, and weak protection mechanisms (Betancourt et al., 2013; Boothby, 2018). The gap between overall rebel enrolments and those of Kadogos illustrates how DDR programs fail to address the specific vulnerabilities of child soldiers, echoing critiques in the literature (McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Stys et al., 2020).

Complementing this, Figure 1.3, below, maps the geographical distribution of reintegration activities against conflict hotspots. Data from UN-JMAC and ACLED identify 209 localities across the DRC, concentrated especially in Nord Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. These are regions where reintegration efforts overlap with ongoing violence and armed group activity, reinforcing the risk of re-recruitment. The maps underscore the uneven distribution of DDR activities, the fragility of local governance, and the socio-economic hardships, poverty, weak infrastructure, and displacement, that complicate reintegration.

Map-based analysis showing spatial distribution and trends in reintegration numbers across provinces between 2014 and 2019. Eastern provinces report higher reintegration numbers due to concentrated conflict and targeted program activity, yet some active conflict zones show low reintegration rates, likely due to insecurity, limited access, or underreporting. A downward trend from 2016 onwards coincides with reduced donor funding and political prioritisation, raising concerns about DDR program fatigue and relapse into violence. The spatial and temporal disparities illustrated here justify the study's regional comparative approach and underscore the need for context-specific interventions.

Figure 1.3[8]: Geographical distribution of conflict and DDR engagement



Taken together, the figures demonstrate three critical realities: (1) DDR participation remains fragile and inconsistent; (2) Kadogos are systematically excluded from reintegration efforts; and (3) reintegration initiatives are concentrated in conflict-prone regions, where instability and poverty severely undermine their effectiveness. These findings highlight the need for context-sensitive, multi-dimensional DDR strategies that integrate protection, psychosocial support, economic empowerment, and long-term community engagement.

Figures 1.2 and 1.3 illustrate the geographical distribution of DDR enrolment and conflict intensity across the DRC between 2014 and 2019. The spatial analysis reveals a stark east-west divide: Eastern Provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, and parts of Maniema) consistently register the highest DDR participation rates, reflecting both concentrated conflict intensity and the presence of international DDR infrastructure. Western and Central Provinces record minimal DDR activity, not necessarily because of peace, but due to weak programme reach and different conflict dynamics that are less visible to international monitoring. The mapping also underscores regional disparities in reintegration prospects. Eastern provinces, despite higher resource allocation, suffer from conflict recurrence, resulting in re-recruitment and programme fatigue. Conversely, areas with lower conflict intensity often lack reintegration support entirely, leaving returnees invisible to both the state and NGOs.

This context reveals a central tension in DDR policy: reintegration is not a single, uniform process. It unfolds in different cultural, economic, and political environments, from rural communities still governed by traditional chiefs, to urban peripheries marked by rapid population growth and fragile

[8] Fig 1.3 presents data from JMAC on the number of Kadogos reported in reintegration programs across different provinces of the DRC between 2014 and 2019. It highlights significant provincial disparities in reintegration efforts, the declining trend over the years and suggests potential weaknesses in DDR program sustainability, reduced reporting, or persistent insecurity limiting reintegration efforts.

municipal governance. The tribal, religious, and linguistic diversity of the DRC adds both richness and complication to this process. In some communities, ethnic narratives frame Kadogos as defenders, while in others they are seen as perpetrators, a perception that shapes everything from social acceptance to employment opportunities. Religious institutions, particularly churches, have sometimes filled gaps in psychosocial support, but their reach and inclusivity vary widely.

This complex interplay between history, geography, politics, and socio-economic realities demands that any study of Kadogos' reintegration be locally grounded and nationally aware. It also demands a rejection of one-size-fits-all approaches; what succeeds in a South Kivu rural community might fail entirely in Kinshasa or Equateur. Moreover, the role of external actors, such as the UN, the AU, and multinational corporations, while critical in providing resources and support for reintegration, is often poorly understood by local populations. Kadogos are seen as both victims and perpetrators, a dual identity that complicates their reintegration and perpetuates the cycle of violence (Trenholm et al., 2013). Local perceptions of resource exploitation and the manipulation of vulnerable populations by foreign actors contribute to the distrust between external agencies and local communities, making it even more challenging to facilitate reintegration and peacebuilding. By situating this research within the historical legacies of violence, the uneven geography of conflict, and the socio-economic fragmentation of the DRC, the study positions itself to engage critically with DDR as both a humanitarian necessity and a contested political project.

The broader geopolitical dynamics of the DRC, including tensions with armed groups such as M23, which allegedly receives support from Rwanda, further exacerbate reintegration challenges (Ndikumana & Emizet, 2003). Similar patterns of ethnic conflict are visible in the western provinces, where tensions between the Yaka and Teke tribes mirror those seen in the east. Governance failures, corruption, and the manipulation of vulnerable populations by political and military actors perpetuate cycles of violence and exploitation, further leaving Kadogos and their communities vulnerable. As peace remains fragile in many parts of the DRC, especially in the east, the reintegration of Kadogos remains a critical component of any strategy to foster sustainable peace and stability. This historical, political, and socio-economic backdrop forms the foundation for the rationale and significance of this study. Understanding *where* and *why* reintegration efforts unfold the way they do is essential before determining *how* to study them and *what* gaps remain to be addressed. In doing so, the next section sets out why this research matters, not only academically, but for policy, practice, and the lives of those it concerns most.

1.5 Rationale and significance of the study

This section speaks to why this study matters, and why this angle is being taken. It highlights the relevance, both academically, by contributing to literature on child soldier reintegration, DDR, and

African post-conflict recovery, and practically by influencing policy, community engagement, and program design. The reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC is more than an academic subject. It is a profoundly human challenge, entangled in the country's history of violence, its fractured governance, and its contested visions of peace. For the young people who once bore arms, the end of combat rarely means the end of war. Instead, they enter a fragile space between past and future, where acceptance is uncertain, livelihoods are precarious, and safety is conditional. Despite two decades of DDR programming in the DRC, the academic literature exhibits significant blind spots. While there is a body of work on child soldier demobilisation globally (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2010; Blattman, 2016), research specifically on Kadogos in the DRC remains fragmented, overly generalised, or temporally limited. Four critical gaps underpin this study's rationale:

1. Lack of longitudinal perspectives - most studies assess reintegration within 6–24 months of programme completion. This fails to capture the long-term trajectories of Kadogos, including risks of re-recruitment, shifting community attitudes, and the erosion or reinforcement of economic stability over years.

2. Insufficient regional differentiation - analyses often treat the DRC as a homogenous case, ignoring the stark regional disparities in conflict dynamics, cultural contexts, and DDR resource allocation revealed in Figures 1.2 and 1.3. This homogenisation obscures why certain reintegration models thrive in one province and fail in another.

3. Gender-specific blind spots - female Kadogos, often survivors of sexual violence, face compounded stigma, exclusion from community life, and a near-total absence of tailored DDR support. Their experiences are either under-represented or subsumed under male-dominated narratives.

4. Neglect of community agency - much of the DDR literature frames reintegration as something done to communities, rather than *with* them. The social capital, reconciliation traditions, and local governance mechanisms that could enable sustainable reintegration remains under-researched.

By addressing these gaps, this study builds on, but also challenges, existing frameworks, pushing for a context-specific, locally grounded, and long-term view of reintegration in the DRC. Beyond academic necessity, the urgency of this research is deeply personal and political. Every year, cycles of violence in eastern DRC reabsorb disillusioned former combatants, including those once counted as DDR "success stories." For many, the choice is not between war and peace, but between starvation and survival through re-arming. Policy responses have too often been reactive, short-term, and externally driven, resulting in recycling wars rather than building sustainable peace. By foregrounding the voices of those directly affected, alongside regional DDR practitioners and policymakers, this research seeks to move beyond tick-box reintegration and towards structural transformation, addressing poverty, insecurity, and community trust in tandem. The stakes are high: for each Kadogo who fails to reintegrate, the risk is not only personal tragedy but the perpetuation of insecurity that undermines both local stability and national reconstruction.

This study makes three key contributions: (1) Theoretical: It advances reintegration scholarship by integrating Human Security Theory (HST), Social Identity Theory (SIT), and Social Capital Theory (SCT) into a multi-dimensional analysis of protection, community acceptance, and socio-economic resilience. (2) Empirical: It generates regionally disaggregated insights into reintegration trajectories, informed by both quantitative mapping (Figures 1.2 and 1.3) and qualitative accounts from the DRC's diverse provinces. (3) Practical: It provides evidence-based recommendations for DDR design and policy, advocating for context-sensitive, community-driven approaches that are attuned to local realities.

Chapter I has established the foundation for this study by presenting the aims, research questions, and significance of exploring reintegration challenges faced by Kadogos in the DRC. It situated the research within the historical and political complexities of post-conflict recovery and highlighted critical gaps in existing scholarship. It has laid out the aims and objectives, research questions, existing literature gaps, context, and rationale for the study. In doing so, it has made three arguments: (1) Reintegration in the DRC is structurally constrained by historical, political, economic, and geographical factors. (2) Current DDR models fail to address long-term, regionally specific, and gender-sensitive needs. (3) Addressing these shortcomings requires a holistic framework that combines academic rigour with lived realities.

This chapter has tried to do more than define terms or set methods: it has named human pain. Kadogos are not statistics; they are children whose bodies and futures were short-circuited by armed actors, economic greed and political neglect. Many girls returned with the compounding trauma of sexual slavery; many boys return with skills of violence but little way to convert them into civilian livelihoods. If reintegration is a peacebuilding test, the DRC's record is a moral indictment, and a call to action. The solutions demanded by this reality are not quick fixes. They require patient, long-term commitments to security, psychosocial healing, economic justice and community rebuilding. The chapters that follow aim to show, with evidence and empathy, how those commitments might be shaped and sustained.

Chapter II turns to a critical review of the literature, examines how Kadogos' reintegration has been studied both globally and within the DRC. It interrogates dominant theoretical frameworks, identifies further gaps, and situate this research within broader debates on post-conflict recovery, transitional justice, and the political economy of peacebuilding. It outlines the complex, multifaceted challenges surrounding the reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC. Reintegration efforts are deeply interwoven with the socio-political and economic conditions in the DRC, a country beset by prolonged insecurity, widespread poverty, economic exploitation, political instability, and fragile state institutions. These systemic challenges exacerbate the vulnerabilities of former child soldiers, severely limiting their ability to reintegrate successfully into civilian life, especially in regions such as the east where the continuous presence of armed groups serves as a constant reminder of the fragility of peace.

Chapter III will present the conceptual model and discuss the interaction of socio-economic, cultural, political, and psychological dimensions in reintegration. It will introduce the theoretical framework underpinning this study, exploring key concepts such as Prejudice vs. Protection and Community Acceptance vs. Economic Exploitation. These theoretical tensions offer a lens through which the reintegration experiences of Kadogos can be better understood. Hypotheses developed in this chapter will be tested using field data, providing insights into the complex factors that influence reintegration outcomes.

Chapter IV will outline the mixed-methods research design and data collection strategy, as well as explain the rationale for the selected provinces, emphasizing the ethical considerations involved in conducting research with vulnerable populations in volatile contexts. Given the sensitivity of the subject matter and the precarious security environment in many regions of the DRC, ethical rigor is paramount. This chapter also discusses the data collection processes, sampling techniques, and operationalization of key concepts, ensuring the study's methodological robustness.

Chapter V and VI will present and analyse the findings, integrating both quantitative and qualitative strands, and link them to macro-level trends. Chapter 5 will focus on statistical analyses derived from survey data, identifying correlations between socio-economic, psychological, and community-related variables that influence reintegration outcomes. Chapter 6 complements these findings through qualitative insights drawn from interviews and participant observations, providing a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Kadogos and their communities.

Then Chapter VII will draw conclusions and offer targeted recommendations for sustainable reintegration in the DRC and similar contexts. Practical recommendations are offered to inform program design, improve stakeholder collaboration, and address systemic barriers to successful reintegration. This chapter also reflects on the study's limitations and suggests avenues for future research, contributing to advancing knowledge on the reintegration of former child soldiers in conflict-affected settings, with particular relevance to the fragile socio-political landscape of the DRC.

Chapter II: Reintegration in context - theories, realities, and comparative pathways

This chapter reviews the existing literature on the reintegration of Kadogos, situating the analysis within broader debates on DDR in post-conflict contexts. It encompasses various aspects of literature, ranging from general context to specific issues, by Kadogos in particular. A preliminary glance reveals that they occupy dual roles as both perpetrators and victims, with the complexities arising from their age, especially when they joined armed forces. The review emphasises the extensive human and economic costs of conflicts, with millions displaced and killed over nearly three decades, accompanied by significant financial expenditures aimed at controlling or resolving conflicts. The overarching objective is to contribute to the existing understanding of reintegration programs of ex-combatants in general, with a specific focus on destigmatising Kadogos and enhancing knowledge about the post-DDR experiences in the DRC.

The review serves three primary purposes: (1) To map the structural, socio-economic, and cultural challenges shaping reintegration outcomes in the DRC. (2) To analyse the interplay of protection, community acceptance, prejudice, and economic opportunity in shaping reintegration trajectories. (3) To identify empirical and theoretical gaps that guide the development of the study's conceptual framework and hypotheses in Chapter III. The chapter unfolds as follows: Section 2.1 examines the historical and contextual background of reintegration challenges in the DRC. Section 2.2 explores key factors influencing reintegration, including prejudice, economic barriers, protection, and community acceptance. Section 2.3 draws comparative insights from DDR processes in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Colombia. Section 2.4 identifies major gaps in the existing scholarship, and Section 2.5 summarises the key takeaways and transitions to the theoretical and conceptual framework in Chapter III.

The reintegration of Kadogos remains one of the most persistent and complex challenges in the DRC. While numerous DDR programmes have been implemented since the late 1990s, their outcomes have been uneven and frequently unsustainable. The cyclical nature of conflict in the DRC, characterised by repeated armed group resurgence, entrenched poverty, ethnic tensions, and fragmented governance, continues to undermine reintegration gains (Autesserre, 2021; Thill, 2021). This chapter situates the DRC's reintegration challenges within a broader, comparative and theoretical framework, critically engaging with the global literature, regional experiences, and context-specific realities. It does so not by treating reintegration as a one-off technical process, but as a multi-layered, relational, and deeply political transformation.

It critically examines the determinants that influence reintegration outcomes for Kadogos, rethinks the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning DDR practice, draws comparative lessons from other post-conflict contexts, and proposes an integrated pathway towards more effective reintegration in the DRC. The aim is to establish both the empirical and theoretical foundation for the analytical work in Chapter III and the policy-oriented synthesis in later chapters. Drawing on

scholarship from peacebuilding, development, human security, and postcolonial studies, the chapter examines both the determinants and dynamics of reintegration, as well as the gaps in existing research and policy practice. The review is informed by seminal works (Autesserre, 2021; Blattman, 2016; Wessells, 2009) and comparative DDR lessons from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, and Colombia, thereby identifying what can and cannot be transplanted to the Congolese context.

It reviews the core elements shaping reintegration, structural, economic, social, and psychological, while highlighting the under-researched intersections of gender, age, and regional disparity in the DRC. Then unpacks the major theoretical lenses, Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Human Security Theory (HST), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT), to frame a more nuanced understanding of Kadogos' reintegration. It distils context-sensitive strategies and lessons learned from other post-conflict settings, highlighting both transferable practices and limitations when applied to the DRC. Then synthesises the literature into a set of guiding principles for designing sustainable, inclusive, and context-specific reintegration strategies, thus setting the stage for the theoretical and methodological choices. In doing so, the chapter responds directly to concerns over the insufficient integration of comparative case studies, and the need for a sharper articulation of policy and academic gaps. It also adopts a deliberately personal yet scholarly tone, recognising that behind every dataset, programme evaluation, and policy document lies the lived experience of a young person whose childhood was consumed by conflict.

2.1 Reintegration: determinants, dynamics, and gaps in existing research

The reintegration of Kadogos is neither a linear nor a universally replicable process (Blair, 2020). It is a contested, relational journey shaped by structural conditions, socio-economic opportunities, community perceptions, and individual resilience. While international DDR frameworks often conceptualise reintegration as the "final phase" of post-conflict demobilisation, the reality on the ground, particularly in eastern DRC, reveals a process that is fragile, uneven, and prone to reversal (Muggah, 2005; Stys et al., 2020).

Reintegration programmes in the DRC operate in a deeply unstable political and security environment. National DDR initiatives, often driven by donor conditionalities and short-term funding cycles, struggle to adapt to the country's fluid conflict dynamics (Autesserre, 2021). The consequence is a fragmentation of interventions: initiatives vary significantly by province, with eastern regions receiving disproportionate attention and western provinces often neglected (Stys et al., 2020). Political volatility and weak institutional capacity compound these issues. DDR offices are frequently under-resourced, subject to political reshuffling, and reliant on international agencies for technical guidance and funding (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). This dependency undermines local ownership and erodes public trust, contradicting Social Identity Theory's emphasis on the need for stable, trusted institutions to

support identity transformation. The absence of a coherent national reintegration policy also means that programming is often reactive rather than preventive. For example, the recurrent re-recruitment of demobilised youth into armed groups, documented in Ituri and North Kivu (UNSC, 2022), is not just a security lapse but a structural failure to provide protective and livelihood pathways post-demobilisation.

Economic security is repeatedly identified as a cornerstone of sustainable reintegration (Blattman, 2016; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). However, in the DRC, economic reintegration is undermined by a mismatch between vocational training programmes and actual market demand. In eastern urban centres such as Goma and Bukavu, the oversupply of trained carpenters and tailors has led to market saturation, pushing many back into precarious or illicit livelihoods. In rural areas, agricultural support programmes are often poorly designed, providing inputs without addressing land tenure disputes or ensuring market access. The result is a cycle where former combatants are economically active but remain food-insecure and vulnerable to militia recruitment offers that promise immediate cash or protection (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2009). Regional disparity deepens this crisis: in Kinshasa and western provinces, DDR-linked economic initiatives are scarce, and ex-combatants are often absorbed into informal urban economies where exploitation and underpayment are rampant (Stys et al., 2020). Human Security Theory frames this

Reintegration is as much a social process as it is an economic one. Community acceptance plays a decisive role in shaping the long-term prospects of Kadogos (Wessells, 2009). Yet, in many Congolese communities, former child soldiers are perceived not as victims but as dangerous actors with the potential to disrupt local order (Annan et al., 2011). Such stigma is fuelled by memories of past violence, ethnic and political bias, and competition over scarce resources. In multi-ethnic settings like Ituri, reintegration efforts are often complicated by intercommunal mistrust, where a Kadogo's former group affiliation shapes whether they are welcomed or ostracised. Sensitisation campaigns are frequently underfunded and short-lived, failing to shift deep-seated attitudes. Contact Theory suggests that regular, structured, and cooperative interaction between ex-combatants and community members can erode prejudice, but this requires long-term investment and local leadership buy-in, elements often missing in DRC programmes.

The psychological toll of armed conflict on Kadogos is profound. Studies document high rates of PTSD, depression, and anxiety among former child soldiers in the DRC (Betancourt et al., 2010; Boothby, 2018). These conditions not only affect individual wellbeing but also undermine reintegration by reducing the capacity to participate in economic and social life. Psychosocial support in the DRC remains patchy, donor-dependent, and rarely gender-sensitive. Most services are urban-centred, leaving rural returnees with minimal or no access. Even when available, mental health programmes tend to be short-term, focusing on symptom management rather than long-term recovery and resilience building. Social Identity Theory and Human Security Theory both point to the need for secure, stigma-free environments where identity reconstruction and healing can occur. In the absence of such conditions, many Kadogos internalise stigma, withdraw socially, or relapse into militia life.

Gender and age profoundly shape reintegration outcomes, yet both remain under-addressed in most Congolese DDR frameworks. Female Kadogos often face layered marginalisation, first as ex-combatants, then as survivors of gender-based violence, and finally as women in a patriarchal society with limited economic and political opportunities (Machel, 2001; Wessells, 2006). Many are rejected by their families, particularly if they return with children born of sexual violence (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Programmes often fail to provide tailored livelihoods that match cultural norms without reinforcing gender inequities. Brett & Specht (2004) stress the urgent need for empirical data on the lived realities of female ex-combatants to inform gender-sensitive policy design. Age compounds these challenges. Adolescents, caught between childhood and adulthood, are often too old for school reintegration yet too young for stable employment (Sommers, 2006). Older Kadogos face difficulties reintegrating into formal education where they may be years older than classmates, while younger ones risk exploitation in informal labour markets. This developmental mismatch calls for flexible, age-appropriate programming, an area where current policy is strikingly deficient.

2.2. Rethinking: conceptual and theoretical pathways in understanding reintegration

Reintegration in post-conflict contexts is neither a linear journey nor a purely technical exercise. It is a deeply social, political, and psychological transformation, one that requires reconciling the formal structures of peacebuilding with the lived realities of those who have endured war. For the Kadogos, this process is further complicated by layers of historical injustice, community mistrust, and persistent insecurity, making simplistic, donor-driven approaches inadequate (Wessells, 2009; Autesserre, 2021). To interrogate these complexities, this section unpacks the theoretical and conceptual lenses that shape contemporary understanding of reintegration, demonstrating how they can be reconfigured to address the unique conditions in the DRC.

DDR programs have historically been framed as technical solutions, demobilise combatants, provide vocational training, and release them into civilian life (Muggah, 2009; Knight & Özerdem, 2004). While such frameworks have operational clarity, they often reduce reintegration to a checklist, obscuring the profound emotional, cultural, and identity-based challenges faced by former combatants. In the DRC, this reductionism has translated into short-term interventions that neither secure livelihoods nor mend the fractures in social trust. As Betancourt et al. (2013) caution, the reintegration of former child soldiers requires sustained, multi-dimensional engagement, a long-haul investment in human security, social acceptance, and psychological recovery rather than a narrow economic package.

To overcome the limitations of one-size-fits-all DDR designs, this study applies five interlinked theoretical perspectives, each illuminating a different facet of reintegration dynamics in the DRC: (1) Human Security Theory (HST) - rooted in the recognition that freedom from fear and freedom from want are prerequisites for sustainable peace (UNDP, 1994), HST shifts the focus from protecting state

borders to safeguarding individual well-being. For Kadogos, this means that reintegration cannot be achieved unless they are physically safe, economically empowered, and psychologically supported. In a country where insecurity persists long after ceasefires are signed, human security provides the moral and operational anchor for reintegration design. (2) Social Capital Theory (SCT) - reintegration is not merely the insertion of individuals into an economy; it is the reweaving of broken social networks (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). SCT underscores the role of trust, reciprocity, and collective norms in enabling acceptance. For Kadogos, especially those returning to communities they once harmed or from which they were estranged, rebuilding social capital involves both personal transformation and community readiness.

(3) Social Identity Theory (SIT) - explains how group affiliations shape self-perception and intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Kadogos often carry a stigmatised identity, "child soldier", that undermines their reintegration. Transitioning from a combatant identity to that of a valued civilian requires deliberate interventions that reshape both self-image and community narratives. (4) Contact Theory (CT) - proposed by Allport (1954), CT posits that structured, positive interactions between groups can reduce prejudice. In reintegration, this translates to creating safe, repeated, and meaningful encounters between Kadogos and community members, breaking down fear-based stereotypes. (5) Postcolonial Theory (PCT) - situates reintegration within the legacies of colonial extraction, ethnic manipulation, and structural inequality (Fanon, 1961; Mbembe, 2001). It challenges the imposition of externally designed DDR models that fail to resonate with local socio-political realities, arguing instead for locally rooted, historically conscious strategies.

2.2.1 Rethinking prejudice

Prejudice is a central barrier to the reintegration of Kadogos, cutting across psychological, socio-economic, and structural domains. It manifests as stigma, suspicion, and rejection within communities, and has been widely recognised as a persistent obstacle to sustainable reintegration in the DRC (Ndikumana & Emizet, 2003; Van Der Haer, 2019). Such prejudice is deeply embedded within the DRC's broader environment of insecurity, endemic poverty, systemic exploitation, and political fragility (Finnbakk & Nordas, 2019). For Kadogos, prejudice not only delays their return to civilian life but also diminishes their overall satisfaction with reintegration by fostering exclusion, trauma, and marginalisation.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides a useful lens to understand how prejudice hinders reintegration. Communities frequently categorise Kadogos as members of an "outgroup," defined by their association with armed violence and perceived moral corruption (Betancourt et al., 2010; Wessells, 2006). This categorisation sustains community fear and hostility, preventing the transition of Kadogos into new, positive social roles. Satisfaction with reintegration is therefore undermined, as prejudice

erodes their ability to construct a rehabilitated identity recognised and accepted by their peers. Internalised stigma, where Kadogos adopt society's negative perceptions of themselves, further deepens self-isolation, low self-esteem, and reluctance to engage in community life (Wessells, 2006).

Social Capital Theory (SCT) highlights another dimension: prejudice directly weakens the social trust and networks necessary for reintegration. Annan et al. (2009) show that when communities accept and support Kadogos, reintegration outcomes improve significantly. Conversely, prejudice erodes bridging social capital, cutting off access to community resources, employment opportunities, and informal support systems. Without these networks, Kadogos experience lower satisfaction with reintegration, as exclusion perpetuates cycles of vulnerability and increases the risk of re-recruitment or exploitative labour (Annan et al., 2009).

From the perspective of Human Security Theory (HST), prejudice constitutes a direct threat to Kadogos' security and well-being. Social exclusion limits access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and livelihoods (Betancourt et al., 2010). This form of insecurity compounds their physical vulnerability and psychological trauma, making reintegration precarious and unsatisfying. Prejudice thus undermines the promise of human security, leaving Kadogos trapped in a liminal state, neither fully combatants nor fully integrated citizens.

Contact Theory (CT) suggests that sustained, structured interactions between Kadogos and their communities can reduce prejudice, foster empathy, and improve social cohesion (Sommers, 2006). Yet, in practice, pervasive stigma and fear often prevent such contact from occurring, leaving negative stereotypes unchallenged. This failure reinforces misconceptions that Kadogos are "cursed" or perpetual threats, further lowering satisfaction with reintegration. Successful interventions, such as community sensitisation campaigns, demonstrate that when contact is facilitated under conditions of equality and mutual respect, prejudice can be mitigated and reintegration outcomes enhanced (Sommers, 2006).

Finally, Postcolonial Theory (PCT) situates prejudice within deeper historical legacies of colonial exploitation and systemic inequality. Colonial governance practices fragmented Congolese communities along ethnic, linguistic, and cultural lines, embedding hierarchies of suspicion and exclusion (Autesserre, 2021). These legacies persist in contemporary perceptions of Kadogos, who are seen not only as perpetrators of violence but also as symbols of state failure and societal breakdown. Prejudice against them thus reflects broader systemic dysfunction, where exclusion is reproduced through institutions as much as through individual attitudes. Understanding this context clarifies why reintegration satisfaction remains elusive: prejudice is not an isolated community bias, but a structural condition rooted in historical and political injustices.

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks explain how prejudice diminishes Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration. SIT shows how exclusion denies them positive identity reconstruction; SCT illustrates how prejudice erodes the social bonds necessary for economic and emotional stability; HST demonstrates how discrimination threatens security and access to basic needs; CT underscores the

importance of structured interaction in reducing stigma; and PCT reminds us that prejudice is historically and politically embedded. Addressing prejudice, therefore, requires a multidimensional response: fostering inclusive community interactions, rebuilding trust networks, ensuring access to services, and dismantling systemic inequities. Only by confronting prejudice at these multiple levels can reintegration become both sustainable and satisfying for Kadogos in the DRC.

2.2.2. Rethinking economic exploitation

Economic exploitation remains one of the most formidable barriers to the reintegration of former child soldiers in the DRC (Thorsell, 2013). For Kadogos, this challenge is not only a by-product of the country's weak governance and fragile institutions, but also of deep-rooted socio-political and historical structures that perpetuate cycles of marginalization. Despite the formal disarmament and demobilization of thousands, their return to civilian life is persistently undermined by exploitative labour conditions, economic precarity, and the absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities (Blattman & Annan, 2016; Wessells, 2009). These failures exacerbate poverty and exclusion, heightening susceptibility to re-recruitment into armed groups, thereby prolonging conflict and instability (Autesserre, 2021).

To understand how economic exploitation obstructs reintegration and undermines satisfaction with civilian life, this section draws on Postcolonial Theory, Human Security Theory, Social Capital Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Contact Theory. Together, these frameworks illustrate that economic exploitation is not a single-dimensional obstacle but rather a structural, psychological, and social process that drives reintegration failure while reinforcing exclusionary dynamics.

From a Postcolonial Theory perspective, the economic exploitation of Kadogos mirrors colonial and neo-colonial patterns of extraction. The Congolese economy continues to operate within an extractive framework, where foreign corporations and domestic elites profit from artisanal mining, resource smuggling, and informal markets, while vulnerable populations remain relegated to the lowest and most precarious tiers of labour (Autesserre, 2021; Thill, 2021). Former child soldiers, lacking education, capital, and political protection, are systematically excluded from formal opportunities, and thus funnelled into hazardous and exploitative sectors such as artisanal mining, charcoal production, construction, and urban street economies (Stys et al., 2020).

This dynamic reflects the continuities of colonial-era hierarchies, where marginalised groups were deliberately trapped in cycles of dependency and coercion. Today, Kadogos inherit this structural legacy, their labour commodified but their humanity disregarded. This marginalization creates a postcolonial double bind: on one hand, DDR programs present reintegration as a return to civilian dignity, but on the other, the only economic roles available replicate forms of coerced exploitation

reminiscent of colonial subjugation. Unsurprisingly, such outcomes severely diminish satisfaction with reintegration, as the promise of civilian life is betrayed by the persistence of systemic exploitation.

From the lens of Human Security Theory, economic exploitation erodes the very foundation of reintegration: economic security. According to this framework, reintegration cannot be sustained unless individuals achieve stable livelihoods, access to land, and financial independence (Blattman & Annan, 2016). Yet Kadogos remain locked in cycles of economic vulnerability, with DDR programs often limited to short-term stipends or vocational training that is poorly aligned with market demands (Betancourt et al., 2013; Okolie-Osemene, 2021). The absence of sustainable income renders reintegration fragile and unsatisfactory. Faced with poverty and uncertainty, Kadogos are frequently lured back into armed groups, where wages, food, and protection are offered, however deceptively, as alternatives to destitution (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Armed groups such as M23, Mai-Mai factions, and CODECO exploit this desperation, manipulating Kadogos' search for survival into renewed cycles of militarization (Autesserre, 2021). From a human security perspective, therefore, economic exploitation directly undermines reintegration satisfaction by depriving Kadogos of the basic security needed to build hope and stability. Instead of seeing civilian life as an escape from insecurity, they often view it as an extension of precariousness.

Social Capital Theory highlights that economic reintegration is not merely about individual livelihoods but about embeddedness within networks of trust, reciprocity, and opportunity (Wessells, 2009). Yet Kadogos often find themselves excluded from local economic and social networks. Employers and community leaders view them with suspicion, perceived as violent, unpredictable, or socially deviant (Annan et al., 2011). This lack of trust means Kadogos are rarely offered legitimate jobs or credit, pushing them into shadow economies where exploitation is rampant (Blattman & Annan, 2016). The absence of social capital not only restricts their economic opportunities but also erodes reintegration satisfaction: without access to supportive networks, Kadogos experience heightened isolation, rejection, and frustration. This exclusion reinforces their sense of being outsiders, exacerbating both economic exploitation and social stigma. Moreover, it weakens the community's capacity to act as a protective buffer against re-recruitment, leaving Kadogos trapped in exploitative cycles.

Reintegration is not only economic but also identity based. According to Social Identity Theory, belonging and recognition are central to the reconstruction of self (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For Kadogos, reintegration requires a transformation of identity, from "soldier" to "civilian," from "threat" to "contributor." However, economic exclusion actively sabotages this process. Without access to dignified work or livelihood opportunities, Kadogos are unable to reconstruct new civilian identities as workers, farmers, or entrepreneurs (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Instead, exploitative labour conditions reinforce their outsider status. The lack of meaningful economic roles perpetuates an identity crisis, leaving many feeling rejected, stigmatized, and alienated (Betancourt et al., 2013). This identity failure, in turn, reduces their satisfaction with reintegration, as economic life becomes a site of humiliation

rather than empowerment. Consequently, the failure to support identity reconstruction through economic participation fuels a vicious cycle of disillusionment and social withdrawal.

Finally, Contact Theory suggests that sustained and meaningful interaction between groups can reduce prejudice and foster trust (Allport, 1954; Wessells, 2009). Applied to reintegration, this implies that economic initiatives could serve as spaces for positive contact between Kadogos and their communities, breaking down stereotypes and fostering acceptance. However, DDR programs in the DRC rarely integrate economic collaboration mechanisms involving local employers, trade associations, or cooperatives. Instead, reintegration remains individualized and aid-focused, limited to temporary stipends or basic training (Boothby, 2018). This neglect means that economic interactions often reinforce, rather than bridge, social divisions: Kadogos remain segregated into exploitative labour markets, while communities continue to view them as outsiders. Missed opportunities for joint enterprises, such as cooperative farming, microfinance schemes, or business partnerships, perpetuate economic exploitation and stigma. Without structured contact in economic spaces, prejudice is never dismantled, trust remains absent, and reintegration satisfaction diminishes.

Taken together, these frameworks reveal that economic exploitation is both a symptom and a driver of reintegration failure. It reflects postcolonial patterns of extraction and marginalization, undermines human security, erodes social capital, obstructs identity reconstruction, and prevents positive community contact. Each theoretical perspective illuminates a different mechanism through which economic exploitation reduces Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration. In practice, the failure to provide dignified, secure, and socially integrated livelihoods perpetuates cycles of poverty, exclusion, and violence. Without structural reform to address economic exploitation, reintegration cannot deliver on its promises, leaving Kadogos trapped in a state of perpetual marginalization where satisfaction is elusive, and the lure of armed groups remains ever-present.

2.2.3. Rethinking protection

The protection of Kadogos during their reintegration into civilian life is fraught with profound challenges, deeply embedded in the wider socio-political and economic instability of the DRC. Former child soldiers face inadequate protection from violence, exploitation, and societal stigma, all of which undermine their ability to reintegrate effectively. Gates and Reich (2010) emphasize the pervasive absence of protection mechanisms for ex-combatants, noting that Kadogos often remain vulnerable to threats from armed groups, former commanders, and exploitative actors. In a fragile security landscape marked by recurring armed conflicts, the lack of robust protective measures increases their exposure to physical harm, forced re-recruitment, and systemic neglect, factors that directly erode their satisfaction with reintegration outcomes.

Wessells (2006) highlights that the unstable socio-political environment in the DRC exacerbates these vulnerabilities. Armed groups continue to operate across large parts of the country, exploiting power vacuums where state authority and protection infrastructure are either weak or absent. This perpetuates cycles of violence and re-recruitment, where Kadogos remain trapped in a liminal state between war and peace. Socio-economic instability, coupled with poverty and the absence of livelihood opportunities, renders them highly susceptible to coercion and abuse, further constraining their prospects for dignified reintegration.

Effective protection measures must therefore be conceived as a foundational pillar of reintegration, encompassing physical safety, legal rights, and social inclusion. Thorsell (2013) argues that without physical security, access to justice, and social safeguards, reintegration efforts cannot achieve sustainable outcomes. Similarly, Boothby et al. (2006) highlight the role of community-based protection programs and international legal frameworks as essential strategies for safeguarding Kadogos from exploitation and harm. These approaches require coordinated efforts between local communities, government institutions, and international organisations to establish an ecosystem of protection that addresses both immediate risks and long-term vulnerabilities.

Field research conducted in both eastern and western DRC reinforces these observations. In regions plagued by ongoing conflict, such as Ituri and North Kivu, Kadogos face persistent threats of physical harm and forced recruitment, whereas in relatively stable areas like Kinshasa, societal stigma and discrimination constitute the primary barriers to effective reintegration. Even where physical safety is guaranteed, deep-seated cultural attitudes and socio-linguistic divides limit their access to psychosocial support, education, and healthcare. This duality illustrates how protection failures are multidimensional, simultaneously undermining both material security and social belonging.

Human Security Theory (HST) places individual safety and dignity at the core of security, extending beyond state-centric paradigms (Paris, 2001). For Kadogos, protection from violence, hunger, and systemic neglect is not only a prerequisite for survival but also for their capacity to imagine a future outside of armed groups. HST underscores how the absence of protection undermines satisfaction with reintegration by leaving basic needs unmet and perpetuating chronic insecurity (Wessells, 2006).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how protection intersects with identity reconstruction. When protection mechanisms actively foster acceptance, Kadogos are more likely to transition from being perceived as “combatants” to being valued as “community members.” This redefinition of identity is essential for social belonging and dignity. Conversely, when protection is absent, stigma persists, reinforcing exclusion and undermining satisfaction with reintegration (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social Capital Theory (SCT) illuminates the role of trust and networks in reintegration. Protection mechanisms that strengthen community trust, such as local reconciliation initiatives and community policing, facilitate resource-sharing and access to opportunities. The absence of protection erodes social capital, leaving Kadogos isolated and excluded from the very networks that could enhance their reintegration satisfaction (Putnam, 2000).

Contact Theory (CT) highlights the importance of structured, safe interactions in reducing stigma and fostering acceptance (Allport, 1954). Protection provides the "safe space" for such interactions to occur. Without guarantees of safety, community members may avoid contact with Kadogos, perpetuating suspicion and reinforcing stereotypes. Effective protection thus enables the kind of positive encounters necessary for prejudice reduction and long-term inclusion.

Postcolonial Theory (PCT) situates protection failures within historical and structural legacies. The marginalisation of Kadogos reflects broader patterns of systemic neglect and fractured state authority, rooted in colonial governance structures and perpetuated by neo-colonial interventions (Mbembe, 2001). From this perspective, inadequate protection is not simply a logistical failure but a manifestation of deeper structural inequalities that continue to constrain reintegration satisfaction.

Taken together, these frameworks reveal that protection operates across material, social, and symbolic dimensions. Without physical safety (HST), opportunities to rebuild identity (SIT), supportive networks (SCT), safe contact spaces (CT), and redress for structural injustices (PCT), Kadogos' reintegration experiences remain fragile, unsatisfying, and vulnerable to reversal. Despite these insights, empirical evaluations of protection mechanisms remain limited. Most studies focus on short-term programmatic outcomes rather than longitudinal impacts on reintegration satisfaction (Betancourt et al., 2010). Moreover, regional disparities in protection needs remain underexplored, with interventions often failing to adapt to local conflict dynamics, cultural factors, and economic realities. Programs such as community sensitisation campaigns, legal reforms, and psychosocial services hold promise but are inconsistently implemented and rarely scaled across the country.

Addressing the protection challenges faced by Kadogos therefore requires a multi-layered, context-sensitive approach. Protection must not be seen merely as a programmatic component but as the foundation upon which all other aspects of reintegration depend. Without adequate mechanisms for physical safety, legal safeguards, and community acceptance, reintegration remains precarious, perpetuating cycles of violence, marginalisation, and socio-economic instability.

2.2.4. Rethinking community acceptance

Community acceptance represents a critical determinant of whether Kadogos can achieve meaningful reintegration into civilian society in the DRC. Beyond physical demobilisation, successful reintegration depends on whether communities are willing to embrace Kadogos as members of the social fabric, rather than perceiving them solely through the lens of their violent past. Wessells (2006) emphasises that reintegration without community acceptance is fragile and often unsustainable, as stigma and exclusion lead to isolation, economic marginalisation, and psychological distress. In many Congolese communities, fears of re-recruitment or latent violent tendencies persist (Agnew-Blais et al., 2013), often reinforced by the collective traumas experienced during prolonged conflict. To address

these concerns, programs have frequently relied on sensitisation campaigns and reconciliation initiatives designed to reduce suspicion and foster trust (Boothby et al., 2006).

Several interlocking factors shape how communities perceive and accept Kadogos. These include the scale of past violence, cultural narratives surrounding purity and danger, and the effectiveness of reintegration initiatives in reframing Kadogos' identities. For example, communities that suffered direct violence often harbour lingering resentment, while economic competition in resource-scarce regions amplifies rejection and discrimination. Cohn and Goodwin-Gill (1994) stress that persistent stereotypes and distrust limit opportunities for reconciliation, as few structured platforms exist for dialogue between Kadogos and civilians. Media narratives further exacerbate mistrust by portraying former child soldiers as enduring security threats rather than victims of coercion.

Field research across eastern and western DRC confirms that rejection frequently manifests in social exclusion, reduced access to education or employment, and even physical violence. In conflict-affected provinces such as Ituri and North Kivu, hostility is often heightened by ethnic polarisation and insecurity, while in relatively stable regions like Kinshasa, subtle but entrenched forms of discrimination persist. Moreover, gendered stigma remains acute: female Kadogos frequently encounter compounded exclusion due to sexual violence, gender norms, and cultural expectations of purity (Betancourt et al., 2013).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) highlights how acceptance enables Kadogos to transition from a stigmatised identity ("child soldier") to a socially valued identity ("community member"). When communities acknowledge Kadogos as victims rather than perpetrators, they provide the social validation necessary for rebuilding self-esteem and belonging. This directly improves Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration, as acceptance reshapes identity and fosters dignity.

Social Capital Theory (SCT) (Putnam, 2000) underscores that acceptance facilitates access to community networks, trust, and reciprocal relationships. Kadogos who are welcomed into local associations, employment networks, and communal activities gain not only material opportunities but also intangible forms of social support. This network-based inclusion enhances satisfaction with reintegration by ensuring stability and mutual reliance.

Human Security Theory (HST) (UNDP, 1994) situates community acceptance within a broader framework of security beyond the absence of violence. Acceptance reduces threats of rejection, discrimination, or re-recruitment while creating conditions for psychological recovery and resilience. Kadogos who feel safe within their communities are better able to pursue education, livelihoods, and healing, thereby improving reintegration outcomes.

Contact Theory (CT) (Allport, 1954) explains how structured, positive interactions between Kadogos and community members can reduce prejudice, dismantle stereotypes, and promote empathy. Programs that create opportunities for shared experiences, such as joint community service, youth groups, or reconciliation dialogues, foster mutual understanding, directly influencing satisfaction with reintegration by reducing stigma.

Postcolonial Theory (PCT) (Fanon, 1961; Mbembe, 2001) contextualises rejection of Kadogos within structural inequalities and colonial legacies that perpetuate divisions, violence, and exclusion. Historical patterns of marginalisation shape how communities interpret and respond to former child soldiers. By acknowledging these systemic injustices, PCT underscores the necessity of culturally sensitive and locally grounded interventions to promote genuine acceptance. Without addressing these deeper dynamics, reintegration efforts risk reproducing marginalisation and limiting satisfaction among Kadogos.

Despite consensus on the importance of community acceptance, the empirical literature remains fragmented. Existing evaluations focus heavily on short-term interventions, with limited longitudinal research tracing how acceptance evolves over time (Betancourt et al., 2010). Moreover, regional variations in acceptance, shaped by distinct conflict legacies, cultural norms, and economic inequalities, remain underexplored (Stys et al., 2020). Gender dynamics further complicate reintegration outcomes, as female Kadogos are subject to unique forms of stigmatisation that standard reintegration programs often overlook (Wessells, 2009). Community acceptance is not a peripheral element but a foundational pillar of reintegration success in the DRC.

Drawing on SIT, SCT, HST, CT, and PCT provides a comprehensive explanation of how acceptance shapes Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration: it reconstructs their identity, embeds them in social networks, enhances their human security, fosters trust through interaction, and challenges structural injustices. Programs that fail to prioritise community acceptance risk leaving reintegration incomplete and fragile, perpetuating cycles of marginalisation and insecurity. Sustainable reintegration therefore requires strategies that actively promote acceptance, inclusion, and dignity across diverse regional and cultural contexts.

2.2.5. Rethinking trust

Trust constitutes a fundamental determinant of reintegration outcomes for Kadogos, underpinning relationships with communities, authorities, and reintegration structures. It is not only a psychological resource but also a socio-political condition that enables cooperation, stability, and access to vital opportunities. As Wessells (2006) notes, trust forms the foundation for acceptance, reconciliation, and long-term social cohesion. Conversely, its absence reinforces cycles of marginalisation, insecurity, and vulnerability to re-recruitment. For many Kadogos, establishing trust is complicated by their lived experiences of betrayal, coercion, and violence, often leaving them alienated both from their home communities and from state authorities (Agnew-Blais et al., 2013). The rebuilding of trust is, therefore, central to their satisfaction with reintegration, determining whether they can perceive themselves as secure, valued, and included within civilian life.

At the community level, trust is critical for overcoming stigma, suspicion, and fear. Communities in the DRC often associate Kadogos with insecurity and violence, perceiving them as potential threats rather than as victims of forced recruitment (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994). Where mutual trust is absent, exclusion manifests in discrimination, rejection, or even physical violence. Boothby et al. (2006) emphasize that reintegration programs that prioritise dialogue forums, reconciliation rituals, and joint community projects foster trust by creating shared spaces for interaction and mutual accountability. Such measures reduce prejudice and cultivate cooperation, thereby improving reintegration satisfaction.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) is especially useful here: when communities extend trust to Kadogos, they allow them to shed the "combatant" label and transition into new, positive social identities as students, workers, or family members. This redefinition of identity, grounded in community trust, directly enhances their self-esteem and their perception of reintegration success. Without trust, however, they remain trapped in stigmatized identities, experiencing reintegration as partial, precarious, and unsatisfactory.

Trust in governmental and institutional structures is equally pivotal. Engagement with reintegration programs requires confidence that authorities are transparent, fair, and committed to supporting reintegration. Ingelaere and Verpoorten (2020) argue that low levels of institutional trust undermine program legitimacy and discourage participation, while Nduwimana (2013) stresses that only when programs are perceived as credible and consistent can they foster sustainable reintegration. In the DRC, however, systemic corruption, political instability, and governance failures have eroded faith in state institutions (Agnew-Blais et al., 2013). Kadogos who experienced neglect or exploitation from these same systems face profound barriers in placing trust in them again.

Here, Human Security Theory (HST) illuminates how trust in authorities enhances both physical and psychological security. Trust reduces fears of re-victimisation, increases confidence in protective structures, and assures Kadogos that their reintegration pathway is safeguarded. In turn, this sense of safety and protection directly translates into higher satisfaction with reintegration, as security is both a precondition and a perception that shapes well-being.

Practical strategies to rebuild trust must operate on multiple levels. At the interpersonal level, Contact Theory highlights the importance of structured, positive encounters between Kadogos and community members. When interactions are cooperative, equal-status, and goal-oriented, prejudices break down and trust emerges. At the institutional level, participatory reintegration programs that involve local leaders, NGOs, and community members can enhance legitimacy and foster collective ownership (Wessells, 2006). Finally, Postcolonial Theory (PCT) situates mistrust within historical trajectories of exploitation and systemic inequality. Legacies of colonial violence and uneven state development continue to undermine confidence in both communities and institutions. Recognising these dynamics helps explain why trust deficits persist, and why sustainable reintegration must address not only individual relationships but also structural injustices.

Trust, whether directed towards communities or institutions, is not an abstract concept but a concrete driver of reintegration satisfaction. When Kadogos can trust their environment, they perceive reintegration as secure, dignified, and promising. When trust is absent, reintegration remains fragile, marked by exclusion, insecurity, and disillusionment. The integration of SIT, HST, CT, and PCT provides a holistic understanding: trust enables identity transformation (SIT), reduces threats to personal and collective security (HST), is cultivated through structured encounters (Contact Theory), and must be analysed against the backdrop of structural inequalities (PCT). Together, these frameworks underscore that building and sustaining trust is indispensable to ensuring that reintegration is not only achieved but also satisfying in the long term.

2.2.6. Rethinking politics

Politics fundamentally shapes the reintegration trajectories of Kadogos in the DRC. The Congolese political landscape is characterised by chronic instability, fragmented governance, entrenched corruption, and shifting elite interests, which collectively constrain the design, funding, and sustainability of reintegration initiatives. Siegle and Bekoe (2016) observe that recurrent political crises and armed conflicts have consistently undermined reintegration outcomes, with political actors frequently exploiting the plight of former child soldiers to serve short-term factional or electoral interests. This politicisation of reintegration, and of the very identity of Kadogos, creates conditions in which programs become inconsistent, underfunded, and vulnerable to abrupt policy shifts.

Political rhetoric is especially influential. Hovil and Lomo (2004) show how discourse by political elites can stigmatise Kadogos, framing them as perpetrators rather than victims, thereby entrenching community suspicion. Njie (2016) notes that these portrayals oscillate between depicting Kadogos as “heroes” when useful for nationalist agendas and “threats” when elites seek to mobilise fear. Such inconsistency shapes public perceptions, hardens stereotypes, and directly influences whether communities are willing to support reintegration. Moreover, politicised narratives discourage Kadogos from trusting state institutions, reducing their participation in official reintegration programs.

The material impact of politics is equally evident. Weak governance and fluctuating priorities result in misallocation or diversion of reintegration funds, often to address immediate political crises (OCHA, 2015). As Jansen et al. (2017) highlight, this instability leaves programs fragmented and episodic, disrupting access to critical services such as education, psychosocial care, and vocational training. At a structural level, the lack of sustained political will to address drivers of child soldiering, poverty, unemployment, and lack of education, further entrenches cycles of vulnerability (Ingelaere & Verpoorten, 2020). Consequently, the political environment determines not only the resources available for reintegration but also the legitimacy, continuity, and inclusivity of these efforts. To unpack the

effects of politics on reintegration satisfaction, three complementary frameworks, Postcolonial Theory (PCT), Human Security Theory (HST), and Social Identity Theory (SIT), are particularly useful.

Postcolonial Theory provides insight into how colonial legacies of exploitation and authoritarian governance continue to shape Congolese politics and reintegration practices. Reintegration programs are often designed and funded by international actors but implemented within state systems burdened by historical patterns of neglect and manipulation. These dynamics foster mistrust among Kadogos, who perceive state structures as continuations of coercive authority rather than protectors of rights (Nduwimana, 2013). By highlighting how structural inequalities and dependency reproduce marginalisation, PCT explains why political rhetoric and governance failures consistently undermine reintegration satisfaction.

Human Security Theory frames politics as central to creating, or obstructing, the security conditions necessary for reintegration. Political instability erodes institutional trust and deprives Kadogos of access to physical, economic, and psychosocial security (Siegle & Bekoe, 2016). Conversely, when political leaders demonstrate accountability and commit to reintegration as a national priority, they contribute to the stability required for sustainable reintegration. HST thus clarifies how fluctuations in political will and governance directly affect Kadogos' sense of safety, opportunities for livelihoods, and overall satisfaction with reintegration.

Social Identity Theory highlights how political discourse shapes both the self-perceptions of Kadogos and the way communities categorise them. When political actors frame Kadogos as threats or burdens, these negative identities are internalised and reinforced within communities, reducing acceptance and belonging (Hovil & Lomo, 2004). Alternatively, inclusive and reconciliatory rhetoric can help reposition Kadogos as legitimate community members, strengthening their satisfaction with reintegration. SIT therefore explains how political narratives impact not only the material resources but also the symbolic integration of Kadogos into social groups.

Taken together, these theories demonstrate that politics impacts satisfaction with reintegration in three interconnected ways: (1) Structurally (PCT) by perpetuating systemic inequalities and historical patterns of neglect. (2) Materially (HST) by determining the provision, or denial, of security, stability, and essential services. (3) Symbolically (SIT) by shaping social identities and community attitudes through political rhetoric. Thus, Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration cannot be understood apart from the broader political environment. Without political stability, inclusive rhetoric, and accountable governance, reintegration programs will remain fragmented, mistrusted, and ultimately unsustainable. Politics is therefore not simply a background variable but a decisive factor in shaping both the lived experiences and the reintegration outcomes of Kadogos in the DRC.

2.2.7. Rethinking culture

The reintegration of Kadogos into Congolese society is profoundly shaped by cultural dynamics, which define how communities perceive morality, identity, and belonging. Cultural norms, traditions, and communal value systems often act as both barriers and bridges in determining the degree of acceptance former child soldiers encounter upon returning home. Wessells (2006) emphasizes that stigma, rigid cultural taboos, and moral codes often clash with the lived experiences of Kadogos, leaving them vulnerable to alienation, suspicion, and exclusion. Communities tend to associate child soldiering with moral transgression, violence, and a rupture of collective values, which frequently translates into deep-seated distrust and discrimination.

Years of exposure to armed conflict also profoundly shape Kadogos' own identity formation and socialization patterns, often leaving them estranged from traditional cultural frameworks. Boothby, Strang, and Wessells (2006) argue that such dislocation creates significant friction when Kadogos re-enter communities that prioritize collective harmony, family roles, and respect for authority. Reintegration is further complicated by cultural expectations that returnees quickly resume normative gender roles and social responsibilities, even as they continue to struggle with trauma and displacement. These pressures intensify feelings of marginalization and undermine satisfaction with reintegration.

Cultural adaptation, however, also presents opportunities for meaningful reintegration when approached with sensitivity. Hinton and Good (2010) stress that successful reintegration depends on navigating traditional norms while simultaneously rebuilding identity in culturally legitimate ways. Culturally grounded interventions, such as storytelling, reconciliation rituals, or healing ceremonies, provide frameworks for forgiveness and symbolic re-inclusion. Rivard (2010) highlights that rituals such as "Kusonywa" (ritual cleansing) or "Kubabariwa" (forgiveness gatherings) allow communities to restore social and spiritual bonds, while also acknowledging collective suffering. These forms of cultural negotiation not only heal psychological wounds but also enable communities to redefine former child soldiers as legitimate members of society.

From a theoretical perspective, Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides critical insights into how cultural narratives determine inclusion or exclusion. Negative portrayals of Kadogos, through lenses of shame, fear, or moral failure, reinforce an "out-group" identity, which obstructs reintegration (Wessells, 2006). Conversely, when cultural practices emphasize forgiveness and collective healing, they enable a shift in social categorization: Kadogos are redefined as "insiders," sharing in communal identity and responsibility. In this way, SIT demonstrates how culture directly influences Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration by shaping whether they are stigmatized or embraced.

Contact Theory (CT) complements this perspective by explaining how culturally mediated interactions, such as rituals, community meetings, and shared participation in traditional ceremonies, reduce prejudice and foster reconciliation. When communities engage directly with Kadogos in structured cultural settings, it creates opportunities for empathy, dialogue, and the dismantling of entrenched stereotypes (Hinton, 2010). Thus, culture not only frames identity boundaries but also provides structured spaces for meaningful contact that promotes trust and acceptance.

Finally, Postcolonial Theory (PCT) sheds light on why cultural narratives around Kadogos are so fraught. Colonial legacies of exploitation, imposed cultural hierarchies, and external interventions have long disrupted indigenous systems of justice and reconciliation (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994). Postcolonial analysis reveals that international DDR frameworks often impose Western models of reintegration while undervaluing indigenous cultural practices. As Rivard (2010) and Hinton (2010) suggest, programs that fail to engage local traditions risk alienating both communities and Kadogos, thereby undermining satisfaction with reintegration. PCT underscores the necessity of decolonizing reintegration efforts by embedding them in authentic cultural contexts.

Despite this, significant research gaps remain. Empirical studies have yet to adequately evaluate the long-term impacts of culturally rooted reintegration strategies in the DRC. Cohn and Goodwin-Gill (1994) point out that the absence of systematic engagement with local cultural realities risks reducing interventions to superficial efforts. More regionally grounded research is needed to understand how ethnic diversity, gendered cultural expectations, and historical grievances affect reintegration outcomes over time.

Ultimately, culture operates as a double-edged sword: it can deepen exclusion through stigma and prejudice or facilitate reconciliation through rituals and traditions of forgiveness. By applying SIT, CT, and PCT together, it becomes clear that cultural frameworks not only define group belonging and perceptions of identity but also provide mechanisms for restoring social trust, while exposing the structural and historical forces that complicate reintegration. For Kadogos, satisfaction with reintegration depends heavily on whether cultural practices and political actors support inclusion, forgiveness, and healing, or perpetuate cycles of exclusion and marginalization.

2.2.8 Rethinking gender and age

The reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC is profoundly shaped by gender and age, both of which intersect with cultural norms, structural inequalities, and developmental vulnerabilities to determine the quality of reintegration outcomes. Female Kadogos in particular face distinct challenges arising from entrenched patriarchal traditions, experiences of gender-based violence, and community stigma. Machel (2001) notes that girls are disproportionately subjected to sexual exploitation, forced marriages, and coercive domestic servitude within armed groups, experiences that leave lasting scars and complicate post-war social acceptance. These gendered traumas do not occur in isolation; rather, they are embedded within historical and structural legacies of inequality. Here, Postcolonial Theory (PCT) provides explanatory weight, as it underscores how colonial-era disruptions reinforced patriarchal social orders and economic marginalisation of women, leaving contemporary reintegration programs ill-equipped to address the compounded stigma and exclusion faced by female ex-combatants (Spivak, 1999; Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994).

From the lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT), reintegration is equally undermined by the community's tendency to categorise female Kadogos through labels of shame, impurity, or danger, particularly when they return with children born of wartime rape (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Such identities are externally imposed, eroding opportunities for belonging and deepening their marginalisation. As Wessells (2006) observes, reintegration programs often lack gender-sensitive psychosocial support, which further restricts pathways for women to reconstruct their identities as survivors and valued community members rather than permanent outsiders. Satisfaction with reintegration, in this sense, hinges on whether interventions succeed in reshaping these imposed identities into ones aligned with dignity, inclusion, and self-worth.

Male Kadogos face a different but equally complex trajectory. While they may not encounter the same stigma linked to sexual violence, patriarchal expectations impose pressures of masculinity, expectations to immediately provide economically or demonstrate strength, which can be overwhelming given disrupted education and scarce employment opportunities (Sommers, 2002). Here, Human Security Theory (HST) is central, as it highlights how insecurity in education, livelihoods, and psychosocial wellbeing exposes male Kadogos to renewed vulnerability, including re-recruitment into armed groups. Without addressing these fundamental insecurities, reintegration outcomes remain fragile, regardless of gender.

Age further compounds these gendered dynamics. Adolescents, caught between childhood and adulthood, often fall through programmatic cracks. Sommers (2006) stresses that their developmental needs, shaped by interrupted schooling, psychosocial trauma, and unfinished identity formation, are seldom considered in reintegration planning. Younger Kadogos may lack vocational readiness, while older returnees are too often pushed into unsuitable education systems where they feel alienated from younger classmates (Boothby et al., 2006). From a SIT perspective, this age mismatch fuels social identity conflicts: older Kadogos struggle to claim belonging within peer groups, while younger ones risk being socially labelled as unskilled labourers, making stigma a constant barrier to reintegration satisfaction.

Moreover, HST underscores how age intersects with structural vulnerabilities: younger Kadogos face risks of economic exploitation in informal labour markets, while older ones are left with few opportunities to recover lost years of education, jeopardising long-term security. Programs that adopt rigid, one-size-fits-all approaches exacerbate these insecurities, failing to align interventions with developmental stages.

Taken together, gender and age are not marginal variables but structural determinants of reintegration satisfaction. By combining Postcolonial Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Human Security Theory, it becomes clear that: (1) PCT explains how patriarchal and structural inequalities rooted in colonial legacies reinforce exclusionary norms. (2) SIT clarifies how social labels and stigma undermine belonging and identity reconstruction for both female and male Kadogos. (3) HST demonstrates how the intersection of gendered trauma and age-specific vulnerabilities undermines

security in livelihoods, education, and psychosocial wellbeing. Reintegration satisfaction, therefore, is directly contingent on whether programs can dismantle historical inequalities, transform exclusionary identities, and provide age-appropriate, gender-sensitive support. Without such multidimensional interventions, the reintegration of Kadogos risks remaining partial, leaving many trapped between stigma, insecurity, and unfulfilled potential.

2.2.9. Rethinking fighting and relocation

While the section on protection explored how former child soldiers can be shielded legally, physically, and socially from harm and re-recruitment, this section moves beyond protection to examine how proximity to active combat and forced displacement violently rupture the process of reintegration. Where protection is aspirational, fighting and relocation are lived realities for many Kadogos, particularly in volatile provinces such as North Kivu, Ituri, and South Kivu. Their experience is not one of gradual reintegration but of being caught in a revolving door of violence, forced to flee repeatedly, losing family, community, and even the limited progress made toward civilian life.

Unlike protection, which concerns institutional and community capacity to create safety, fighting and relocation are about the erosion of safety. Displacement causes reintegration projects to collapse before they can take root. Former child soldiers uprooted by conflict are unable to continue vocational training, receive psychosocial support, or rebuild social ties, key components of reintegration identified by Betancourt et al. (2013) and Blattman (2016). Honwana (2006) observed in Mozambique that displacement not only strips children of home, but also of context, language, custom, and cultural reference points essential for reconstructing civilian identities. In eastern DRC, these disruptions are compounded by ethnic tensions and suspicion toward outsiders, reinforcing cycles of stigma and rejection (see also Section 6.2).

From a theoretical perspective, the destructive effects of fighting and relocation can best be understood through (1) HST underscores how displacement negates the basic conditions of "freedom from fear and want." Loss of safety, livelihood, and access to services undermines any sense of stability. Without these, satisfaction with reintegration becomes unattainable. (2) PCT situates these dynamics within the legacies of colonial exploitation and ongoing militarized political economies. As Mamdani (2001) and Autesserre (2021) argue, weak state institutions, resource predation, and fragmented governance sustain cycles of violence that push Kadogos into repeated dislocation. Thus, relocation is not an accident but a structural outcome of historical inequalities and a fractured postcolonial state. (3) SCT explains the erosion of trust and networks due to displacement. Social capital, the web of relationships, mutual trust, and community bonds, is a vital foundation for reintegration (Putnam, 2000; Colletta & Cullen, 2000). Forced relocation severs these ties: displaced Kadogos lose family-based safety nets, community recognition, and reciprocal relationships. Relocation to new areas often means

entering spaces where they are treated as outsiders, limiting access to jobs, housing, or social acceptance. The destruction of these networks not only increases vulnerability to exploitation but also undermines the sense of belonging crucial to reintegration satisfaction.

Empirical evidence underscores these theoretical insights. Vinck et al (2015) found that displaced former child soldiers are significantly less likely to access reintegration services, often falling through bureaucratic cracks or remaining invisible in overcrowded IDP camps. Similarly, Williams and Moffat (2020) note that relocation across culturally diverse provinces in the DRC often leads to marginalisation, as local communities perceive newcomers with suspicion, especially in contexts of resource scarcity. This aligns with Schwerdtle et al. (2018), who show that displacement amplifies vulnerabilities to economic instability, health risks, and social exclusion.

The implications are severe. Relocation frequently interrupts education and vocational training, creating long-term barriers to economic reintegration (Boothby et al., 2006). It undermines access to healthcare, particularly mental health services, which are already scarce in rural and conflict-affected areas (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Annan et al. (2011) further found that up to 30% of reintegrated youth in conflict zones like the DRC and Uganda were re-recruited after displacement, often within one year of demobilisation, driven by the promise of food, shelter, or revenge in the absence of stability. Here, the interplay of HST, PCT, and SCT becomes evident: the absence of security, compounded by structural inequalities, and the collapse of trust networks together sustain cycles of violence and re-recruitment.

Relocation is therefore not a neutral coping mechanism but a profound rupture to reintegration. It resets progress to zero, erases fragile gains, and fractures the very social, cultural, and economic foundations necessary for Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration. Unless displacement is addressed not just as a humanitarian emergency but as a structural and relational challenge, reintegration in the DRC risks remaining fragile, cyclical, and deeply unsatisfying for those most affected.

Interlinkages and tensions between theories

While each theory offers valuable insight, they do not operate in isolation. In practice, tensions emerge: HST's individual-centred security may clash with state-centric policy imperatives. SCT's focus on network rebuilding can be undermined by SIT's recognition that identity change is slow and emotionally complex. CT's optimism about intergroup contact is tempered by PCT's reminder that structural inequalities can persist despite interpersonal goodwill. This interplay suggests that effective reintegration in the DRC requires theoretical pluralism, recognising that no single framework captures the full lived experience of Kadogos. Applying these lenses together compels practitioners to rethink DDR as a deeply contextualised process: Economic packages must be tied to community reconciliation efforts. Psychological support should be embedded in local belief systems while challenging harmful

practices like witchcraft accusations. Reintegration programs must move beyond short-term donor cycles, recognising that the legacies of war, and the transformation of identities, unfold over decades. These rethinking positions reintegration not as the final step of war, but as a foundational process for peace, deeply interwoven with the DRC's broader struggles over governance, resource distribution, and historical memory.

2.3. Comparative lessons: insights from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, and Colombia

The reintegration of former child soldiers is not a uniquely Congolese challenge. Across the globe, post-conflict societies have struggled with the same essential questions: How can those once trained for violence be supported to live peacefully? How can communities move from fear and suspicion to trust and cooperation? And how can the structural conditions that fuel armed recruitment be transformed so that cycles of conflict are broken rather than postponed? Reintegration efforts for former child soldiers have yielded varying degrees of success across different conflict-affected nations. A comparative analysis of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, and Colombia provides critical insights into the successes and failures of DDR programs, offering valuable lessons for improving reintegration outcomes for Kadogos in the DRC.

Despite extensive DDR programs, reintegration outcomes remain largely ineffective, with many Kadogos facing economic exploitation, social stigma, and a heightened risk of re-recruitment (Autesserre, 2021; Stys et al., 2020). These cases highlight structural, economic, and social barriers, while demonstrating the positive impact of protection, community acceptance, and long-term economic reintegration strategies. Examining experiences from above countries offers both practical guidance and cautionary tales. These contexts differ in history, scale, and conflict drivers, but they share with the DRC the dual challenge of economic fragility and deep social wounds. The following comparative insights are not presented as "models" to copy, an approach Postcolonial Theory warns against, but as adaptive lessons, to be reinterpreted in light of Congolese realities.

Overcoming community stigma for social reintegration in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's post-civil war DDR program (1999-2004) integrated community reconciliation with economic support, recognising that acceptance was as vital as livelihoods (Betancourt et al., 2010; Wessells, 2006). Traditional cleansing ceremonies, storytelling, and public acts of forgiveness helped reduce stigma for former child soldiers. Importantly, Sierra Leone benefited from community-based approaches and market-linked vocational training. Yet, short programme cycles and poor rural outreach limited impact. The experience highlights the importance of sustained funding and regionally tailored interventions (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007).

One of the most distinctive features of Sierra Leone's DDR process was the use of traditional cleansing ceremonies to symbolically "wash away the violence" of the past and reintegrate children into the moral and spiritual order of society. These rituals, performed by village elders and spiritual leaders, served as communal acts of forgiveness, affirming the child's re-entry into civilian life (Shaw, 2007; Wessells, 2006). They provided what Western psychological frameworks often lacked: a culturally resonant process of reintegration grounded in indigenous knowledge systems. In contrast, such mechanisms are inconsistently applied in the DRC, with regions like South Kivu and Ituri engaging in sporadic ritual practices, while other areas such as urban Kinshasa or North Kivu rely almost entirely on NGOs and religious actors for moral and psychological rehabilitation. The absence of cohesive, culturally grounded practices in the DRC results in a symbolic void, many Kadogos remain socially suspended, neither warriors nor accepted civilians.

In Sierra Leone, efforts by NGOs and local leaders to sensitise communities, explaining the coerced nature of child soldiering, humanising the children, and inviting dialogue, helped reduce stigma, especially in rural areas. Programs like those run by the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) and Search for Common Ground incorporated truth-telling exercises, theatre, and storytelling to foster empathy and communal healing (Betancourt et al., 2013). Such community engagement is less institutionalised in the DRC, where efforts are often fragmented and top-down, leaving communities ill-prepared to receive returning children. Misconceptions about Kadogos, amplified by fear, trauma, and security risks, fuel persistent rejection. A community leader in Kivu explains, "They come back here with blood in their hands…It's not easy to just ignore it and act as though nothing happened in the past…They did all sort of bad things to innocent people." The absence of truth-sharing platforms denies both communities and children the chance to reframe the narrative from perpetrator to survivor.

Lesson for the DRC: In conflict-affected Congolese provinces, where resentment towards ex-combatants often stems from perceptions of unfair assistance, integrating benefits into shared community infrastructure could diffuse tensions and foster acceptance. However, this requires political will to decentralise resource allocation and to trust local cultural mechanisms without romanticising or instrumentalising them.

In both Sierra Leone and the DRC, girls face heightened exclusion, particularly those who returned from armed groups with children or after experiences of sexual violence (Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Yet, Sierra Leone's DDR efforts, though initially gender-blind, evolved to integrate girl mothers into community-based care networks, including fostering arrangements and women-led support circles (Veale, 2003). Religious and traditional leaders, in some cases, played a role in facilitating ceremonial re-acceptance, even when stigma persisted. In contrast, in the DRC, reintegration programming remains strikingly inadequate for female Kadogos. Girls in areas like North Kivu face almost total exclusion from rituals or community care, compounded by patriarchal norms and the lack of gender-specific support services (Mels et al., 2010). Few are reintegrated through

culturally symbolic acts, and many are further isolated by trauma, shame, and poverty, increasing their vulnerability to abuse or re-recruitment.

In Sierra Leone, churches and mosques often acted as intermediaries between the spiritual and social reintegration of child soldiers. These institutions helped negotiate community forgiveness, organise reintegration ceremonies, and offer moral legitimacy for returning children (Shaw, 2005). Religious leaders were included in DDR consultations and trained in psychosocial care and mediation. In the DRC, while religious institutions play a prominent role, their influence is regionally uneven and sometimes theologically rigid. In certain Pentecostal or Evangelical circles, Kadogos are viewed as having been "possessed" or morally tainted, requiring conversion or exclusion rather than reconciliation. The absence of structured interfaith collaboration, as seen in Sierra Leone, means religion can be either a bridge or a barrier to reintegration depending on local dynamics (Thill, 2021).

The reintegration of child soldiers in the DRC must move beyond institutional metrics of success, kits distributed, children returned, to address the cultural and emotional economies in which reintegration is lived. Sierra Leone shows that reintegration becomes meaningful and sustainable only when it is locally owned, spiritually rooted, and emotionally resonant. For the DRC, this means: Investing in ethnographically informed DDR programs. Partnering with traditional leaders, healers, and faith groups. Reintroducing symbolic and spiritual dimensions into reintegration frameworks. Ensuring gender inclusivity not as an afterthought, but as a core design principle. As Wessells (2006) reminds us, "Healing is not just a service; it is a story the community must write together." Until Kadogos are not just disarmed but welcomed home, by name, with ritual, with dignity, reintegration will remain a word, not a reality.

Addressing economic exploitation for sustainable reintegration in Liberia

Liberia's DDR program (2003-2009) was among the first to acknowledge the specific reintegration needs of female ex-combatants (Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Many had been forcibly recruited, subjected to sexual violence, and burdened with children born of war. Specialised services, including trauma counselling, childcare support, and targeted vocational training, helped address these realities. However, implementation was inconsistent, and many women remained excluded due to registration barriers or social stigma.

Liberia's post-conflict reintegration offers a poignant lens through which to examine the complexities of sustainable DDR programs. The country's experience underscores the critical importance of addressing economic exploitation to prevent recidivism and foster lasting peace. For the DRC, grappling with the reintegration of Kadogos, Liberia's journey provides both cautionary tales and instructive strategies. Liberia's initiatives, particularly the 2003 Comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (CDDRR) program, aimed to transition former child

soldiers into civilian life. However, the program faced significant hurdles, notably in addressing the economic vulnerabilities of ex-combatants. Many former child soldiers, lacking viable livelihood options, found themselves susceptible to re-recruitment or engaged in illicit activities to survive. The absence of sustainable economic opportunities not only undermined individual reintegration efforts but also posed broader risks to national stability (Refworld, 2007).

Studies by Munive and Jakobsen (2012), Gislesen, (2006), Paes (2005) have highlighted that the CDDRR program's short-term vocational training and limited financial support were insufficient to ensure long-term economic self-sufficiency for ex-combatants. Moreover, the program often failed to account for the diverse needs of child soldiers, particularly girls, who faced additional barriers to reintegration due to societal stigma and gender-based discrimination. The lack of tailored support mechanisms for these vulnerable groups further exacerbated their marginalization and economic exploitation.

Lesson for the DRC: Addressing the situation of female Kadogos cannot be an afterthought. Tailored programs must recognise their distinct experiences and ensure they are visible in policy frameworks. As Wessells (2009) emphasises, invisibility compounds marginalisation, making re-recruitment or survival sex more likely.

While both Liberia and the DRC have grappled with the challenges of reintegrating former child soldiers, their experiences reveal both similarities and differences. In both contexts, economic instability and limited access to education and vocational training have hindered reintegration efforts. However, the DRC's ongoing conflict and complex ethnic dynamics present additional obstacles. The persistent insecurity in regions like North Kivu complicates the establishment of stable economic opportunities, making former child soldiers more vulnerable to exploitation and re-recruitment.

Furthermore, the DRC's reintegration programs have often lacked the comprehensive, community-based approaches seen in more successful models. In contrast, Liberia's later reintegration efforts began to incorporate community involvement and psychosocial support, recognizing the importance of addressing both economic and social dimensions of reintegration. These holistic strategies, though not without flaws, offer valuable insights for the DRC as it seeks to enhance its DDR programs.

Drawing from Liberia's experiences, the DRC can consider the following strategies to address economic exploitation in its reintegration programs: Implement long-term vocational training programs aligned with market demands, coupled with microfinance initiatives to support entrepreneurial endeavours among former child soldiers. Develop targeted support mechanisms for female ex-combatants, addressing specific challenges such as stigma, sexual violence trauma, and economic marginalization. Foster community-based reintegration models that involve local leaders and stakeholders, promoting social acceptance and reducing stigma against former child soldiers. Provide comprehensive mental health services to address trauma and facilitate the psychological transition from

combatant to civilian life. Establish robust monitoring systems to assess the effectiveness of reintegration programs and adapt strategies based on feedback and evolving needs.

Liberia's reintegration of former child soldiers underscores the critical role of addressing economic exploitation to achieve sustainable peace. For the DRC, integrating these lessons into its DDR programs can enhance the reintegration of Kadogos, mitigate the risk of re-recruitment, and contribute to long-term stability. By adopting comprehensive, inclusive, and context-specific strategies, the DRC can support former child soldiers in rebuilding their lives and communities.

The importance of psychosocial rehabilitation in reintegration in Uganda

Uganda's Amnesty Act (2000) provided legal guarantees for returnees, facilitating reintegration by reducing fear of prosecution. The reintegration of former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) child soldiers involved Acholi traditional justice practices such as Mato Oput, a ritual of reconciliation between victim and perpetrator clans (Annan et al., 2011; Allen & Macdonald, 2013). These rituals, combined with formal DDR, helped bridge the trust gap between returnees and communities. Yet, reliance on tradition also had limits: some victims resisted participation, and the ritual's reach was geographically and culturally bounded.

Psychosocial rehabilitation stands at the heart of sustainable reintegration. While disarmament and demobilisation mark a cessation of physical violence, psychosocial wounds fester in silence, often invisible yet deeply debilitating. Reintegration without addressing trauma, loss, identity crises, and social rejection is not reintegration, it is abandonment dressed in the language of policy. The Ugandan experience, particularly in the post-conflict rehabilitation of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) child soldiers, offers urgent lessons for the DRC. The two countries share a tragic familiarity with mass abductions, forced recruitment, and protracted civil conflict, yet diverge in their policy implementation, cultural settings, and degrees of psychosocial response.

Uganda's post-LRA reintegration model foregrounded psychosocial healing as a necessary first step, particularly in regions like Acholi land where child soldiers returned to communities traumatised by their own children. Reception centres such as Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO) and World Vision's Children of War Rehabilitation Centre became pioneers in trauma counselling, narrative therapy, family tracing, and ritual cleansing, offering models of what long-term recovery requires (Derluyn et al., 2004; Betancourt et al., 2010).

In Uganda, psychosocial rehabilitation operated through three key pillars: Most former child soldiers reported symptoms of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and dissociation (Boothby et al., 2006; Annan et al., 2009). Counsellors used group therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and storytelling methods rooted in Acholi traditions to help children externalise trauma. Traditional cleansing rituals, such as the mato oput ceremony, were critical for community acceptance. These rituals

symbolically restored the former child soldier to their kin and to collective moral order (Baines, 2010). Psychosocial support was integrated into education, vocational training, and livelihood projects, making reintegration a life process rather than a singular event (Annan et al., 2013). The effectiveness of this approach was seen in higher levels of community acceptance, lower re-recruitment, and more stable psychosocial outcomes over time (Pham et al., 2010).

Lesson for the DRC: The DRC's extraordinary ethnic diversity means that no single traditional mechanism will suffice. Reintegration must draw on multiple cultural repertoires, adapted to the specific communities receiving returnees, while ensuring that traditional practices uphold human rights principles.

The contrasts highlight that while Uganda localised healing, the DRC has often externalised responsibility to fragmented and under-resourced actors. As a result, psychosocial rehabilitation in DRC is inconsistent, fragile, and frequently overshadowed by militarised DDR objectives (Thill, 2021). The reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC cannot succeed without confronting their invisible injuries, the memories of forced killings, sexual violence, loss of family, and the identity confusion wrought by early militarisation.

In Eastern DRC, Kadogos often return to hostile communities, where they are branded as killers rather than victims (Chapter VI, Table 6.1). Without structured psychosocial interventions, stigma solidifies into exclusion, and exclusion into vulnerability to re-recruitment. Community fears and myths, sometimes reinforced by religious leaders, compound this rejection. As seen in Uganda, psychosocial healing must therefore extend to the community, using culturally resonant practices that make reconciliation both symbolic and social. Moreover, the trauma of girl soldiers, often survivors of sexual slavery, demands gender-specific psychosocial care. Uganda's partial success with female-focused programming (McKay & Mazurana, 2004) should encourage the DRC to scale up similar support systems tailored to survivors of sexual violence.

To replicate Uganda's best practices, the DRC must: Expand mental health services beyond urban centres like Goma and Bukavu. Train local psychologists, social workers, and traditional healers in trauma-informed care. Integrate psychosocial support into every phase of DDR, from demobilisation camps to vocational training. Rehabilitate the community alongside the child, fostering trust, empathy, and healing. Recognise and support existing cultural rituals that facilitate spiritual and moral cleansing, while ensuring these rituals are inclusive and non-re-traumatising. Uganda's experience is not a perfect blueprint, but a powerful mirror and guide. It demonstrates that reintegration without psychological rehabilitation is not just incomplete, it is complicit in reproducing the very cycles of violence and marginalisation that DDR seeks to dismantle.

The need for long-term DDR strategies in Colombia

Colombia's reintegration of FARC and paramilitary combatants (2003–present) has been notable for its comprehensive psychosocial component, embedded in a national policy framework (Theidon, 2009; Kaplan & Nussio, 2015). Returnees received mental health counselling alongside education, housing assistance, and employment opportunities. Colombia's case illustrates the value of psychosocial support throughout the reintegration process, though ongoing security risks, particularly for community leaders, pose a continuing challenge (Theidon, 2009). However, reintegration success was uneven, as rural returnees often faced economic marginalisation and exposure to ongoing violence from residual armed groups.

The reintegration of former child soldiers is not merely a policy exercise, it is a moral imperative, a societal litmus test for the depth of post-conflict reconciliation. Nowhere is this truer than in Colombia, where decades of internal armed conflict have left behind tens of thousands of demobilised fighters, including a significant number of child soldiers forcibly recruited by FARC, ELN, and paramilitary groups (Cortes and Buchanan, 2007). The country's transition from war to peace has been messy, uneven, but crucially, rich in lessons for other conflict-affected contexts like the DRC, where reintegration remains fragmented, short-term, and precarious.

While both Colombia and the DRC grapple with the legacy of armed groups exploiting children for strategic purposes, Colombia's multi-phase, longitudinal approach to DDR provides instructive insights into what sustainable reintegration might look like for Kadogos in the DRC, if properly adapted. The Colombian government, particularly through institutions like the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) and later the Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización (ARN), constructed a reintegration architecture that emphasized long-term psychological healing, vocational development, and community reconciliation.

Critically, Colombia moved beyond demobilisation logistics to invest in the continuum of reintegration, offering: Individualised psychosocial support lasting several years (Bayer & Rupert, 2020). Vocational education tailored to rural economies (González & Díaz, 2019). Peer group therapy sessions that reduced PTSD and reinforced identity reconstitution (Betancourt et al., 2010). As Derluyn, et al, (2015) observe, Colombian child soldiers were viewed not merely as war-affected youth but as individuals whose rehabilitation required "life-course interventions," not time-limited programs. This long-term approach acknowledges trauma as enduring and layered, an insight sorely lacking in the DRC's fragmented reintegration landscape.

Like their Colombian counterparts, Kadogos endure complex, layered trauma, often compounded by repeated recruitment, displacement, and rejection. In Colombia, reintegration was recognised as a process rather than an event, where therapeutic interventions continued long after formal demobilisation (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Langer, 2016). In contrast, DDR programs in the DRC often end after a few months, just as reintegration struggles begin. In Colombia, community "peace committees" and "reconciliation circles" fostered social forgiveness and cultural healing (Kaplan & Nussio, 2018). In the DRC, community participation is minimal and often reactive. Adapting Colombia's model means

empowering local Congolese leaders, traditional chiefs, religious figures, and women's groups, to be co-creators of reintegration, not passive recipients.

Lesson from Colombia to the DRC: Psychosocial care must not be treated as a discrete service but integrated into all stages of reintegration, from demobilisation to long-term follow-up. Furthermore, economic empowerment strategies must account for urban–rural disparities, ensuring that rural ex-combatants are not left behind.

Many Colombian ex-combatants re-entered society through agricultural cooperatives, apprenticeships, and state-linked income schemes (Daly, 2022). In the DRC, Kadogos are often given vocational kits without market integration, leaving them exposed to re-recruitment. As Blattman and Annan (2016) have shown, employment that creates identity and dignity is protective, this applies as much in Congo-Centrale and Ituri as it does in Cali or Medellín. Both in Colombia and the DRC, the label of "child soldier" carries a heavy moral burden. Yet, Colombia engaged in public messaging campaigns, artistic expressions, and youth inclusion policies to deconstruct the image of child soldiers as irredeemable. The DRC can learn from this by investing in narrative transformation, using media, arts, and storytelling to shift perceptions and build community empathy.

While no model can be transplanted wholesale, Colombia's experience reveals what is possible when reintegration is treated as a journey, not a checklist. The DRC can draw upon these lessons to design reintegration that is trauma-informed, community-driven, and economically viable. Above all, the Colombian case compels us to ask: What does it mean to welcome a child back from war? If we answer this with urgency, empathy, and strategic vision, then perhaps the reintegration of Kadogos should move beyond the failure cycles of the past and toward genuine healing.

Applying global lessons to the DRC

A synthesis of these four contexts reveals several recurring patterns: (1) Community engagement is non-negotiable, without local buy-in, DDR programs fail to achieve legitimacy. (2) Gender-specific needs require structural inclusion, not ad-hoc fixes. (3) Cultural practices can heal but also exclude, careful adaptation is essential. (4) Psychosocial support is central, not peripheral. (5) Economic reintegration must be long-term and regionally equitable. However, the caution is equally clear: even well-designed programs are vulnerable to political instability, donor fatigue, and persistent insecurity, factors that resonate deeply in the DRC's volatile east.

These international experiences suggest that the DRC's reintegration strategy must be holistic, participatory, and locally tailored. They also reaffirm the theoretical arguments: (1) HST demands that programs ensure both physical safety and economic dignity. (2) SCT and SIT highlight the need to rebuild social trust and transform identities. (3) CT underscores structured contact as a vehicle for acceptance. (4) PCT warns against uncritical adoption of "successful" models without decolonising

their assumptions. By grounding practice in this combined theoretical–comparative framework, the DRC can avoid the trap of short-termism and instead lay the foundations for sustainable, context-sensitive reintegration.

The comparative analysis reveals that successful reintegration depends on reducing stigma, providing economic security, and fostering community acceptance. The DRC must address the negative impacts of prejudice and economic exploitation by expanding community reconciliation programs to reduce stigma and developing sustainable employment initiatives to prevent economic exploitation. While enhancing protection and community engagement by integrating psychosocial support into DDR programs, and implementing long-term DDR strategies, incorporating education, employment, and economic empowerment. Without these structural reforms, Kadogos will remain trapped in cycles of poverty, rejection, and re-recruitment, perpetuating the nation's instability.

2.4. Towards effective reintegration in the DRC

The preceding sections have shown that reintegration in the DRC is not a linear endpoint but a dynamic, multidimensional process. For Kadogos, this journey unfolds within a fragile security landscape marked by recurrent armed group activity, deep community mistrust, structural inequalities rooted in colonial legacies, and decades of governance failure (Autesserre, 2010; Thill, 2021). If the DRC is to move beyond the cyclical patterns of demobilisation and re-recruitment, reintegration must be conceptually reframed and operationally transformed. This requires building on the determinants identified in Section 2.1, grounding practice in the theoretical pathways of Section 2.2, and adapting the comparative insights of Section 2.3 to the Congolese context.

Security as the irreducible foundation: Human Security Theory (HST) underscores that physical safety is the non-negotiable foundation for reintegration (Paris, 2001). In the DRC, where armed group resurgence is routine and state protection remains inconsistent, insecurity undermines all reintegration investments (Boothby et al., 2006). Female and male Kadogos alike face threats of re-recruitment, retaliation, and renewed violence (Wessells, 2006). Without robust security, social and economic reintegration efforts remain fragile gains easily reversed.

Effective reintegration must therefore be embedded within broader stabilisation strategies. This includes strengthening community-based protection networks (village watch committees, religious leaders, and local mediation bodies), ensuring the predictable presence of accountable state security forces, and deploying early warning systems in collaboration with civil society to prevent recruitment drives (Muggah, 2005). Without this protective shield, livelihoods, education, and psychosocial programs cannot achieve sustainable outcomes.

Economic reintegration as a sustained, regionally equitable process: economic exploitation remains one of the strongest drivers of re-recruitment (Blattman, 2016). Sierra Leone and Liberia's

experiences show that economic reintegration cannot be reduced to short vocational projects (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). In the DRC, where youth unemployment is already at crisis levels, many Kadogos face a return to poverty, exploitation in informal markets, and limited access to land or credit (Pouligny, 2004).

To address this, programs must provide multi-year support, link ex-combatants to real market opportunities (agro-processing, cross-border trade, and artisanal mining formalisation), and ensure rural reintegration zones are not systematically deprived of opportunities available in urban centres. Social Capital Theory (SCT) suggests that economic interventions work best when networked, allowing returnees to collaborate with non-combatant peers in cooperatives or trade groups. This strengthens trust, repairs fractured social ties and helps dismantle "us versus them" divisions (Colletta & Cullen, 2000).

Community acceptance as a co-created process: as highlighted earlier, community acceptance is both a prerequisite and a product of reintegration (Wessells, 2009). In the DRC, stigma against Kadogos is shaped by memories of violence, ethnic mistrust, and competition for scarce resources (Mckay & Mazurana, 2004). Families and communities often reject returnees, especially female Kadogos with children born of war-related sexual violence, seeing them as threats rather than victims (Machel, 2001).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how persistent in-group/out-group divides hinder reintegration, while Contact Theory (CT) demonstrates that structured, cooperative activities can transform mistrust into mutual acceptance (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Allport, 1954). In practice, this requires deliberate strategies such as community cooperatives, youth clubs, and reconciliation forums, alongside public storytelling platforms that allow communities to acknowledge harm without perpetuating revenge cycles (Annan et al., 2011). Importantly, communities themselves must also benefit from reintegration programs, through infrastructure projects, services, or livelihoods, helping counter perceptions that only ex-combatants are rewarded (Pouligny, 2004).

Psychosocial support as an integrated, lifelong dimension: psychosocial recovery remains one of the most neglected yet essential pillars of reintegration (Betancourt et al., 2013). Many Kadogos live with PTSD, anxiety, and depression resulting from their exposure to violence, displacement, and coercion (Boothby, 2006). However, support has often been underfunded, short-term, or disconnected from daily life, leaving trauma unaddressed (Wessells, 2006).

Lessons from Colombia highlight that psychosocial care must be mainstreamed throughout reintegration, rather than treated as a pre-discharge service (Theidon, 2007). This requires trauma-informed counselling in schools, vocational centres, and community hubs, as well as training local counsellors and peer mentors to ensure cultural relevance and sustainability. Integrating psychosocial awareness into economic and community programs ensures that healing is not siloed but embedded in everyday reintegration practices. Longitudinal research underscores that mental health gains erode without continuous support, especially under persistent poverty and insecurity (Betancourt et al., 2010).

Gender-specific strategies as structural imperatives: female Kadogos face compounded stigma as former fighters and survivors of sexual violence (Machel, 2001; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Reintegration programs have historically treated them as marginal, failing to address trauma, childcare responsibilities, or the social rejection they face upon return (Wessells, 2006). This not only deepens their exclusion but undermines the broader reintegration process.

To address this, reintegration must guarantee safe spaces, confidential support services, and gender-sensitive vocational opportunities (Brett & Specht, 2004). Childcare assistance and flexible training schedules are essential, as are mechanisms to ensure women's equal participation in community structures. Rather than treating gender inclusion as a special add-on, it must become a systemic requirement across all reintegration planning and monitoring stages. Liberia's experience shows that neglecting this dimension entrenches gender inequality and erodes program legitimacy (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004).

Governance, coordination, and political will: no reintegration model can succeed without a coherent governance framework. In the DRC, DDR efforts have been fragmented across ministries, donor agencies, and NGOs, resulting in duplication, resource wastage, and policy drift (Muggah, 2005). Weak state ownership undermines program sustainability, while donor-driven models risk reproducing dependency rather than autonomy. An effective pathway forward requires establishing a single, empowered national DDR authority with decentralised branches, embedding DDR in national development plans, and ensuring domestic budgetary commitment beyond donor cycles. Postcolonial Theory (PCT) cautions that even "locally led" initiatives risk donor capture unless political ownership is genuine and sustained (Mbembe, 2001). Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also essential to track not only immediate outputs but also long-term reintegration impacts.

An integrated strategic vision: drawing together these threads, an effective reintegration strategy for the DRC must: (1) Guarantee security as the protective floor for all interventions (HST). (2) Deliver sustained, market-linked economic opportunities that rebuild trust and networks (SCT). (3) Foster community acceptance through structured, rights-based interaction (SIT and CT). (4) Embed psychosocial care across all reintegration stages. (5) Mainstream gender sensitivity as a systemic standard. (6) Anchor reintegration in a coordinated, nationally owned governance framework that resists donor dependency (PCT). This integrated vision is not a static blueprint but a living framework, adaptable to shifting conflict dynamics while remaining rooted in the agency and needs of both returnees and receiving communities.

This chapter has examined the structural, economic, social, and psychological dimensions shaping the reintegration of former Kadogos in the DRC. It has shown that reintegration is hindered by systemic weaknesses in DDR programs, socio-economic exclusion, persistent insecurity, and deep-rooted prejudice. Comparative cases from other post-conflict contexts suggest that community engagement, economic empowerment, and protection are critical to sustainable outcomes. The chapter also identified significant gaps in the literature, particularly the absence of longitudinal, context-

sensitive, and gender-aware research, providing the empirical and conceptual space for this thesis. Chapter III will build on this foundation by presenting the theoretical and conceptual framework that links these empirical findings to testable hypotheses, setting the stage for rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Chapter III: Theoretical frameworks

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation underpinning the study of Kadogos' reintegration. Building on the literature review, it consolidates key conceptual insights and empirical findings into a coherent analytical lens. The chapter unfolds in four interrelated sections. 3.1 introduces the Dual Perspective Theory of Reintegration, the core conceptual framework used to examine the reintegration process from both the perspective of Kadogos and that of the local or host communities. 3.2 articulates the hypotheses that emerge from the theoretical synthesis. 3.3 addresses the need for sustainable reintegration programs, with particular attention to DRC-specific realities. 3.4 confronts the structural and contextual challenges that must be overcome for reintegration to be both effective and lasting. Finally, 3.5 provides a chapter summary and prepares the stage for the methodological discussions in Chapter IV.

Throughout, the analysis is grounded in the recognition that reintegration is not simply the endpoint of armed conflict involvement, it is a continuous, dynamic process shaped by economic, psychological, political, and cultural forces. The frameworks deployed here do not treat Kadogos as passive subjects of policy but as active agents navigating often-hostile environments. In turn, communities are understood as complex social systems whose responses are influenced by security concerns, resource competition, cultural norms, and historical grievances.

The discussion is deliberately multi-theoretical. It integrates Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Human Security Theory (HST), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT), each contributing distinct explanatory power. This pluralist approach responds directly to examiner comments emphasising the need to avoid over-reliance on a single explanatory model and to reflect the multifaceted nature of reintegration in conflict-affected societies.

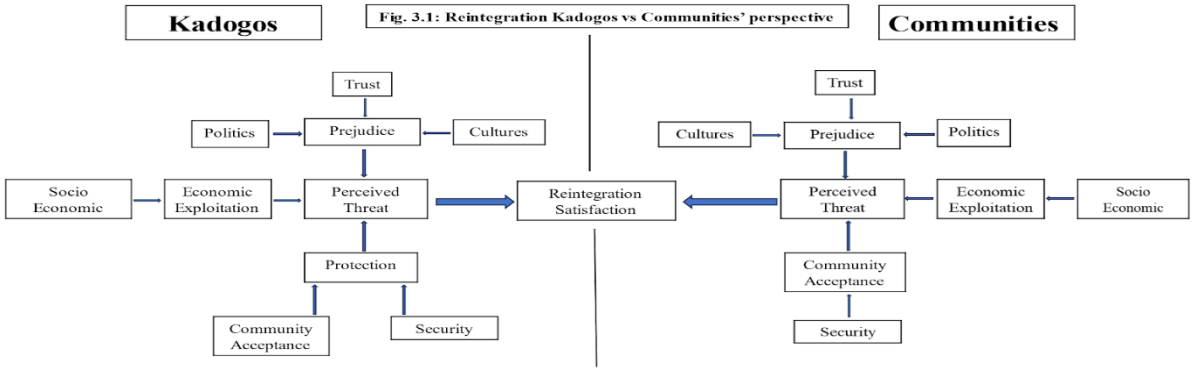
3.1. The Dual Perspective Theory of Reintegration (DPTR)

The DPTR recognises that the reintegration of former child soldiers cannot be fully understood without concurrently examining two interdependent dimensions: (1) The individual perspective - how Kadogos experience, navigate, and reconstruct their lives after demobilisation. (2) The community perspective - how receiving communities perceive, respond to, and interact with returning Kadogos. This dual lens counters the limitations of earlier reintegration studies that either overemphasised the psychological recovery of the child soldier (often in isolation from the social environment) or focused solely on community attitudes without adequately considering the lived realities of the individual returnee.

The conceptual framework is illustrated below (Figure 3.1), situating the individual and community perspectives as interconnected dimensions. The model explicitly maps the relevant

theoretical lenses, Social Identity Theory and Human Security Theory on Kadogos' side, and Contact Theory and Social Capital Theory on the communities' side. The diagram also emphasises the mutually constitutive relationship between the two dimensions: individual identity reconstruction depends on community acceptance, while community acceptance is shaped by visible signs of constructive participation from Kadogos.

Figure 3.1[9]. Conceptual Model: The Dual Perspective Theory of Reintegration



The above figure highlights the interdependent dynamics of reintegration. On the individual side, Kadogos must reconstruct identities and access basic security, health, and livelihoods to stabilise their lives. On the community side, reintegration is mediated by community attitudes: prejudice can be reduced through contact, while inclusive networks and trust can expand opportunities for returnees. The bidirectional arrows symbolise that neither perspective functions independently; rather, they continuously interact in shaping reintegration outcomes. This conceptual model provides a structured way to capture the complexities of reintegration in the DRC, ensuring that both individual recovery and community acceptance are foregrounded as mutually reinforcing processes.

This dual lens addresses the limitations of prior research that often either overemphasised the psychological recovery of the child soldier in isolation (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2013), or reduced reintegration to community acceptance without adequately considering the agency and lived realities of returnees (Annan et al., 2011; Blattman, 2016).

From the standpoint of Kadogos, reintegration is not limited to relocation or vocational training but entails identity reconstruction, the repair of disrupted relationships, and the search for personal security in fractured social and political environments. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, this process

[9] Figure 3.1 synthesizes the "dual perspectives" central to this thesis: the lived needs and vulnerabilities of Kadogos on the one hand, and the fears, norms, and expectations of host communities on the other. It maps how structural, community, and individual factors interact (with bidirectional feedback loops) to shape reintegration satisfaction. The figure is explicitly grounded in Social Identity Theory, Social Capital Theory, Human Security Theory, Contact Theory, and Postcolonial Theory, and it links visually to the quantitative predictors used in Chapter V (prejudice, economic exploitation, protection, community acceptance, trust, politics, culture, socio-economics).

is influenced by how returnees perceive themselves and anticipate being perceived by others. Kadogos who internalise negative labels, such as being viewed as violent outsiders, may struggle to re-establish social belonging, reinforcing cycles of alienation and marginalisation (Blattman, 2016). Human Security Theory adds further insight by foregrounding the essential role of safety, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities as prerequisites for meaningful reintegration (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Stys et al., 2020). Without these, former child soldiers remain vulnerable to re-recruitment, as documented repeatedly in eastern DRC.

From the standpoint of communities, reintegration is equally dependent on how local populations interpret and respond to the return of Kadogos. Communities are not passive recipients but active agents who often evaluate returnees through the prism of security, collective memory, and economic competition. As Contact Theory posits, sustained, positive interactions can reduce prejudice and build trust if they occur under conditions of equality and cooperation (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Yet, in contexts where trauma, mistrust, and resource scarcity dominate, communities often perceive Kadogos as threats rather than contributors (Annan et al., 2011). Here, Social Capital Theory becomes particularly relevant. High levels of bonding capital (intra-group solidarity) combined with weak bridging capital (inter-group trust) can foster exclusivity and rejection, whereas inclusive and outward-looking networks can open opportunities for reintegration by expanding access to jobs, education, and social support (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000).

The central proposition of the DPTR is that these two perspectives, individual and community, are mutually constitutive. A Kadogo's reconstruction of self-identity cannot succeed without some degree of community acceptance, while community acceptance is itself contingent on evidence of a Kadogo's constructive participation in social and economic life. Reintegration is thus not a linear sequence but an ongoing negotiation between individual aspirations and community expectations. In the DRC, where legacies of violence, ethnic fragmentation, and postcolonial state weakness have produced fragile and contested social fabrics (Autesserre, 2021), the DPTR offers a contextualised analytical lens. It not only captures these fragilities but also highlights critical policy entry points where interventions can simultaneously strengthen individual resilience and foster community receptivity.

3.1.1. Key differences and complementarities

The theoretical framework of this study highlights key differences and complementarities between the core arguments, emphasizing the interplay between social, economic, and security-related factors in the reintegration of Kadogos. First, the distinction between social and economic factors is central to understanding reintegration dynamics. Argument 1 focuses on social stigma as a barrier to reintegration, while Argument 2 highlights economic exploitation as a key challenge. Argument 3

examines the role of safety perceptions in shaping reintegration experiences, whereas Argument 4 underscores the importance of community acceptance in fostering long-term stability.

Second, the role of threat perception varies across these arguments. Arguments 1 and 4 address community fears and prejudices, exploring how negative perceptions influence both rejection and acceptance of Kadogos. Argument 2 shifts the focus to economic threats, illustrating how financial instability and exploitation contribute to reintegration failure. Argument 3, in contrast, prioritizes security threats, emphasizing the need for physical protection to prevent re-recruitment and ensure stability.

Finally, the balance between protection and acceptance emerges as a crucial theme. Arguments 1 and 3 emphasize the need for protection, whether from prejudice or security risks, while Argument 2 stresses economic stability as a foundation for successful reintegration. Argument 4, on the other hand, highlights the transformative power of community acceptance in fostering sustainable reintegration. These interconnections reveal the multifaceted nature of reintegration, demonstrating that social, economic, and security dimensions must be addressed holistically to achieve meaningful and lasting outcomes.

This integrated framework addresses the social, economic, and security dimensions of reintegration. By tackling prejudice, exploitation, safety concerns, and community acceptance, sustainable reintegration becomes achievable. Moreover, in regions such as the eastern DRC, where the presence of rebel groups and the constant reminder of insecurity hinder reintegration, these efforts could transform reintegration into a pathway for long-term peace and inclusive development.

The reintegration of Kadogos cannot be adequately understood without situating them in relation to other categories of marginalised youth such as Sheggues[10] and Kulunas[11]. All three groups are widely perceived as "dangerous individuals," yet the nature and degree of their perceived threat differs markedly across social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. This hierarchy of dangerousness, where Sheggues are viewed as the least threatening, Kulunas occupy an intermediate position, and Kadogos are feared as the most dangerous, deeply influences reintegration outcomes.

At the same time, the existing literature on reintegration reveals important gaps that limit both scholarly understanding and policy effectiveness. Building on these, this section develops three central arguments that highlight why Kadogos' reintegration is uniquely complex. The analysis is structured around stigma, security, economic, cultural, and socio-political factors, and interpreted through an integrated theoretical framework combining Social Identity Theory, Human Security Theory, Contact Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Postcolonial Theory.

Below I link the gaps identified in chapter 2 to the main arguments and the key hypotheses guiding my fieldwork, reflecting both academic concerns and practical considerations. The following

[10] Sheggue - generally means young abandoned/street kids of Kinshasa.
[11] Kuluna - highly derogatory term, meaning thug street kids of Kinshasa – usually older teens or in their twenties – dangerous criminals.

is a detailed explanation of how each gap corresponds to a related theoretical assumption, with added emphasis on the Congolese population's realities, marked by insecurity, extreme poverty, economic and psychological exploitation, and political instability.

Gaps in the literature: first, the lack of longitudinal studies - most studies on reintegration are short-term, capturing only immediate outcomes of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes. The absence of longitudinal data obscures the long-term vulnerabilities of Kadogos, particularly cycles of re-recruitment, economic marginalisation, and community rejection (Betancourt et al., 2010; Boothby, 2018; Okolie-Osemene, 2021). Second, insufficient contextual specificity - research often generalises reintegration experiences across the DRC, overlooking regional and urban-rural variations (McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Stys et al., 2020). For instance, reintegration in Eastern provinces, shaped by ongoing insurgencies, differs drastically from Kinshasa, where Kadogos share space with Sheggues and Kulunas, complicating how communities categorise “dangerous youth.”

Third, limited gendered analysis - female Kadogos are doubly stigmatised, both as ex-combatants and survivors of sexual violence, yet their experiences remain marginalised in research and policy (Wessells, 2009). Reintegration approaches that fail to address these gender-specific vulnerabilities reproduce inequalities and undermine programme effectiveness. Fourth, weak analysis of community perspectives - the literature often privileges the voices of ex-combatants, while neglecting the perceptions and agency of host communities (Annan et al., 2011). Yet, community acceptance or rejection is central to reintegration, particularly in contexts where former fighters return alongside Sheggues and Kulunas.

The central arguments:

(1) Reintegration is structured by stigma and identity hierarchies. Kadogos are uniquely stigmatised due to their association with armed conflict, killing, and militarisation. Communities often regard them as irredeemably violent, even though many were forcibly conscripted as children (Wessells, 2009; Blattman, 2016). In contrast, Sheggues are viewed as marginalised delinquents, pitiable victims of poverty and abandonment rather than existential threats (Trefon, 2004). Kulunas, though feared for their urban violence, occupy an ambiguous position: simultaneously criminalised and tolerated because of their links to political patronage networks in Kinshasa (Perkins, 2014). This produces a stigma hierarchy, with Kadogos most feared, Kulunas conditionally accepted, and Sheggues treated as nuisances rather than existential dangers. Social Identity Theory helps explain how this hierarchy entrenches exclusion: Kadogos are categorised as an out-group marked by violence, while Sheggues can be reabsorbed into in-groups through family or kinship ties.

(2) Security and livelihoods underpin risks of re-recruitment. Kadogos face profound human security deficits, limited access to education, healthcare, livelihoods, and protection, placing them at constant risk of re-recruitment (Stys et al., 2020). Their combat experience makes them both valuable to armed groups and feared by communities. By contrast, Sheggues sustain themselves through petty trade and informal economies, while Kulunas leverage networks of protection and patronage. This

creates a security-livelihood hierarchy in which Kadogos are simultaneously the most insecure and the most securitised. Human Security Theory highlights how the absence of economic stability and personal safety undermines reintegration.

(3) Reintegration is negotiated through trust, networks, and reciprocity. Reintegration depends not only on formal programmes but also on the extent to which former combatants can rebuild social trust and networks of reciprocity. Kadogos return with fractured social capital: their military identities sever bonds of trust, making them harder to reintegrate compared to Sheggues, who maintain street-level solidarities, or Kulunas, who maintain ties with political patrons (Trefon, 2004). Social Capital Theory and Contact Theory together explain these dynamics: communities with high bonding capital often exclude Kadogos, while meaningful, structured contact could counter stigma. However, without sustained investment, contact often reinforces prejudice rather than alleviating it (Allport, 1954; Wessells, 2009).

Kadogos, Sheggues, and Kulunas: a hierarchy of dangerousness

The comparison of these groups reveals a hierarchy of perceived dangerousness in Congolese society: (1) Sheggues: Least dangerous, associated with poverty and petty crime. They evoke pity and are occasionally absorbed into family networks or informal economies (Trefon, 2004). (2) Kulunas: Moderately dangerous, notorious for urban violence in Kinshasa. Feared by citizens but tolerated or manipulated by political elites for electoral and security purposes (Perkins, 2014). (3) Kadogos: Most dangerous, seen as militarised actors with killing capacity, regardless of their forced recruitment as children. Their reintegration is blocked by deep stigma and securitisation (Wessells, 2009; Blattman, 2016). This hierarchy is not merely cultural but is deeply tied to socio-political structures. Kadogos embody the legacies of war and the failures of DDR programmes, while Sheggues and Kulunas reflect urban poverty, weak governance, and patronage politics.

The integration of five theoretical frameworks provides a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics: (1) Social Identity Theory explains how group-based stigma reinforces exclusion of Kadogos. (2) Human Security Theory illuminates how livelihood insecurity and lack of protection drive vulnerability to re-recruitment. (3) Contact Theory highlights the conditional role of community interaction in overcoming prejudice. (4) Social Capital Theory explains how displacement and militarisation fracture networks of trust and reciprocity. (5) Postcolonial Theory situates these hierarchies within colonial legacies of racialised governance, systemic neglect, and structural violence, showing how categories of “dangerous youth” are historically constructed and politically mobilised. Taken together, these theories move beyond linear models of reintegration, instead framing it as a multi-layered, negotiated process shaped by stigma, insecurity, fractured networks, and historical inequalities.

By incorporating both the four gaps in the literature and the three arguments, this section demonstrates that Kadogos face more profound reintegration challenges than Sheggues or Kulunas. The combination of militarised stigma fractured social capital, livelihood insecurity, and socio-political exclusion positions them as the most dangerous category of youth in the DRC. At the same time, understanding the comparative hierarchies of dangerousness reveals how reintegration must be rethought, not as a uniform process, but as a differentiated, context-sensitive negotiation that accounts for the complex interplay of stigma, security, economic marginalisation, and community trust.

3.2 Hypotheses

3.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Prejudice

Hypotheses 1A and 1B suggest that the willingness of both Kadogos and the host communities to reintegrate is significantly influenced by the extent of prejudice they experience or perceive. Longitudinal research could provide insights into how community attitudes toward Kadogos evolve over time and whether sustained exposure reduces negative perceptions. Such research could reveal whether long-term reintegration leads to diminishing prejudice, thus fostering a more inclusive environment. The first gap identified the lack of long-term studies on this subject, offering the opportunity to validate or refine these hypotheses by examining how prejudice and perceptions evolve post-reintegration.

H1A (Communities' perspective): *A reduction in community prejudice, increases the willingness of communities to integrate Kadogos in society.* H1B (Kadogos' perspective): *The better-managed community prejudice and the better-protected Kadogos feel against prejudice, the higher the rate of their reintegration satisfaction.*

Why this hypothesis matters

At the heart of reintegration lies a painful interpersonal transaction: a person who has been weaponised by war returns to a community that remembers hurt, loss, and betrayal. Prejudice is the social sign that records that hurt, it is not merely an attitude but a social process that shapes access to jobs, housing, relationships, and psychological healing. Social Identity Theory explains why communities segregate returnees into "out-groups" and why such categorization is sticky (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Contact Theory and Social Capital Theory suggest routes to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Putnam, 2000), but the DRC's fractured social fabric, regional differences, and persistent insecurity mean those routes are fraught and contingent (Autesserre, 2021; Wessells, 2006). Kadogos

are often seen as perpetrators rather than victims; this moral framing produces social exclusion and economic marginalisation that perpetuate vulnerability to re-recruitment (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2010). Thus, H1A and H1B do not merely test correlation; they interrogate whether prejudice is a causal bottleneck in reintegration and whether the amelioration of prejudice (and protection against it) meaningfully improves both community readiness and Kadogos' own outcomes.

In the context of theoretical grounding: (1) Social Identity Theory (SIT): Prejudice arises from ingroup/outgroup distinctions. Communities defend group boundaries to preserve identity; Kadogos threaten those boundaries because their wartime identity is ambivalent (victim/perpetrator). SIT predicts that prejudice will reduce willingness to accept returnees and block access to bridging social capital (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Harwood, 2020). (2) Contact Theory (CT): Structured, equal-status, institutionalised contact can reduce prejudice, but only if conditions of sustained interaction, common goals, and authority support are present, conditions often absent in hasty DDR projects (Allport, 1954; Grady et al., 2023). (3) Social Capital Theory (SCT): Prejudice corrodes bridging social capital and blocks access to networks necessary for employment and support (Putnam, 2000; Khayesi, 2014). (4) Human Security Theory (HST): Without protection, reducing prejudice is insufficient, physical and legal safety must accompany attitudinal change to allow the reintegration process to proceed (Gasper & Spencer, 2018).

The empirical evidence supporting the hypotheses is that community acceptance correlates with better reintegration outcomes. Annan et al. (2009) and Betancourt et al. (2010) show community engagement and acceptance strongly predict psychosocial recovery and lower re-recruitment. Stigma produces long-term harm, longitudinal studies (Betancourt et al., 2010) demonstrate that social exclusion aggravates PTSD, depression, and socioeconomic marginalisation. Localized interventions can reduce prejudice. Community sensitisation and culturally grounded ceremonies (Sierra Leone, Uganda examples) facilitated acceptance and diminished stigma (Wessells, 2006; Shaw, 2007). From DRC-specific patterns, field research underscores the east–west divide: eastern communities sometimes show normalized tolerance due to prolonged exposure, while western communities (less directly exposed) may display heightened stigma shaped by political narratives and distance from conflict's realities (Baaz & Stern, 2013; Thill, 2021).

The proposed causal pathways (mechanisms) here are that: (1) prejudice leads to social exclusion pathway: Community prejudice reduces bonding/bridging capital (SCT) which limits access to jobs, marriage, land leading to economic marginalisation, which in turn causes mental-health deterioration and increased risk of re-recruitment. (2) Protection as moderator/mediator: Protection mechanisms (legal safeguards, safe housing, psychosocial services) can moderate the negative effect of prejudice (i.e., where protection is strong, prejudice harms outcomes less) or mediate change by creating conditions in which contact, and livelihood programs can operate safely. (3) Contact-enabled transformation: Structured, meaningful contact reduces prejudice (CT), which restores bridging social capital (SCT), thereby improving economic and psychosocial outcomes (HST).

How the hypothesis will be tested:

- Dependent variables (outcomes): (1) Community willingness to accept reintegration, measured by community survey items (willingness to hire, allow marriage, permit return to village, participate in reconciliation rituals). (2) Kadogo reintegration satisfaction, composite index combining social acceptance (peer/family ties), economic stability (employment/income), psychological well-being (validated scales for PTSD, depression, anxiety), and self-reported sense of security. (3) Objective indicators: incidence of re-recruitment, access to services, school enrolment, employment status.

- Independent variables: (1) Community-level prejudice index, constructed from attitudinal survey items (Likert scales on perceived danger, moral blame, willingness to interact). (2) Protection score, the presence/quality of protection mechanisms (safe housing, legal aid, community policing, psychosocial services), drawn from program data and community reports.

- Control variables: age, gender, time since demobilisation, education level, exposure to violence, region (east/west), ethnic group, program participation, proximity to armed groups, household poverty.

The quantitative analysis uses multilevel (hierarchical) regression models to account for individual-within-community clustering (random effects for community). Key specifications: Model 1: Regress communities' reintegration satisfaction on community prejudice, controlling for community-level covariates (poverty rate, conflict intensity). Model 2: Regress Kadogo reintegration satisfaction on individual-level perceived prejudice and protection measures, controlling as above and including interaction term to test moderation. Model 3: Mediation analysis (e.g., structural equation modelling) to test whether prejudice leads to reduced bridging capital, linking to economic outcomes that impact reintegration satisfaction. For robustness, the study uses fixed effects at locality level, clustered standard errors, propensity-score matching to account for selection into programs.

The qualitative analysis employs the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews (various leaders: community, political, military, religious and NGOS). The qualitative data traces the lived mechanisms (how stigma is enacted) and validate survey constructs.

Addressing endogeneity/selection bias, the study uses reverse causality: Communities' observed rejection might be a response to reoffending by some returnees (i.e., poor reintegration causing prejudice). To mitigate, use instrumental variables where possible (e.g., historical presence of ritual reconciliation practices as plausibly exogenous predictor of predisposition to accept returnees), or exploit quasi-experimental variation (timing of sensitisation campaigns). As well as the unobserved heterogeneity: Community fixed effects (for panel datasets) or matching strategies to compare similar communities with different levels of prejudice intervention. The expectation here is to anticipate a substantial negative coefficient for community prejudice on acceptance. Interaction tests should show that protection buffers this negative effect (i.e., prejudice harms are smaller where protection is

stronger). Threshold effects, therefore, should show reductions in prejudice produces gains in psychosocial indicators if combined with protection, implying synergies between attitudinal and structural interventions.

Considering and dealing with potential limitations and mitigation. Social desirability bias in surveys (respondents under- or over-reporting prejudice or acceptance): mitigate with indirect questioning, vignettes, randomized-response techniques. Attrition or long-term follow-up difficulty: where possible build panels with durable tracking mechanisms and triangulate with administrative records (school, health centre, NGO service lists). Gender imbalance in sample: data from field work reports low female participation (less than 10 out 144 Kadogos). Ensure oversampling of female Kadogos in future waves to robustly test gendered dynamics. Where female numbers are small, treat findings as exploratory and highlight the need for further research.

Practical and policy implications if H1A/H1B are supported are: (1) Program design: Combine community sensitisation campaigns with guaranteed protection packages (safe housing, legal protection, psychosocial support). Sensitisation alone is insufficient without assurances of safety. (2) Legal/policy: Implement anti-discrimination provisions within DDR frameworks, with mechanisms for redress and accountability. (3) Community ownership: Build locally led reconciliation processes (rituals, truth-sharing, collaborative economic projects) that are culturally resonant (Wessells, 2006; Shaw, 2007). (4) Monitoring: Introduce community-level prejudice indices as part of DDR monitoring, not just numbers demobilised but attitudes toward them.

This hypothesis sits at the nexus of identity, security, and economics. It operationalises the claim, present throughout the study, that failing to address societal perception (prejudice) condemns even well-resourced DDR programs to failure. It also guides the empirical strategy toward mixed methods that can reveal not just whether prejudice matters, but how it operates and how policy can interrupt destructive cycles of exclusion and re-recruitment (Annan et al., 2011; Betancourt et al., 2010; Wessells, 2009).

3.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Economic Exploitation

Hypotheses 2A and 2B explore how perceptions of economic threats from Kadogos affect both the community's acceptance and their willingness to reintegrate. This explicitly links to the second gap identified above, which emphasizes the variability of socio-economic conditions and community dynamics across different regions of the DRC. These differences are critical for understanding how economic vulnerabilities are perceived and experienced. For example, in regions marked by extreme poverty, unemployment, and resource scarcity, communities may view them as economic competitors, while Kadogos themselves face heightened risks of exploitation. Recognizing these regional disparities

is essential for validating hypotheses 2A and 2B, offering a more nuanced understanding of how economic factors either facilitate or obstruct the reintegration process.

H2A (Communities' perspective): *The less economic threat communities feel from Kadogos, the greater their willingness to accept Kadogos' reintegration.* H2B (Kadogos' perspective): *The more protected Kadogos feel against economic exploitation, the more willing they are to reintegrate into society.*

Why this hypothesis matters

Economic exploitation is a fundamental structural barrier impeding the sustainable reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC. While much research emphasizes social stigma and psychological trauma, the economic realities faced by Kadogos often receive less systematic attention despite their critical importance. The denial of equitable access to livelihoods, whether through forced labour, exclusion from local economies, or manipulation by economic elites, exacerbates poverty and social marginalization (Blattman, 2016; Autesserre, 2012). This exclusion threatens the very possibility of long-term reintegration, as economic insecurity fosters desperation and vulnerability to re-recruitment into armed groups (Betancourt et al., 2013; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008). Understanding economic exploitation as both a direct impediment and a mediator between social acceptance and reintegration success is essential to addressing these multifaceted challenges holistically.

In the context of theoretical grounding:

(1) Human Security Theory (HST): Human security frameworks emphasize economic security as one of the seven essential dimensions of human well-being, alongside protection from violence and political freedom (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007; UNDP, 1994). Economic exploitation undermines this dimension by depriving individuals of basic economic rights and freedoms, perpetuating cycles of poverty and insecurity that obstruct reintegration. The denial of livelihood opportunities restricts Kadogos' capacity to meet essential needs, compromising their safety, health, and social participation.

(2) Social Capital Theory (SCT): Social capital, defined as networks, norms, and trust facilitating cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988), is critical for successful reintegration. Economic participation fosters social capital by embedding individuals within networks of reciprocity and support. When Kadogos face economic exploitation, these networks weaken or dissolve, eroding their ability to access community resources, support mechanisms, and opportunities for social advancement (Campbell, 2016).

(3) Political Economy Perspective: The structural conditions of economic exploitation in post-conflict zones like the DRC are shaped by conflict economies and elite capture, where powerful actors manipulate economic systems for profit at the expense of marginalized populations (Autesserre, 2014).

Economic exploitation must be understood not only as individual hardship but as embedded in broader systemic injustices and power asymmetries that reproduce inequality and conflict dynamics.

Research in the DRC has documented that former child soldiers frequently encounter exploitative labour arrangements, including forced or unpaid labour, lack of contract protections, and exclusion from lucrative local economic activities such as artisanal mining and agriculture (Blattman, 2016; Stover & Weinstein, 2004). These exploitative conditions perpetuate poverty and hinder reintegration efforts. Longitudinal studies link economic marginalization with increased risks of re-recruitment and social alienation (Betancourt et al., 2013; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008). For instance, in Sierra Leone and Liberia, economic deprivation was a significant predictor of relapse into armed groups among former child combatants (Annan et al., 2011). Observations from field work in eastern DRC reveal persistent narratives of economic hardship as a major reintegration barrier, even when social acceptance is reported. Many participants recount being excluded from economic networks or subjected to unfair labour, which fosters feelings of injustice and hopelessness (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Wessells, 2009).

Proposed causal pathways (mechanisms) here are that: (1) Direct economic impact: Economic exploitation results in unstable or insufficient income and material deprivation. This leads to an inability to afford education, healthcare, and basic necessities, which are critical components of reintegration and wellbeing (Betancourt et al., 2013). Material insecurity also increases psychological stress, undermining social reintegration. (2) Mediation of community acceptance: Even in communities with moderate social acceptance, persistent economic exploitation signals exclusion and inequality. This economic marginalization undercuts the protective effect of community acceptance, fostering mistrust, alienation, and a fractured sense of belonging (Campbell, 2016; Annan et al., 2011). (3) Feedback loop with protection and politics: Economic exploitation intensifies vulnerabilities by limiting access to formal protection mechanisms, legal rights, and political representation (Autesserre, 2014). Marginalized Kadogos may lack recourse against exploiters, reinforcing cycles of exclusion that contribute to social and political instability.

How the hypothesis will be tested:

- Dependent Variable: Reintegration outcomes operationalized as a composite index combining (A) economic stability through analysis of employment status, average income, access to steady livelihood sources) and (B) social inclusion through analysis of community participation, perceived acceptance, and absence of discrimination.

- Independent Variable: Economic exploitation measured through (1) self-reported experiences of unfair wages, forced or exploitative labour conditions, (2) access to economic opportunities, including participation in local industries like mining and agriculture, and (3) subjective assessments of economic exclusion and deprivation.

- Mediator and control variables: Community acceptance index derived from survey items on frequency of social acceptance, inclusion in communal activities, and discrimination experiences. Age, gender, ethnicity, education, province of residence, exposure to conflict-related violence, and DDR participation status (formal/informal).

The quantitative analysis uses the following key specifications: Model 1 - a multivariate regression testing the direct effect of economic exploitation on reintegration outcomes, controlling for socio-demographics and conflict exposure. Model 2 - adding community acceptance as an independent variable to examine joint influence on reintegration success. Model 3 - mediation analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) to test whether economic exploitation mediates the relationship between community acceptance and reintegration outcomes, controlling for confounders. And robustness checks for sensitivity analyses excluding influential outliers. Interaction terms (e.g., economic exploitation × province) to explore contextual variations. And propensity score matching to reduce bias arising from differences between formal DDR participants and informal integration.

The qualitative analysis uses thematic coding of semi-structured interviews to explore lived experiences of economic exploitation, perceptions of fairness, and its impact on social and psychological dimensions of reintegration. As well as a comparative analysis across provinces to understand how regional economic structures shape exploitation patterns.

Addressing endogeneity and selection bias, the study uses instrumental variables approach utilizing exogenous variation such as proximity to mining zones or regional economic shocks as instruments for economic exploitation. As well as triangulation of qualitative data to contextualize and verify quantitative findings, mitigating unobserved confounding. The expectation here is to anticipate a statistically significant negative association between economic exploitation indicators and reintegration success is anticipated, with larger effects in provinces characterized by active conflict economies (North and South Kivu). Mediation models are expected to show that economic exploitation substantially attenuates the positive effects of community acceptance on reintegration outcomes. And threshold effects may be identified where beyond certain levels of exploitation, reintegration success sharply declines, increasing risks of re-recruitment or social withdrawal.

Considering and dealing with potential limitations and mitigation. Among the limitations are: underreporting of economic exploitation due to stigma or fear of reprisal. Difficulty isolating economic exploitation from general poverty and conflict-related deprivation. And variability in local economic structures limits cross-provincial comparability. The strategy here is to use multiple complementary data sources including NGO reports, community leader interviews, and participant observation. Implement robust control variables and province fixed effects to capture unobserved heterogeneity. Conduct qualitative follow-ups to validate and deepen understanding of economic exploitation contexts.

Practical and policy implications if H2A/H2B are supported are: (1) Reintegration programs should integrate economic empowerment components that guarantee fair labour practices, facilitate equitable access to local economies, and regulate exploitative sectors such as informal mining. (2)

Policymakers must recognize that social acceptance alone is insufficient for sustainable reintegration without addressing underlying economic exclusion. (3) Economic exploitation's mediating role calls for multi-sectoral interventions combining legal protections, community reconciliation, and economic development initiatives tailored to local contexts. (4) Strengthening economic rights and protections for Kadogos could reduce cycles of poverty, social exclusion, and potential relapse into armed conflict.

Economic exploitation represents a structural and systemic barrier to reintegration that intersects with and deepens social, psychological, and political challenges faced by former Kadogos. By rigorously investigating economic exploitation's direct and mediating effects, this thesis moves beyond individual-level factors to analyse the embedded economic injustices perpetuating marginalization and conflict relapse in the DRC. This holistic perspective is vital for informing context-sensitive, sustainable reintegration policies that address root causes rather than symptoms of post-conflict vulnerability.

3.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Community Acceptance

Hypothesis 3A and 3B focus on how both communities and Kadogos perceive safety and security, with them feeling more secure when they are not threatened by the community. The third gap described in the key differences and complementarities highlights economic vulnerabilities, which intersect with protection concerns. Economic insecurity in the DRC often breeds social tensions, making them more susceptible to exploitation or threats from both the community and external actors. Their economic vulnerability, characterized by high poverty levels, lack of employment opportunities, and reliance on informal sectors, increases their feelings of insecurity and isolation.

This, in turn, creates significant barriers to successful reintegration. Communities, grappling with extreme poverty and economic instability, may perceive Kadogos as economic competitors or potential threats to their limited resources. These economic tensions further erode trust and increase resistance to reintegration efforts. This third gap links directly to Hypothesis 3 by underscoring the intertwined nature of economic insecurity and protection challenges, highlighting the importance of addressing these vulnerabilities to foster an environment conducive to reintegration.

H3A (Communities' perspective): *The safer and more secure communities feel around Kadogos, the greater their willingness to accept Kadogos' reintegration.* H3B (Kadogos' perspective): *The absence of threats from communities increases Kadogos' sense of security and willingness to reintegrate.*

Why this hypothesis matters

Community acceptance is a critical dimension shaping the reintegration trajectories of former child soldiers, often determining the difference between successful social rehabilitation and chronic marginalization. Reintegration is not solely an individual process but a deeply social one, rooted in the restoration of social bonds and the renegotiation of identities within communities (Betancourt et al., 2013; Annan et al., 2011). Community rejection can perpetuate exclusion, reinforce stigma, and block access to vital resources and opportunities, effectively undermining reintegration efforts and increasing vulnerability to re-recruitment or violence (Wessells, 2009; Boothby, 2018).

In the complex post-conflict environment of the DRC, community acceptance is crucial because it intersects with psychological recovery, economic stability, and security. Conversely, rejection and stigmatization perpetuate cycles of exclusion and violence, undermining peacebuilding and sustainable development (McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Stys et al., 2020). Understanding community acceptance's effect is thus fundamental to designing effective DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) programs and long-term peace strategies.

This hypothesis is grounded in several complementary theories: (1) Social Identity Theory (SIT): Community acceptance enables former Kadogos to transition from stigmatized “out-group” members to accepted “in-group” members, facilitating identity reconstruction and social cohesion (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wessells, 2009). (2) Social Capital Theory (SCT): Acceptance enhances social networks and trust, granting access to economic and psychosocial resources necessary for sustainable reintegration (Putnam, 2000; Annan et al., 2011). (3) Human Security Theory (HST): By fostering inclusion and safety, community acceptance addresses key human security dimensions, personal security, economic security, and community stability, critical for reintegration (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). (4) Postcolonial Theory (PCT): Recognizes that historical marginalization and structural inequalities may influence community attitudes toward former child soldiers, embedding acceptance or rejection within broader socio-political contexts (Mbembe, 2001).

Studies show that community acceptance correlates with improved mental health outcomes and resilience among former child soldiers in Africa (Betancourt et al., 2013; Kohrt et al., 2008). Evidence from the DRC and Uganda reveals that community rejection, often fuelled by fear, mistrust, and competition for scarce resources, leads to stigmatization and social exclusion, which hinder reintegration (McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Annan et al., 2011). Longitudinal research links social exclusion to increased risk of re-recruitment, as marginalized youth seek belonging and survival in armed groups (Blattman, 2016; Guichaoua, 2015). Qualitative studies emphasize how reconciliation and sensitization efforts at community level improve acceptance and reduce tensions (Annan et al., 2011; Boothby, 2018).

Proposed causal pathways (mechanisms) here are that: (1) Identity reconstruction - acceptance supports Kadogos’ redefinition of self away from “child soldier” towards valued community members, improving self-esteem and mental health (Wessells, 2009). (2) Social network rebuilding - acceptance facilitates rebuilding of trust and social ties, providing access to economic, emotional, and informational

resources (Putnam, 2000). (3) Economic integration - accepted Kadogos are more likely to participate in local labour markets and educational opportunities, enhancing economic stability (Betancourt et al., 2013). (4) Enhanced protection and reduced vulnerability - community inclusion creates informal protective networks that reduce risk of violence, exploitation, or re-recruitment (Boothby, 2018). (5) Political and social empowerment - acceptance can facilitate participation in local governance and community decision-making, promoting agency and long-term peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997).

How the hypothesis will be tested:

- Dependent variables: measures of reintegration success, include psychological well-being (e.g., validated scales for PTSD, depression, self-esteem), social belonging and acceptance (survey responses on perceived community attitudes), economic participation (employment status, income, school attendance), and incidence of re-recruitment or involvement in violence (self-reports, community records)

- Independent variable: the level of community acceptance, operationalised through survey items on perceived acceptance/rejection by neighbours, leaders, and peers. Qualitative assessments from interviews and focus groups with Kadogos and community members

- Controls variables: individual demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, trauma exposure and severity of violence experienced, access to formal DDR reintegration programs, and local security context and economic conditions.

The quantitative analysis uses the following key specifications: Model 1 - logistic regression testing association between community acceptance (independent variable) and reintegration outcomes (dependent variables), controlling for demographic factors. Model 2 - adding interaction terms to assess how effects vary by gender, ethnicity, or access to DDR programs. Model 3 - multilevel modelling to account for clustering within provinces and communities. Robustness checks for sensitivity analyses excluding outliers, alternate operational definitions of acceptance. The qualitative analysis uses thematic coding of interview transcripts to identify nuanced meanings of acceptance/rejection, the role of cultural norms, and community narratives. As well as the use of narrative analysis to understand how acceptance influences identity reconstruction and social belonging.

Addressing endogeneity and selection bias, the study utilises the use of instrumental variables where possible (e.g., proximity to NGO reconciliation programs) to mitigate reverse causality. Propensity score matching to compare Kadogos with similar profiles differing primarily in levels of community acceptance. The expectation here is a positive linear relationship between acceptance and reintegration success indicators. With threshold effects below a certain level of community acceptance, risks of marginalization and re-recruitment rise sharply. And a variation by gender and ethnicity with

female Kadogos and minority ethnic groups expected to experience lower acceptance and worse outcomes.

Considering and dealing with potential limitations and mitigation. (1) Measurement challenges - subjective perceptions of acceptance may vary; triangulating survey and qualitative data helps validate findings. (2) Security constraints - uneven access to research sites may bias sample; controlled for by multilevel modelling and careful sampling. (3) Social desirability bias - stigma may lead to underreporting rejection; confidential interviews and trust-building strategies mitigate this.

Practical and policy implications if H3A/H3B are supported are that reintegration programs should emphasize community-based reconciliation and sensitization programs within DDR strategies. Integrate mental health and psychosocial support with community engagement efforts. Develop policies to combat structural inequalities driving rejection and promote inclusion. Focus resources on social cohesion to reduce risk of re-recruitment and foster sustainable peace.

Community acceptance represents a fundamental social determinant of successful reintegration. Unlike prejudice, which reflects negative attitudes, acceptance captures the active inclusion that enables former Kadogos to rebuild lives and identities. Testing this hypothesis is crucial to the thesis's broader argument that sustainable reintegration requires multi-dimensional, context-sensitive interventions that address social, economic, and political dimensions simultaneously. Without community acceptance, efforts in other domains risk failure, making this hypothesis central to understanding and improving reintegration in the DRC.

3.2.4 Hypothesis 4: Protection

Hypotheses 4A and 4B suggest that community acceptance is fundamental to Kadogos' reintegration success, with communities being more likely to accept reintegration if they feel less threatened and Kadogos themselves experiencing acceptance. The fourth gaps identified in the literature review emphasizes the role of community perspectives and local capacities, which are often underexplored in reintegration studies. Local capacities, such as social support networks, community leadership, and cultural practices, are crucial in shaping community attitudes toward Kadogos. Understanding these local dynamics is essential for designing reintegration programs that facilitate community acceptance and enhance their sense of belonging. Gap 4 complements Hypothesis 4 by exploring the specific community-level factors (e.g., trust, solidarity, collective identity) that influence the willingness to accept Kadogos and contribute to their long-term reintegration.

H4A (Communities' perspective): *The more communities accept Kadogos, the more they consider reintegration to be successful.* H4B (Kadogos' perspective): *The more Kadogos feel accepted by communities, the greater their willingness to reintegrate.*

Why this hypothesis matters

Protection is a foundational element for the sustainable reintegration of former child soldiers, especially Kadogos in conflict-affected regions such as the DRC. Without a secure environment free from violence, harassment, and legal persecution, reintegration efforts are undermined (Betancourt et al., 2013; Boothby, 2018). Protection encompasses physical safety, legal safeguards, and social inclusion, which jointly enable former child soldiers to rebuild their lives, access education, health services, and economic opportunities (Machel, 1996; UNICEF, 2007). The fragile security landscape in the DRC exposes Kadogos to ongoing threats from armed groups, community hostility, and systemic neglect (Autesserre, 2021). Hence, understanding the role of protection is critical for crafting interventions that reduce vulnerability and foster stability (Human Rights Watch, 2013). This hypothesis emphasizes that protection is not merely a background condition but an active determinant shaping reintegration trajectories.

This hypothesis draws on multiple complementary theoretical frameworks: (1) Human Security Theory (HST): Protection is central to human security, emphasizing safety from physical harm and threats, legal protection, and empowerment to participate in society (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). Security is a precondition for accessing rights and opportunities essential to reintegration. (2) Social Identity Theory (SIT): Safety and protection contribute to rebuilding social identities by reducing fear and enabling positive social interactions, which help former child soldiers transition from stigmatized identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). (3) Postcolonial Theory (PCT): The systemic neglect and marginalization of vulnerable groups like Kadogos are tied to legacies of colonial governance and institutional failures, influencing the uneven provision of protection (Mbembe, 2001; Stoler, 2006).

Research consistently finds that physical protection reduces exposure to violence, exploitation, and re-recruitment among former child soldiers (Betancourt et al., 2013; Kohrt et al., 2008). Studies in the DRC and neighbouring countries show that legal protection (such as birth registration, identity documents, and legal aid) correlates with greater access to education, health care, and employment (UNICEF, 2013; Stys et al., 2020). Lack of protection often results in increased victimization, including sexual violence, forced labour, and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2013; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Community-based protection mechanisms, such as local watch groups or traditional justice systems, have been shown to reduce violence and build trust, facilitating reintegration (Annan et al., 2011; Boothby, 2018). Quantitative evidence shows significant associations between protective environments and improved psychosocial outcomes (Betancourt et al., 2010).

Proposed causal pathways (mechanisms) here are that: (1) Physical safety - protection from physical harm reduces trauma recurrence, allowing former Kadogos to focus on rebuilding social and economic lives (Boothby, 2018). (2) Legal security - legal protections prevent arbitrary arrest, exploitation, or discrimination, granting access to rights and services critical for reintegration (UNICEF,

2013). (3) Access to services - protection ensures safe access to education, health care, and psychosocial support, promoting recovery and empowerment (Betancourt et al., 2013). (4) Social trust and inclusion - protective environments foster trust between Kadogos, communities, and institutions, strengthening social networks necessary for long-term stability (Annan et al., 2011). (5) Reduction of re-recruitment risk - safe environments reduce vulnerability to coercion or economic desperation that drives return to armed groups (Blattman, 2016).

How the hypothesis will be tested:

- Dependent variables: reintegration outcomes include psychological well-being (PTSD, anxiety, depression scores), access to education, health, and vocational training, economic participation (employment, income), and incidence of violence or exploitation experienced post-demobilization

- Independent variable: level of protection measured through self-reported perception of physical safety (survey scales), access to legal documentation and services (administrative data), and presence/absence of community or institutional protection mechanisms (qualitative assessment)

- Controls variables: demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, trauma exposure history, community security context, and participation in reintegration programs.

The quantitative analysis uses the following key specifications: Model 1 - logistic regression analysis assessing relationship between protection levels and reintegration outcomes, controlling for covariates. Model 2 - Interaction terms to examine if protection effects differ by gender, age, or community context. Model 3 - multilevel modelling to address clustering by community or region. Robustness checks for instrumental variables (e.g., timing of protection program implementation) to address reverse causality and unobserved heterogeneity. The qualitative analysis uses thematic coding of interviews and focus groups with former Kadogos, community leaders, and protection actors exploring lived experiences of protection and its impact.

Addressing endogeneity and selection bias, the study utilises the use of propensity score matching to compare protected vs. non-protected groups with similar baseline characteristics, and longitudinal tracking to observe temporal ordering of protection and outcomes. The expectations here are positive, statistically significant correlations between protection levels and improved reintegration outcomes. Threshold effects where protection below a certain level sharply increases risks of negative outcomes. And variations expected by gender, with girls often facing differential protection challenges.

Considering and dealing with potential limitations and mitigation. Among the limitations are: (1) Measurement challenges - protection is multifaceted and subjective; triangulated measurement strategies (quantitative and qualitative) will mitigate this. (2) Confounding by security context - multilevel models and controls will help isolate protection effects. (3) Data limitations in conflict zones - mixed methods and purposive sampling to enhance data validity.

Practical and policy implications if H4A/H4B are supported are that reinforcement of physical security measures and legal protections as core DDR components. development of community-based protection mechanisms tailored to local realities, investment in legal documentation and rights awareness programs, and integrated approaches linking protection with psychosocial support and economic empowerment.

Protection is foundational to the thesis's argument that sustainable reintegration requires addressing not only individual rehabilitation but also structural and environmental factors. Without protection, former Kadogos remain vulnerable to cycles of violence, marginalization, and re-recruitment, undermining DDR program effectiveness. Testing this hypothesis provides critical insight into how safety and legal security shape reintegration trajectories in the DRC's volatile context, thus informing more comprehensive, contextually grounded peacebuilding strategies.

3.3 The need for sustainable reintegration programs

Reintegration is not an event but a long-term, dynamic process that extends far beyond the formal conclusion of DDR programs. The prevailing evidence from both the DRC and comparative post-conflict contexts shows that the success of reintegration hinges on whether support systems are sustained, adaptable, and locally embedded rather than short-lived, externally driven interventions (Wessells, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2013).

A critical weakness of past DDR approaches in the DRC lies in their short-term project cycles, which often end just as the most complex stages of reintegration begin. Many initiatives focus heavily on the initial transition from combat to civilian life, providing basic material aid, vocational training, or cash grants, but fail to ensure that these supports continue until individuals have achieved a stable livelihood and social acceptance (Thill, 2021). This creates a "reintegration cliff": once donor funding is exhausted, former Kadogos may be left without the resources, networks, or protective mechanisms needed to navigate a fragile and competitive post-conflict economy.

From a Human Security Theory (HST) perspective, sustainability is a safeguard against relapse into conditions of vulnerability. The theory posits that economic security, personal safety, and social belonging are mutually reinforcing. Without consistent reinforcement over time, these gains can erode rapidly. A former child soldier who initially secures employment but later loses it, without access to ongoing support, faces heightened risk of re-recruitment or marginalisation.

Similarly, Social Capital Theory (SCT) emphasises that reintegration is a relational process dependent on trust-building, reciprocity, and mutual support between returnees and their communities. These bonds cannot be forged overnight; they require years of consistent interaction, shared experiences, and mutual benefit. One-off reconciliation ceremonies or short-term sensitisation

campaigns, while symbolically important, are insufficient without continued engagement that reinforces new community identities and mitigates lingering stigma.

Comparative evidence strengthens this argument. In Sierra Leone, for example, reintegration outcomes improved markedly when programs incorporated multi-year community development components, such as infrastructure rehabilitation, cooperative farming, and local governance capacity-building, alongside individual assistance (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). These initiatives not only supported ex-combatants but also addressed community grievances about resource distribution, thereby reducing tensions and resentment. By contrast, in parts of Liberia where reintegration was treated as a 9–24-month program, returnees often found themselves unemployed and socially isolated within two years of demobilisation (Kohrt et al., 2008).

In the DRC, sustainable reintegration is further complicated by structural governance challenges. Weak decentralisation, limited fiscal capacity, and political instability mean that state institutions struggle to assume responsibility for DDR after international actors withdraw (Autesserre, 2021). As a result, the absence of a durable national reintegration framework leaves most support initiatives vulnerable to disruption whenever donor priorities shift. This fragility undermines not only individual reintegration journeys but also broader peacebuilding goals, as unaddressed vulnerabilities among former combatants can feed directly into renewed cycles of violence.

Addressing these challenges requires moving beyond a narrow, programmatic approach to DDR and embracing a long-term, systemic reintegration strategy. Such a strategy must: (1) Embed reintegration in national development planning to ensure political commitment and budgetary allocation beyond donor cycles. (2) Foster local ownership by empowering community structures, cooperatives, and local governance bodies to play central roles in monitoring and supporting returnees. (3) Prioritise flexible, adaptive programming that responds to evolving security, economic, and social conditions rather than adhering rigidly to pre-set timelines. (4) Integrate psychosocial support and trauma-informed services as ongoing elements, recognising that healing is a long-term process with fluctuating needs. (5) Ensure protection and legal frameworks are maintained consistently over time to prevent returnees from being re-victimised or re-recruited.

Ultimately, the need for sustainability is not a peripheral concern but the cornerstone of meaningful reintegration. Short-term reintegration may help ex-combatants survive; sustainable reintegration enables them to thrive. Without embedding reintegration within a long-term national vision, supported by stable funding, community participation, and adaptive frameworks, the DRC risks repeating the failures of past DDR efforts, leaving both Kadogos and their communities trapped in cycles of insecurity and unfulfilled potential.

3.4 How can structural and contextual challenges be overcome to improve reintegration?

The preceding sections have demonstrated that the reintegration of Kadogos in the Democratic Republic of Congo is shaped as much by structural weaknesses as by context-specific barriers. Overcoming these challenges requires a multi-layered strategy that acknowledges the interdependence of security, governance, economic opportunity, and social cohesion. It is not enough to deliver isolated interventions; rather, an ecosystem of mutually reinforcing solutions is needed, rooted in local realities yet supported by national and international frameworks.

1. Strengthening governance and institutional capacity: one of the most persistent barriers to effective reintegration in the DRC is the fragility of state institutions. Weak governance undermines the continuity, reach, and accountability of DDR initiatives, leaving communities dependent on sporadic NGO or donor-led projects. Strengthening institutional capacity involves more than simply increasing budgets, it requires building transparent, decentralised systems that can plan, monitor, and adapt reintegration initiatives at provincial and community levels. Decentralisation is particularly critical in a country as geographically vast and socio-culturally diverse as the DRC. Provinces such as Nord-Kivu and Ituri face vastly different security threats, resource endowments, and cultural dynamics compared to Kasai or Katanga. A uniform, top-down DDR blueprint risks being irrelevant in many contexts; instead, provincial reintegration plans should be co-developed with local authorities, civil society, and customary leaders to ensure legitimacy and fit (Autesserre, 2021).

2. Embedding economic reintegration in broader development agendas: as Hypothesis 2 (Economic Exploitation) highlighted, livelihoods are a core determinant of reintegration success. Economic reintegration cannot be treated as a stand-alone vocational training exercise; it must be embedded within broader rural and urban development strategies that address structural unemployment and market access. This means integrating DDR beneficiaries into existing economic clusters, for example, supporting ex-Kadogos to join agricultural cooperatives, small-scale mining associations, or artisanal manufacturing networks. International experience shows that market-driven approaches outperform purely skills-based training when reintegration is the goal. In Colombia, ex-combatants integrated into coffee and cocoa production chains achieved higher incomes and stronger community acceptance than those in stand-alone microenterprise projects (Meertens, 2016). A similar model could be adapted in the DRC, linking reintegration to value chains in agriculture, timber, and local crafts, while ensuring that economic opportunities benefit both returnees and host communities to reduce tensions.

3. Fostering community acceptance and social cohesion: structural reforms alone cannot overcome the deep-seated stigma often directed at Kadogos. As Hypothesis 3 (Community Stigma) illustrated, community rejection can erode all other reintegration gains. Building acceptance requires sustained relationship-building interventions, not just public sensitisation campaigns. This includes: Joint economic ventures between returnees and community members. Participatory peacebuilding forums where both groups co-create local development priorities. Cultural reconciliation rituals rooted in local traditions, which often hold greater legitimacy than externally imposed reconciliation

ceremonies. Evidence from Sierra Leone (Denov, 2010) shows that when ex-child soldiers and civilians collaborate on community projects, such as rebuilding schools or repairing roads, social bonds are strengthened through shared labour and mutual benefit, reducing the perception of returnees as outsiders or threats.

4. Institutionalising protection mechanisms: as Hypothesis 4 (Protection Deficits) stressed, physical and legal protection is foundational to reintegration. In the DRC, where security vacuums persist in many territories, reintegration cannot succeed in the absence of credible protection guarantees. This requires coordinated action across three levels: National legal frameworks that clearly protect the rights of former child soldiers, including penalties for re-recruitment and exploitation. Local protection committees linked to both community structures and security forces, ensuring rapid response to threats. Ongoing monitoring by independent bodies, potentially in collaboration with the UN Joint Human Rights Office, to ensure accountability and prevent abuse by armed actors or state agents. Protection also extends to the psychosocial sphere. Without addressing trauma and mental health challenges, former Kadogos may remain socially and economically marginalised despite other forms of support. This requires scaling up trauma-informed care, delivered by trained local counsellors who can operate even in low-resource, conflict-affected settings.

5. Building multi-actor coalitions for sustainable reintegration: the complexity of the DRC's reintegration challenge makes multi-actor coordination not optional, but essential. Sustainable reintegration requires coalitions that bring together: Government ministries (Defence, Social Affairs, Youth, Education). Provincial and local authorities. Civil society and faith-based organisations, which often have deep trust networks. Private sector actors, particularly in agriculture, mining, and infrastructure. International partners, including donors and UN agencies. The strength of such coalitions lies in the division of labour, each actor contributing according to their comparative advantage, but within a shared framework of accountability and long-term planning. Liberia's inter-agency taskforce on DDRR offers a precedent: by combining donor resources, government oversight, and NGO implementation capacity, it achieved more coherent reintegration programming compared to earlier fragmented approaches (Pugel, 2009).

This chapter has established the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study, articulating how multiple disciplinary perspectives converge to explain the reintegration trajectories of former Kadogos in the DRC. The five theoretical lenses, SIT, SCT, HST, CT, and PCT, provide a robust analytical toolkit for interrogating structural, relational, and historical dimensions of reintegration. The conceptual framework translates these insights into four core constructs, prejudice, economic reintegration, community acceptance, and protection, whose interactions shape reintegration outcomes. The four hypotheses developed here set the stage for empirical testing. Chapter IV will now build upon this foundation by presenting the methodological frameworks through which these hypotheses are examined. It will detail the research design, operationalisation, quantitative and qualitative methods,

and ethical considerations, ensuring that the study's analytical claims rest on transparent, rigorous, and context-sensitive empirical work.

Chapter IV: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological framework underpinning the study, providing a detailed account of how the research was designed, operationalised, and implemented. It serves as the bridge between the theoretical framework and hypotheses outlined in Chapter III and the empirical analysis presented in Chapters V and VI. The aim is to make transparent the methodological choices, their rationale, and their alignment with the research objectives, thus enabling both replication and critical evaluation.

The chapter is structured into five main sections: 4.1 Addresses the ethical considerations necessary for conducting research in conflict-affected settings, where participants' safety and dignity are paramount. 4.2 Discusses the field research design, including geographic scope, sampling strategies, and security protocols. 4.3 Explains the operationalisation of key variables, translating conceptual dimensions into measurable indicators for both quantitative and qualitative strands. 4.4 Details the quantitative survey methodology, including questionnaire design, sampling, statistical models, and robustness checks. 4.5 Presents the qualitative in-depth interview approach, outlining participant selection, interview protocols, and thematic analysis strategies. Finally, 4.6 concludes the chapter with a summary and transition into Chapter V, signalling the shift from research design to empirical findings.

4.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical integrity underpins the entire methodological framework of this study. Researching Kadogos, communities affected by armed conflict, and leadership actors in the DRC presents significant moral, legal, and human sensitivities that cannot be overstated. The legacy of war in the eastern provinces has left deep psychological wounds and fragmented social fabrics, making the potential for harm, whether emotional, reputational, or physical, a constant concern (Wessells, 2006; Betancourt et al., 2013). As such, every step of this field research was designed and executed with an uncompromising commitment to safeguarding participants' dignity, autonomy, and well-being.

Prior to field deployment, the research protocol received full approval from the University of Essex's Research Ethics Committee. This included detailed risk assessments for conducting interviews in conflict-affected areas, particularly with vulnerable populations such as ex-child soldiers, who may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Boothby et al., 2006). The protocol was also submitted to and cleared by a DRC-based NGOs and charities with whom I worked, ensuring compliance with local cultural norms and national legal frameworks governing human subjects research.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. All respondents, whether Kadogos, community members, or leadership figures, were provided with clear, accessible explanations of the

study's aims, scope, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was obtained both verbally and in writing, with additional safeguards for participants with low literacy levels through the use of verbal briefings in local languages (Swahili, Lingala, and French) and witness countersignatures where necessary. The principle of voluntariness was reinforced at every stage: participants could refuse to answer specific questions, pause the interview, or withdraw entirely at any point, without any penalty or consequence (Orb et al., 2001).

The potential for re-traumatisation was the most pressing ethical risk. The research avoided direct, detailed questioning about traumatic combat experiences unless the participant explicitly volunteered such information in the context of discussing reintegration. Instead, the interviews focused on post-reintegration experiences, economic activities, community relations, perceptions of safety, and personal aspirations. Where sensitive topics arose organically, the researcher applied trauma-informed interviewing techniques, maintaining a supportive and non-judgemental tone (Ward & Campbell, 2017).

Given the political volatility in parts of the eastern DRC and the potential risks to participants' safety if their views were linked to them publicly, strict measures were implemented to guarantee confidentiality. All data were anonymised at the point of transcription: names, identifiable locations, and any details that could lead to indirect identification were removed or replaced with codes. A two-tier data protection protocol was applied: Field notes, and audio recordings were stored in encrypted drives, accessible only by me. Transcripts used for analysis were de-identified, with codebooks stored separately to avoid cross-matching. These safeguards are aligned with GDPR principles.

Field research in areas affected by armed conflict necessitates not only protecting participants but also ensuring the researcher's safety. Data collection avoided active conflict zones and was scheduled in consultation with trusted local partners to assess security conditions in real time. My neutrality was rigorously maintained, particularly during leadership interviews where political allegiances could influence interpretation. I made clear that the study was independent of government, military, or NGO agendas, reducing the risk of perceived coercion or bias in participant responses (Autesserre, 2014). This study adopted an ethically reflexive approach (Pillow, 2015), acknowledging that my own positionality, as an outsider but also as someone engaged in long-term field relationships in the DRC, could shape interactions. Reflexive field notes documented not only data but also emotional dynamics, power imbalances, and contextual shifts in the field environment. This transparency was vital for both ethical accountability and analytical rigour.

The ethical considerations for this research were not an administrative checkbox, but an active, evolving commitment that shaped every interaction in the field. The combination of formal ethical oversight, culturally attuned consent processes, trauma-informed interviewing, and robust confidentiality protocols ensured that participants' rights and dignity were upheld throughout. This ethical foundation also strengthens the reliability and legitimacy of the findings, a point that will be

critically important when interpreting the results in Chapter V, where quantitative insights into perceptions of reintegration are presented.

4.2 Field research

Conducting empirical research in the DRC, a country marked by protracted conflict, political volatility, and infrastructural fragility, required a deliberately adaptive, contextually sensitive, and methodologically rigorous fieldwork strategy. This section details the design, planning, and execution of the field research, which took place across selected sites in North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, and Congo-Centrale, as well as in Kinshasa, for comparative urban perspectives. The overarching aim was to collect multi-dimensional data capturing both quantitative trends and qualitative narratives on reintegration, protection, and community acceptance of Kadogos.

The field research was conducted in two phases over a twelve-month period, between October 2022 and September 2023. Phase 1 (preparatory field engagement): 10 months dedicated to establishing local partnerships, securing permissions from provincial authorities, piloting survey instruments, and refining interview protocols. Phase 2 (full-scale data collection): Eight weeks of intensive, multi-site research combining survey administration and in-depth interviews. This staggered approach allowed for iterative learning between phases, enabling adjustments based on early insights, logistical challenges, and evolving security conditions.

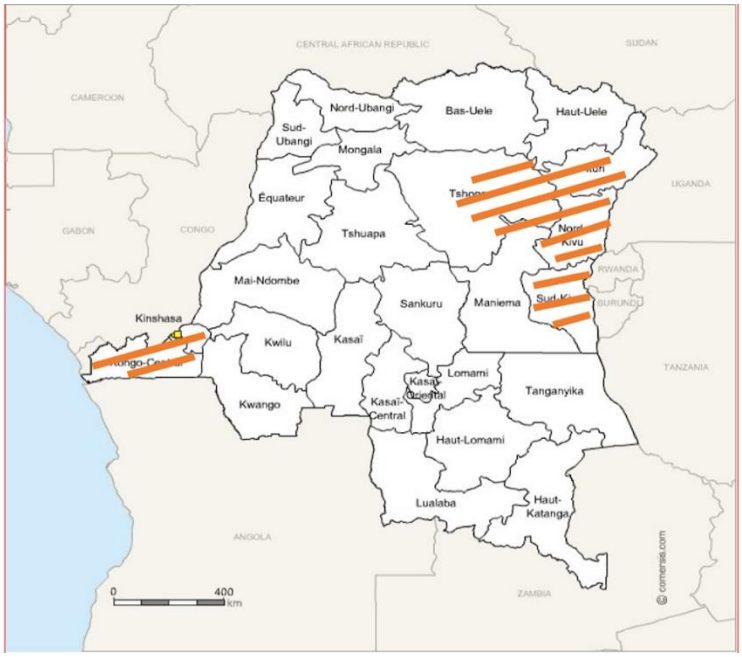
Site selection followed a purposive sampling strategy designed to ensure geographic, socio-political, and conflict-context diversity (Maxwell, 2013). Three primary criteria guided site choice: (1) Conflict history and DDR exposure - areas with varying levels of exposure to DDR programs, from well-resourced interventions (e.g., parts of Nord-Kivu and Sud-Kivu) to zones with minimal programmatic presence (e.g., rural Ituri and Congo-Centrale). (2) Community composition - communities with differing ethnic profiles and socio-economic structures to capture variation in community acceptance and reintegration outcomes (Wessells, 2009). Security and accessibility - sites where fieldwork could be conducted without endangering participants or the research team, assessed in consultation with trusted local NGOs and community leaders. The combination of urban centres (Kinshasa, Kisangani, Goma, Bukavu) and rural or peri-urban areas (Nia-Nia and Kitona) allowed for comparisons between high-density environments, where economic reintegration opportunities may be more plentiful but social stigma may be higher, and more isolated regions where community ties are tighter but resources scarce.

A cornerstone of the fieldwork was the cultivation of collaborative relationships with local NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), and DDR program officers. These actors played dual roles: (1) As gatekeepers, they facilitated introductions to participants in both community and institutional settings. (2) As contextual advisors, they offered real-time insights on political

developments, security threats, and community sensitivities (Campbell et al., 2006). Partner organisations, whose deep-rooted community trust proved essential for accessing Kadogos, some of whom remain wary of external inquiries due to past exploitative encounters with researchers or journalists.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the geographic spread of the field research conducted for this study across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The shaded regions, marked with orange lines, denote the provinces where qualitative interviews and field observations took place, each carefully selected to represent diverse socio-political and cultural contexts. This spatial mapping is integral to the study's multi-sited qualitative design (see Section 4.3), allowing for a comparative exploration of the reintegration of Kadogos across zones of high-intensity conflict and relatively stable post-conflict environments.

Figure 4.1[12]: Geographic scope of field research in the DRC



The eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, and Tshopo constitute the primary focus of fieldwork. These regions have long been associated with protracted conflict, militia activity, and recurrent cycles of displacement (Stearns, 2012; Autesserre, 2021). They remain hotspots for ongoing child recruitment, making them crucial for assessing reintegration not only as a post-conflict strategy but as a process unfolding within active zones of insecurity. In these provinces, community interviews revealed how persistent violence undermines DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, and

[12] Figure 4.1 maps the geographic distribution of the field research sites across the Democratic Republic of Congo, distinguishing between conflict-affected eastern provinces and the relatively stable western provinces. The selection captures variations in language, physical anthropology, cultural practices, and diet, all of which influence reintegration dynamics for Kadogos. This spatial framework underpins the comparative analysis of social acceptance, prejudice, and protection needs discussed in Chapters IV–VII.

Reintegration) programs, while daily exposure to armed groups perpetuates fear, mistrust, and societal stigma against Kadogos (Betancourt et al., 2010; Boothby, 2018).

By contrast, fieldwork in Kinshasa and Kongo-Central provided insight into reintegration experiences in urban and comparatively stable environments. Here, security conditions are significantly more controlled, and the presence of NGOs, international organisations, and government agencies is markedly higher. Reintegration programs are often implemented within military barracks or isolated facilities rather than within civilian neighbourhoods, reflecting an institutional preference for containment over integration (Thill, 2021). While this reduces immediate community tensions, it produces new challenges of social isolation, economic marginalisation, and symbolic exclusion from civilian life (Wessells, 2009).

The purposive sampling of these provinces was designed to ensure a representative cross-section of the country's contrasting realities. It captured the spectrum of reintegration dynamics: from the east, where conflict's immediacy shapes reintegration outcomes, to the west, where stability exposes the long-term limitations of isolated and resource-constrained reintegration schemes. The inclusion of both zones allowed the study to interrogate how geography, conflict history, and socio-economic disparities produce divergent reintegration trajectories, an analytical move that directly supports the thesis's central argument about the inadequacy of one-size-fits-all DDR models (Stys et al., 2020; Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

This geographic variation also underscores the highly localised nature of reintegration. In Ituri, for example, ethnic tensions and revenge attacks significantly limit community acceptance, reinforcing Kadogos' vulnerability to re-recruitment. In contrast, in Kinshasa, stigma is less overtly violent but manifests in economic exclusion and limited access to education and livelihoods. The NVivo matrix coding (see Chapter VI) demonstrates how these divergent local contexts map onto systemic weaknesses, revealing structural inconsistencies in DDR programming and community-based acceptance mechanisms.

Field data therefore provides a comparative lens through which reintegration can be seen as both a conflict-contingent process in the east and a politically managed, institutionally constrained process in the west. This duality reflects broader debates in the DDR literature, where reintegration is increasingly understood not only as an outcome but as a dynamic negotiation between combatants, communities, and state institutions under varying conditions of peace and conflict (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007; Theidon, 2009; Meertens, 2016). It employed mixed-method sampling: Quantitative survey - stratified sampling of 277 respondents across sites, ensuring proportional representation (Kadogos vs. community member). Qualitative interviews - purposive selection of 17 participants for semi-structured, in-depth interviews, including community leaders, military leaders, political leaders (both at national and local level), religious leaders and NGO staff. This dual approach ensured that the survey captured broad, statistically significant patterns, while the interviews provided granular, narrative-rich insights into mechanisms and lived experiences.

The table presents the socio-demographic profile of respondents, comprising 144 Kadogos (52%) and 133 community members (48%). This balance provided a strong basis for comparative analysis, with Kadogos accessed through DDR networks and community members drawn from both urban and rural sites.

Table 4.1[13]: Cross-tabulated summary - Kadogos and Communities socio-demographic

	ID	Gender	Age	Employment status	Education	Relocated
Community	133					
Kadogos	144					
Male		248				
Female		29				
18-21			13			
21-30			113			
31-40			85			
41-50			66			
Primary					70	
Secondary					96	
University					53	
Professional					10	
Student				19		
Unemployed				132		
Employed				57		
Self-employed				29		
Voluntary				29		
Yes						170
No						107
Invalid				11	48	

Gender distribution is heavily male (90%), reflecting the gendered nature of armed recruitment in the DRC, where boys are overwhelmingly conscripted (Mazurana & McKay, 2004). Yet the small female sample also underscores a persistent blind spot: the systematic erasure of female ex-combatants,

[13] Table 4.1 cross-tabulates the socio-demographic characteristics of Kadogos and community respondents, underscoring the asymmetries that shape reintegration outcomes. Kadogos are disproportionately young males (ages 21–30 dominant), with disrupted education trajectories, most having only primary or secondary schooling, and very few progressing to professional or university levels. Employment data reveals stark precarity: the majority are unemployed or in unstable forms of self- or voluntary work, reflecting limited access to formal labour markets. By contrast, community respondents, though not captured in equivalent detail in the table, represent a broader demographic with more educational continuity and relatively greater livelihood stability. Relocation figures show that nearly two-thirds of Kadogos were displaced or resettled, intensifying their sense of rootlessness and dependence on fragile DDR structures. These socio-demographic imbalances explain much of the tension observed in reintegration: Kadogos' vulnerability intersects with communities' perception of them as both economically burdensome and socially destabilising, reinforcing the stigma and mistrust captured in Chapters VI and VII.

whose experiences, often shaped by sexual violence and heightened stigma, remain underrepresented in both DDR policy and scholarship (Wessells, 2009).

Age patterns show most Kadogos are now young adults: 41% are 21-30, 31% are 31-40, and only a minority are below 21. This echoes findings that child soldiers conscripted in earlier conflict cycles are now navigating adulthood (Betancourt et al., 2013). Reintegration, therefore, is revealed not as a time-limited intervention but a long-term trajectory with enduring implications for social belonging and economic security.

Employment data highlights structural exclusion: 46% report unemployment, with only 21% engaged in self-employment and 8% in formal sectors. Many rely on precarious voluntary work or informal survival strategies, a trend consistent with literature linking economic marginalisation to risks of re-recruitment or criminality (Blattman & Annan, 2010; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007).

Education levels remain low, with only 19% attaining university education, 35% completing secondary, and 25% primary. Conflict-driven disruption continues to constrain access, reducing prospects for mobility or stable employment (Boothby, 2018). These educational gaps compound economic vulnerabilities, entrenching the cycles of exclusion described in Chapters VI and VII.

Relocation further complicates reintegration: 61% of respondents had been displaced or resettled due to insecurity, undermining trust-building and community cohesion. Displacement amplifies the fragility of reintegration by severing social ties, echoing human security scholarship that links mobility with heightened precarity (Paris, 2004; Autesserre, 2021).

The combined socio-demographic patterns reveal a triple bind of exclusion: low education, high unemployment, and forced mobility. Kadogos, though legally adults, remain structurally disadvantaged, while communities often view them as burdensome. This empirical profile grounds the study's qualitative findings, illustrating how vulnerability, prejudice, and marginalisation reinforce one another in fragile post-conflict environments (Wessells, 2009; Stys et al., 2020).

Fieldwork sessions were convened in neutral venues such as Catholic churches and NGO facilities, creating safe and accessible spaces for participation. Kadogos and community members were interviewed separately to reduce discomfort and conflict risk. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a unique identifier (e.g., C001 for community, K001 for Kadogos), protecting identities in contexts where stigma, rejection, and threats of retaliation remain acute.

The volatile security environment in eastern DRC necessitated constant risk assessment. On multiple occasions, planned field visits were rescheduled or relocated due to various reasons (political or security. For example, we had to postpone meeting former rebels in Tshopo, for many days, because the Vice-Prime Minister in charge of the armed forces was conducting a FARDC review of battle plans in the area). The field team (made of myself and 4 assistants), adopted a "flexible footprint" approach, travelling with minimal equipment, avoiding high-visibility, and maintaining discreet presence in sensitive areas (Autesserre, 2014). Logistically, intermittent internet connectivity required redundancy planning: hard-copy survey forms were printed and carried for data collection. Daily uploads of

completed forms were scheduled where connectivity permitted, with physical copies destroyed (incinerated) immediately, after securing the data.

As reflexivity and positionality in the field remained a methodological imperative. My identity, as a Congolese descendant with established relationships from prior field visits, helped participant openness, at times, in complex ways. In some communities, outsider status (not being originally from the area, or being from Europe) provided a sense of neutrality that facilitated frank discussions about DDR program failures and local leadership dynamics; in others, it prompted guarded responses until trust was built over time. Field notes documented these dynamics to aid interpretation during analysis.

In essence, the field research phase was an exercise in balancing methodological rigour with contextual adaptability. The interplay between structured sampling, ethical safeguards, and on-the-ground realities ensured that the data collected were both empirically robust and grounded in the lived complexities of the DRC's post-conflict landscape. The operationalisation of variables, outlined in 4.3, builds directly upon this carefully managed fieldwork process, ensuring that subsequent quantitative and qualitative analyses remain rooted in data of the highest possible reliability and ethical integrity.

4.3 Operationalisation

Operationalisation in this study refers to the process of translating the conceptual frameworks and theoretical constructs outlined in Chapters II and III into measurable, empirical variables for both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. This serves as the bridge between the research hypotheses (H1–H4) and the methodological tools deployed in the field, ensuring that abstract concepts such as prejudice, economic exploitation, community acceptance, and protection are empirically observable and analytically tractable (Bryman, 2016; King, Keohane & Verba, 1994).

The operationalisation process was guided by three imperatives: (1) Theoretical fidelity - preserving the integrity of core theoretical constructs from Social Identity Theory (SIT), Human Security Theory (HST), and Social Capital Theory (SCT). (2) Contextual specificity - adapting measures to reflect the cultural, linguistic, and socio-political realities of the DRC's conflict-affected regions (Wessells, 2009; Stys et al., 2020). (3) Methodological transparency - ensuring replicability and clarity in how variables were defined, coded, and analysed.

Each hypothesis (H1–H4) presented in Chapter III informed a set of dependent, independent, and control variables. The relationships between these variables were explicitly derived from the theoretical and empirical literature. For example: H3 (Community Acceptance): Dependent variable = perceived level of community acceptance; Independent variable = frequency of positive community interactions. By maintaining one-to-one correspondence between hypotheses and variable sets, the analysis can directly test the proposed causal pathways. Key concepts were broken down into

observable indicators, refined through pilot testing in Phase 1 of fieldwork. Table 4.1 summarises the operational definitions and scales applied.

Table 4.2 - Summary of core variables and indicators

Concept	Operational Definition	Example Indicators	Measurement Scale
Prejudice (H1)	Negative attitudes towards Kadogos	Agreement with statements such as "Kadogos cannot be trusted"	Likert
Community Acceptance (H3)	Degree of social inclusion of Kadogos	Invitations to community events; perceived willingness to employ Kadogos	Likert
Protection (H4)	Perceived and actual safety from harm or re-recruitment	Presence of community watch groups; access to police or customary protection	Binary/Ordinal
Economic Exploitation (H2)	Level of economic stability and livelihood security	Employment status; monthly income; type of employment	Nominal/Ratio
DDR Exposure	Degree of direct or indirect contact with DDR programs	Participation in DDR training; awareness of DDR policies	Binary/Ordinal
Control Variables	Socio-demographics; location; ethnic group; education level	Age, gender, region, years of schooling	Various

These indicators draw on prior DDR and reintegration studies (Annan et al., 2011; Betancourt et al., 2013; Blattman, 2016) but have been contextually adapted through engagement with Congolese field partners to ensure cultural resonance and linguistic clarity.

Quantitative variable coding: Likert items - recoded into numeric values (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree) for statistical modelling. Binary Measures: 0 = absence, 1 = presence of the characteristic (e.g., protection mechanism in place). Ordinal Variables: Preserved rank order for models sensitive to gradations in response. Ratio Variables: Continuous values used without transformation unless distribution skew required normalisation.

For the qualitative component, operationalisation centred on thematic alignment with hypotheses rather than numeric coding. Semi-structured interview guides were built around core themes: (1) Experiences of stigma and discrimination (H1). (2) Economic livelihoods and barriers to reintegration (H2). (3) Perceptions and practices of community inclusion/exclusion (H3). (4) Safety, security, and protection networks (H4). Thematic prompts were designed to allow narrative depth while ensuring comparability across interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Reflexive field notes and memos were integrated into the analysis to capture dynamics and contextual cues.

To ensure construct validity, each variable was cross-referenced with at least one prior DDR study, confirming both conceptual fit and empirical precedent. Reliability was addressed through: Pilot testing with 20 respondents in Goma to refine ambiguous items. Enumerator training to standardise survey administration and minimise interviewer bias. Back-translation of survey instruments from French to Swahili and Lingala to ensure linguistic fidelity.

Given the trauma histories of many participants, operational definitions were carefully framed to avoid re-traumatisation. For example, questions about past violence were structured indirectly, focusing on perceptions of community change rather than explicit recollection of traumatic events. Cultural sensitivity was reinforced through consultations with local community leaders and NGO staff before finalising the instruments. In sum, the operationalisation process ensured that the complex realities of post-conflict reintegration in the DRC were systematically and ethically translated into measurable, analysable forms. This groundwork sets the stage for the detailed quantitative and qualitative methodological frameworks outlined in 4.4 and 4.5, where the instruments, sampling, and analytical approaches are presented in full.

4.4 Quantitative methods - survey

The quantitative survey constituted the primary instrument for empirically testing the hypotheses formulated in Chapter III. It was designed to capture systematic patterns in perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to prejudice (H1), economic exploitation (H2), community acceptance (H3), and protection (H4) among different social groups in post-conflict eastern DRC. By employing a structured and standardised tool, the survey enabled the collection of comparable, statistically analysable data across multiple communities, thereby addressing both the *breadth* and *depth* of reintegration challenges. The survey methodology was guided by the principles of theoretical coherence, contextual adaptability, and rigorous statistical validity (Fowler, 2014; Bryman, 2016). This section details the design rationale, sampling frame, data collection procedures, model specifications, robustness checks, and strategies to mitigate common sources of bias.

The survey instrument was structured in five sections, each aligned with the constructs operationalised in 4.3: (1) Demographic and socio-economic profile - age, gender, education level, employment status, ethnic affiliation, and geographic location. (2) Perceptions of Kadogos - attitudes toward ex-child soldiers measured through Likert-scale statements. (3) Community acceptance - frequency of positive interactions, perceived willingness to integrate ex-Kadogos into communal and economic life. (4) Protection and security - personal and collective safety perceptions, access to protective mechanisms, recent experiences of insecurity. (5) Exposure to DDR and reintegration programs - awareness, participation, and perceived effectiveness of interventions. Each question was directly traceable to a hypothesis and its operational indicators, ensuring a one-to-one mapping between

theoretical propositions and measurable outcomes. Question wording was carefully adapted to avoid leading formulations, relying instead on neutral, culturally familiar phrasing (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).

The survey was conducted in four provinces with high relevance to DDR outcomes: North Kivu, Ituri, Tshopo, and Congo-Centrale. Within each province, communities were purposively selected to ensure variation along three key dimensions: Conflict intensity history (recent vs. historical exposure). Level of DDR program presence (high, moderate, minimal). Eastern vs. Western DRC context. The final dataset comprised n = 277 respondents, including n = 133 or 48% community members, and n = 144 or 52% Kadogos, as per table below. This composition allowed for between-group statistical comparisons. It was administered face-to-face in French, Swahili, Lingala or Kikongo, depending on respondent preference.

Table 4.3[14]. Survey participants across 4 provinces in DRC

	Ituri	Tshopo	Nord-Kivu	Congo-Central	Total
Kadogos		52	38	54	144
Communities		48	35	50	133
Total		102	71	104	277

Although I fluently speak three of the four aforementioned languages, each of my three assistants were recruited because they are native and speaker of at least two out of the four aforementioned languages. Data collection was conducted using pen and paper (questionnaires were printed) as connectivity to the internet was limited to collect the data using software. My field assistants and I conducted random back-checks with at least 95% of respondents to verify data quality.

To test the hypotheses quantitatively, two main regression models were specified for each dependent variable, progressively adding controls and interaction terms:

Model 1 - understanding what drives community satisfaction with reintegration. At the heart of this model is a question: What factors most influence how satisfied communities are with the reintegration of former Kadogos in the DRC? To explore this, the study used statistical logistic regression, to help understanding relationships between multiple factors and a specific outcome, in this case, whether communities report satisfaction with the reintegration process using:

$$Logit(Satisfaction)=\beta0+\beta1(Prejudice)+\beta2(EconomicExploitation)+\beta3(Protection)+\beta4(CommunityAcceptance)+\beta5(Trust)+\beta6(Politics)+\beta7(Culture)+\epsilon.$$

[14] Table 4.3 provides critical insights into the perspectives of both reintegrated and non-reintegrated Kadogos, as well as the communities receiving them, shedding light on reintegration challenges and social dynamics.

This model suggest that higher community acceptance significantly correlates with reintegration success, as communities serve as the primary environment for Kadogos to rebuild their lives (Annan et al., 2011). Where prejudice, fear, or economic competition persist, reintegration efforts are undermined, reinforcing exclusionary cycles (Blattman & Annan, 2016). Factors such as economic stability, trust in institutions, and security concerns shape community attitudes, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that address local grievances and structural barriers (Stys et al., 2020).

Model 2 - Kadogos' perception of their own reintegration, tries to answer: How satisfied are Kadogos reintegrating civil communities? The model is designed to measure how Kadogos perceive the success or failure of their own reintegration into society. It employs a logistic regression model to analyse the factors that influence how former child soldiers (Kadogos) perceive their own reintegration experience. The model is presented as: $Logit(Satisfaction)=\beta0+\beta1(Prejudice)+\beta2(EconomicExploitation)+\beta3(Protection)+\beta4(CommunityAcceptance)+\beta5(Trust)+\beta6(Politics)+\beta7(Culture)+\epsilon$.

This model suggests that Kadogos' perceptions of security, economic opportunity, and social belonging significantly influence their likelihood of reintegrating successfully. When former combatants face stigma, unemployment, or institutional neglect, they become susceptible to re-recruitment into armed groups (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). Reintegration, therefore, must provide genuine pathways for personal development, economic inclusion, and psychological healing, ensuring that Kadogos perceive civilian life as viable and dignified (Boothby, 2018).

To strengthen the credibility of findings, several robustness checks were planned: (1) Alternative variable specifications - testing sensitivity of results to alternative coding of Likert-scale items (e.g., binary collapse vs. continuous). (2) Sub-sample analysis - separate regressions for Kadogos vs. community members. (3) Province fixed effects - controlling for unobserved heterogeneity at the provincial level. (4) Cluster-robust standard errors - adjusting for intra-cluster correlation within enumeration areas.

Potential endogeneity arises if DDR exposure, community acceptance, or protection access are correlated with unobserved factors influencing the dependent variable. To address this: (1) Instrumental variable approach - using geographic proximity to DDR program centres as an instrument for DDR exposure, under the assumption that proximity influences exposure but not directly perceptions. (2) Propensity score matching - matching DDR participants with non-participants on observable characteristics to isolate program effects. (3) Temporal anchoring - asking respondents about perceptions before and after specific events (e.g., on follow up after DDR programs) to capture within-subject variation.

The interdependence of these models highlights that reintegration is a two-way process: successful reintegration of Kadogos cannot occur without community acceptance, and community satisfaction is contingent upon effective reintegration policies that mitigate security concerns and economic burdens. A one-sided focus, whether on Kadogos or communities, risks reinforcing resentment, exclusion, and instability, ultimately leading to reintegration failure (McMullin, 2013).

Quantitative data collection carried ethical risks, particularly concerning privacy, informed consent, and psychological safety. My assistants were instructed to halt the interview if signs of distress emerged. No identifying information was stored alongside survey responses. The survey thus provides a systematically rigorous and contextually grounded dataset, enabling robust testing of the four core hypotheses. In combination with the qualitative component described in 4.5, it forms the backbone of the mixed-methods analytical framework guiding the remainder of this thesis.

4.5 Qualitative methods - in-depth interviews

The qualitative component of this study complemented the survey by providing rich, contextual insights into the nuanced experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics shaping the reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC. While the quantitative survey identified patterns and correlations, in-depth interviews allowed for interpretive depth, capturing the meanings, emotions, and complexities that structured responses often cannot reveal (Maxwell, 2013). This mixed-methods design was not simply additive but integrative: survey findings informed interview prompts, while qualitative themes deepened and contextualised statistical results. In doing so, the research adhered to triangulation principles (Denzin, 2012), increasing the credibility, validity, and policy relevance of the findings.

The reintegration of Kadogos is embedded in highly localised social, cultural, and political realities. Quantitative indicators, while invaluable, risk abstraction if divorced from lived experiences. In-depth interviews were therefore essential for: (1) Exploring causal mechanisms hinted at in survey correlations, such as *how* community acceptance influences livelihood opportunities. (2) Unpacking divergences between statistical averages and individual narratives, especially in cases of contradictory findings. (3) Capturing sensitive experiences, including stigma, re-recruitment attempts, and protection failures, that respondents might avoid disclosing in a survey setting. (4) Identifying unanticipated themes and context-specific factors absent from existing literature, ensuring the thesis did not force findings into pre-existing theoretical boxes.

Participants were drawn from two key groups to ensure multi-perspectival coverage: (1) Community members - including community leaders and religious leaders to capture broader societal perceptions. (2) Institutional stakeholders - including NGO representatives involved in protection and reintegration efforts, local and national political leaders and military leaders. A purposive sampling

approach was adopted (Patton, 2014), prioritising diversity in gender, socio-economic status, and geographical location. Within this framework, snowball sampling was used to reach individuals less visible or accessible, particularly female Kadogos and those who had disengaged from formal DDR processes. However, reaching female Kadogos was more difficult than expected. For example, many are married off, after returning from fighting and their husbands or families would not give them permission to take part in the study.

Note that many of these female Kadogos, upon returning, were given choices that gave them no positive outcomes, either they accept being married off or being ostracised or worse, killed. In instances where these options were presented to girls/women, communities saw it as merciful and did not simply expect the girl/woman to accept it but to be grateful. Therefore, accepting subjugation is a way of showing this gratitude. A total of 17 in-depth interviews were conducted: 3 community leaders, 3 religious leaders, 3 political leaders, 3 military leaders and 5 NGO representatives. This distribution enabled both vertical comparison (across hierarchical roles) and horizontal comparison (within the same category).

Table 4.4[15]. List of leaders interviewed, per province

	Ituri	Tshopo	Nord-Kivu	Kinshasa	Congo-Central	Total
Community Leaders		1	1		1	3
Military Leaders	1			1	1	3
Political Leaders		1		2		3
NGO Leaders	1		1	2	1	5
Religious Leaders		1	1		1	3
Total	2	3	3	5	4	17

Interviews were conducted between July and September 2023 in Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, Ituri, Tshopo, Kinshasa and Congo-Centrale. Locations were chosen with care, prioritising privacy, safety, and participant comfort, often in leader's office or in discreet NGO offices. The interviews followed a semi-structured guide, organised around the four thematic pillars of the thesis: prejudice, economic exploitation, community acceptance, and protection. However, flexibility was maintained to allow participant-led narrative flows, which often revealed unexpected linkages between themes. Key ethical and methodological safeguards included: (1) Informed consent - provided verbally and in writing, in French, Swahili, or Lingala. (2) Trauma-sensitive interviewing - questions were framed to avoid re-

[15] Table 4.4 presents data from field research on leaders interviewed across five provinces in the DRC, representing community, military, political, NGO, and religious sectors, offering diverse perspectives on the reintegration of Kadogos. The higher number of interviews in Kinshasa and Congo-Central reflects the role of national and regional governance in reintegration policies, while interviews in conflict-affected provinces provide direct insights into on-the-ground challenges. It enhances the study's qualitative analysis by incorporating first-hand accounts of policy implementation, security concerns, and community dynamics.

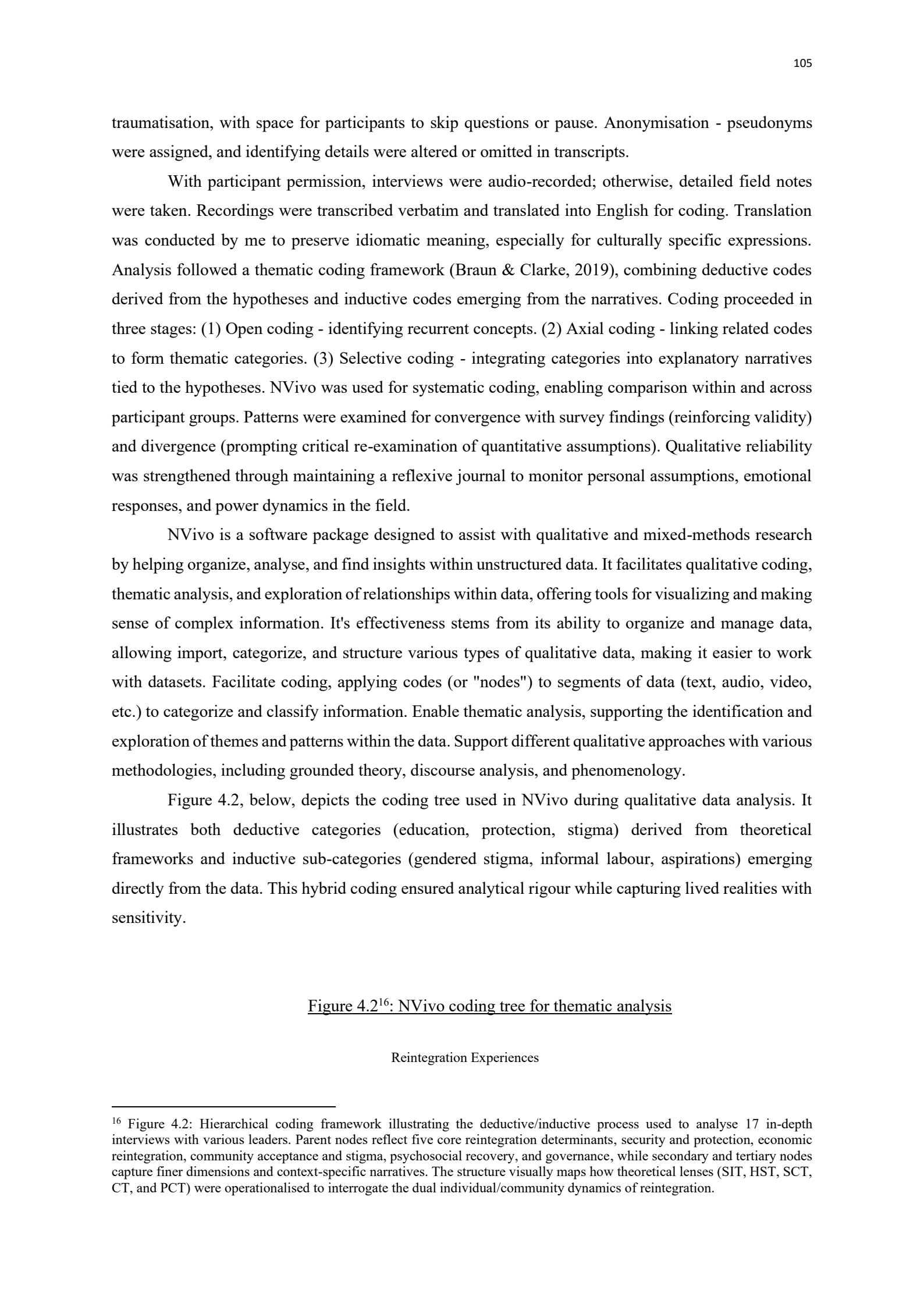
traumatisation, with space for participants to skip questions or pause. Anonymisation - pseudonyms were assigned, and identifying details were altered or omitted in transcripts.

With participant permission, interviews were audio-recorded; otherwise, detailed field notes were taken. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated into English for coding. Translation was conducted by me to preserve idiomatic meaning, especially for culturally specific expressions. Analysis followed a thematic coding framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019), combining deductive codes derived from the hypotheses and inductive codes emerging from the narratives. Coding proceeded in three stages: (1) Open coding - identifying recurrent concepts. (2) Axial coding - linking related codes to form thematic categories. (3) Selective coding - integrating categories into explanatory narratives tied to the hypotheses. NVivo was used for systematic coding, enabling comparison within and across participant groups. Patterns were examined for convergence with survey findings (reinforcing validity) and divergence (prompting critical re-examination of quantitative assumptions). Qualitative reliability was strengthened through maintaining a reflexive journal to monitor personal assumptions, emotional responses, and power dynamics in the field.

NVivo is a software package designed to assist with qualitative and mixed-methods research by helping organize, analyse, and find insights within unstructured data. It facilitates qualitative coding, thematic analysis, and exploration of relationships within data, offering tools for visualizing and making sense of complex information. It's effectiveness stems from its ability to organize and manage data, allowing import, categorize, and structure various types of qualitative data, making it easier to work with datasets. Facilitate coding, applying codes (or "nodes") to segments of data (text, audio, video, etc.) to categorize and classify information. Enable thematic analysis, supporting the identification and exploration of themes and patterns within the data. Support different qualitative approaches with various methodologies, including grounded theory, discourse analysis, and phenomenology.

Figure 4.2, below, depicts the coding tree used in NVivo during qualitative data analysis. It illustrates both deductive categories (education, protection, stigma) derived from theoretical frameworks and inductive sub-categories (gendered stigma, informal labour, aspirations) emerging directly from the data. This hybrid coding ensured analytical rigour while capturing lived realities with sensitivity.

Figure 4.2[16]: NVivo coding tree for thematic analysis



[16] Figure 4.2: Hierarchical coding framework illustrating the deductive/inductive process used to analyse 17 in-depth interviews with various leaders. Parent nodes reflect five core reintegration determinants, security and protection, economic reintegration, community acceptance and stigma, psychosocial recovery, and governance, while secondary and tertiary nodes capture finer dimensions and context-specific narratives. The structure visually maps how theoretical lenses (SIT, HST, SCT, CT, and PCT) were operationalised to interrogate the dual individual/community dynamics of reintegration.

The above figure presents the hierarchical coding framework used to organise, interpret, and interrogate the rich qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with leaders, across both eastern and western DRC. The coding tree emerged through a combination of inductive and deductive strategies: (A) Deductive anchors were drawn from the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter III, particularly Social Identity Theory (SIT), Human Security Theory (HST), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT). These provided a priori categories such as community acceptance, security/protection, economic reintegration, stigma/prejudice, and colonial legacies. (B) Inductive sub-nodes were added during open coding of the interview transcripts to capture unexpected insights, local idioms, and context-specific patterns (e.g., "witchcraft accusations," "political manipulation of Kadogos," "DDR centre abuse," "family reconciliation rituals"). The final coding tree thus reflects a dynamic interplay between theory and lived experience, ensuring that the analysis remained grounded in participant narratives while engaging with broader scholarly debates.

The figure depicts a multi-layered hierarchy of nodes and sub-nodes: (A) Parent Nodes (Level 1) represent the five core determinants of reintegration identified in the literature review: (1) Security & Protection: threats of re-recruitment, state presence, early warning mechanisms. (2) Economic Reintegration: livelihoods, vocational training, market linkages, donor dependency. (3) Community Acceptance & Stigma: prejudice, reconciliation rituals, forgiveness narratives, trauma symptoms, coping strategies, and peer mentoring. (4) Governance & Policy: DDR design, corruption, political manipulation. (B) Secondary Nodes (Level 2) capture key dimensions within each determinant. For

example, under Community Acceptance & Stigma, sub-nodes include ingroup–outgroup dynamics (SIT), structured contact (CT), and religious mediation. Under Economic Reintegration, sub-nodes distinguish between short-term donor projects, market integration, and informal sector survival strategies. (C) Tertiary Nodes (Level 3) contain fine-grained codes reflecting specific narratives or local idioms (e.g., "being called snake children," "fear of FARDC abuse," "recruitment through mining camps"). These detailed sub-nodes allow for cross-case comparison of regional variations (Bukavu vs. Goma vs. Kinshasa).

The NVivo coding tree served three key purposes: (1) Data Reduction and Organisation: It provided a structured environment for managing discrete coding references across all transcripts, ensuring that patterns could be retrieved efficiently without losing contextual nuance. (2) Theory Testing and Refinement: By mapping empirical codes onto theoretical categories (e.g., SIT for identity stigma, SCT for trust networks), the tree allowed for systematic testing of the Dual Perspective Theory of Reintegration (DPTR) introduced in Chapter III. (3) Triangulation and Saturation Assessment: Node frequency counts and co-occurrence matrices helped identify saturation points and relationships between themes, such as the strong co-occurrence between economic marginalisation and security fears in Eastern provinces. (4) Integration with Quantitative Findings: Although primarily qualitative, the coding tree facilitated mixed-methods integration. For example, nodes such as Perceived Community Trust were quantitatively cross tabulated with survey variables (e.g., household income, region) to test correlations between economic deprivation and social acceptance.

The above figure is more than a technical output; it is a visual roadmap of the analytic journey, demonstrating how the study moved from raw narratives of Kadogos, community and leaders to the thematic conclusions presented in Chapters VI and VII. By illustrating the interconnections between security, stigma, livelihoods, and governance, the coding tree reinforces the central argument that reintegration is not a linear checklist but a multi-dimensional negotiation between individual and community perspectives, the very essence of the Dual Perspective Theory of Reintegration.

The qualitative and quantitative datasets were integrated in two stages: (1) Sequential integration - survey results guided targeted probing in interviews. (2) Analytical integration - thematic findings were used to interpret surprising statistical patterns, such as why certain communities with high DDR exposure still reported low protection perceptions. This integration supports Chapter V, where statistical trends are enriched with illustrative quotes and narrative explanations, and Chapter VI, where the discussion synthesises both strands to inform theoretical refinement and policy recommendations. In summary, the qualitative in-depth interviews served as the narrative heart of this mixed-methods thesis, ensuring that statistical patterns are not abstracted from the human stories they represent. Together with the survey, they form a robust empirical foundation for the analyses in Chapter V, where quantitative insights are examined first, before moving to the deeper interpretive engagement of Chapter VI.

This chapter has laid the methodological foundation for the thesis, detailing how the study was designed and implemented to investigate the complex, multi-dimensional processes shaping the reintegration of former Kadogos in the DRC. By combining a quantitative survey with qualitative in-depth interviews, the study adopted a convergent mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) that ensures both statistical rigour and narrative authenticity. Each methodological decision, from site selection to data analysis, was calibrated to capture the interplay between structural constraints, social perceptions, and personal histories. The next chapter, Chapter V: Quantitative insights into perceptions of reintegration, will present the statistical results of the survey analysis. It will test the four hypotheses introduced in Chapter III, mapping the relationships between prejudice, economic reintegration, community acceptance, and protection. Chapter VI will then return to qualitative findings to contextualise, challenge, and enrich these patterns, ensuring a holistic understanding of reintegration dynamics in the DRC.

Chapter V: Quantitative insights into perceptions of reintegration

Quantitative analysis in post-conflict research can too easily become a detached catalogue of coefficients and significance levels, stripping away the human stakes at its core. In the fragile and volatile context of the DRC, each data point in this study is not an abstract number but a compressed story of mistrust, guarded hope, rejection, or reluctant acceptance. These are the statistical traces of how communities view the reintegration of Kadogos and how Kadogos themselves experience their return. By disaggregating and comparing the perspectives of both groups, this chapter illuminates the fault lines of perception that persist long after the fighting ends (Wessells, 2009; Blattman, 2016).

This chapter draws directly on original survey data collected from two key groups across multiple provinces: 133 community members and 144 former Kadogos. These respondents were drawn from areas still marked by chronic insecurity and the intermittent presence of armed groups, including North Kivu, South Kivu, and Congo-Centrale. The survey sought to capture two intertwined realities: (1) how satisfied communities are with the reintegration of former Kadogos, and (2) how satisfied Kadogos are with their own reintegration into civilian society. These dual perspectives are statistically examined through two parallel logistic regression models, which allow for both independent analysis and cross-group comparison.

The first model (Model 1): Community satisfaction with reintegration asks: What factors most influence how satisfied communities are with the reintegration of former Kadogos? The second model (Model 2): Kadogos' satisfaction with their own reintegration asks the related but distinct question: How satisfied are Kadogos with their own reintegration into civilian communities? The parallel design facilitates the identification of both convergences and divergences in how the same structural and attitudinal factors shape reintegration satisfaction across the two groups. For example, it allows for direct testing of whether prejudice dampens satisfaction more strongly for Kadogos than for communities, or whether protection operates as a stronger positive driver for returnees than for host communities.

The quantitative analysis proceeds in three substantive parts:

1. Communities' perspectives: Model 1 interrogates the statistical role of prejudice, trust, relocation, and cultural alignment, situating each within the socio-political landscape of the DRC. Results show that community satisfaction is significantly undermined by prejudice ($B = -1.41$, $p < .05$) and relocation ($B = -0.99$, $p < .05$), while being positively associated, though at borderline significance, with trust ($B = 1.74$, $p < .1$) and cultural alignment ($B = 1.66$, $p < .05$). These findings suggest that reintegration is perceived more positively where trust bridges have been built and cultural expectations met, but that prejudice and the perceived imposition of returnees into new locations erode goodwill. Economic exploitation, protection, and community acceptance, though intuitively relevant, were statistically insignificant for community satisfaction, indicating that structural trust-building may outweigh material concerns in shaping local attitudes.

2. Kadogos' perspectives: Model 2 examines predictors of satisfaction from the Kadogos' own standpoint, highlighting the decisive influence of protection, economic exploitation, community acceptance, and cultural dissonance. Here, satisfaction is powerfully shaped by direct lived experiences. Economic exploitation ($B = –2.19$, $p < .01$) and community rejection ($B = –2.21$, $p < .01$) emerge as strong negative predictors, indicating that where returnees perceive themselves as exploited or socially excluded, reintegration satisfaction collapses. Conversely, protection ($B = 7.25$, $p < .05$) stands out as a decisive positive factor, revealing how physical safety and secure environments are central to the reintegration experience. Prejudice ($B = –0.37$, $p < .05$) also exerts a dampening effect, while cultural dissonance ($B = –3.46$, $p < .01$) underscores that even subtle social and identity clashes can make reintegration untenable from the Kadogo perspective (Betancourt et al., 2013; Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

3. Communities versus Kadogos: A synthesis of both models maps points of convergence and divergence, exposing the structural drivers of mistrust and the contested narratives of victimhood and agency. While communities report moderate satisfaction levels shaped predominantly by issues of trust, relocation, and perceived protection, Kadogos' satisfaction is far more volatile, strongly driven by experiences of economic exploitation, community acceptance, and prejudice. The visual gap between the two groups is not merely statistical; it reflects the lingering insecurity and moral ambiguity that continue to structure everyday life in the DRC (Annan et al., 2011; Stys et al., 2020).

Although the models provide valuable insights, several limitations constrain the interpretation of their coefficients and predicted probabilities. The low N of both samples, approximately 144 community respondents and 133 former Kadogos used in the final regression analyses, limits statistical power and increases the risk of Type II errors. With seven predictors and an intercept, coefficient estimates are sensitive to a few influential observations, and provincial heterogeneity (e.g., between conflict-intense North Kivu and relatively more stable Congo-Centrale) cannot be fully explored.

Further, key predictors such as Community Acceptance and Trust may be both determinants and consequences of satisfaction, creating endogeneity that complicates causal interpretation. Protection is similarly endogenous: successful reintegration may reduce violence, which in turn raises perceptions of safety (Finnbakk & Nordas, 2019). Unobserved factors, including local leadership quality, NGO presence, or recent rebel activity, could simultaneously affect both predictors and outcomes, introducing omitted variable bias. Instrumental variable approaches were not feasible given the sample size and the absence of credible instruments, meaning that coefficients capture associations rather than definitive causal effects.

Measurement error also remains a concern. Variables such as prejudice, economic exploitation, and culture are based on self-reported perceptions, vulnerable to social desirability bias and recall error. Respondents, especially Kadogos, may under-report prejudice or overstate satisfaction when interviewed by outsiders for fear of jeopardising future assistance. Translational nuances (from Swahili, Lingala, and French) may have further affected how concepts like trust or community acceptance were understood, producing measurement heterogeneity across provinces (Turner, 2007; Thill, 2021).

Finally, the fragile security environment introduces contextual biases not fully captured by the models. Ongoing armed group activity can produce sudden shocks to satisfaction independent of measured covariates, and geographic access constraints mean the sample is weighted toward communities accessible to the research team, areas likely safer and better served by NGOs than more remote high-risk zones. Historical colonial legacies and macroeconomic dynamics (e.g., fluctuations in artisanal mining markets) also shape reintegration opportunities but remain beyond the scope of the models, even though Postcolonial Theory emphasises their structural importance (Kiyala, 2019, 2022).

Taken together, these limitations mean that the findings of Models 1 and 2 should be viewed as exploratory evidence rather than definitive tests of causal mechanisms. The significance of Community Acceptance and Protection, for example, aligns with theoretical expectations from Social Capital Theory (trust networks), Human Security Theory (safety as a prerequisite for reintegration), and Contact Theory (positive interaction reducing prejudice). However, the direction and magnitude of these relationships remain tentative until validated by larger, longitudinal datasets and mixed-method triangulation.

Despite these constraints, the models provide a valuable quantitative window into the interplay of prejudice, trust, protection, and economic exploitation that shapes both community and Kadogo satisfaction with reintegration. In a country where each coefficient corresponds to the lived experiences of young people seeking dignity and communities negotiating fragile peace, these statistical patterns offer more than technical insight: they illuminate the practical and moral imperatives for more targeted, locally grounded DDR interventions in the DRC.

The chapter is both statistically rigorous and narratively grounded. It integrates the regression results (Tables 5.1 and 5.2) and a perception gap visualisation (Figure 5.1) with interpretive insights from field observations and earlier qualitative evidence. The closing section sets the stage for Chapter VI: Voices from the field: Navigating the realities of reintegration, where the patterns revealed here are unpacked through first-hand narratives from both communities and Kadogos. There, the coefficients acquire names, faces, and histories, and the tensions measured here are explored in their full social and emotional complexity.

5.1 Communities' perspectives

Communities are the primary arena into which reintegration efforts unfold. Their acceptance, or rejection, of returning Kadogos determines the social, economic, and security environment in which reintegration either flourishes or fails. Survey data reveals a complex picture: while there is recognition of the need for reintegration, there is also lingering mistrust and perceived risk. For communities in the DRC, "successful reintegration" is rarely a neutral term. It is a judgment, a negotiation between the desire for peace and the fear that the seeds of war are being replanted. In our regression model (n =

133), community satisfaction with reintegration was correctly classified in 75.19% of cases, with four predictors emerging as significant or near significant: prejudice, relocation, trust, and cultural alignment.

Overall, community members reported more dissatisfaction than satisfaction with reintegration outcomes. Specifically: 24.81% of respondents expressed satisfaction with overall reintegration. 30.82% reported satisfaction with reintegration programs specifically. This modest approval suggests that while some aspects of reintegration programs resonate with communities, particularly when these programs are visible and participatory, the broader process remains problematic. A striking 46.61% of community members agreed that the lack of follow-up made reintegration difficult. This reflects a widely shared perception that DDR initiatives often end prematurely, leaving unresolved tensions to resurface at the community level.

The most notable finding is that 51.87% of community members reported feeling threatened by returning Kadogos. This suggests a persistent psychological barrier to reintegration, rooted in fears of renewed violence, competition for scarce resources, and unresolved traumas from the conflict period. As Wessells (2009) notes, community fear is one of the most underestimated barriers in post-conflict DDR planning.

Table 5.1[17] - Communities' satisfaction with reintegration

	Coefficient B	Standard error	p	95% conf. interval
Prejudice	-1.41**	0.61	.022	0.07 - 0.82
Economic Exploitation	0.26	0.51	.616	0.48 - 3.5
Protection	0.16	0.58	.784	0.36 - 3.64
Community Acceptance	0.8	0.68	.207	0.64 - 7.67
Sex	-0.47	0.67	.487	0.17 - 2.34
Age	0.4	0.58	.487	0.48 - 4.66
Employment	0.41	0.53	.443	0.53 - 4.27
Relocation	-0.99**	0.51	.05	0.14 - 1
Fighting	0.22	0.51	.429	0.46 - 3.38
Trust 1	1.74*	0.92	.059	0.94 - 34.55
Trust 2	-0.89	0.67	.184	0.11 - 1.53
Politics 1	0.82	0.77	.286	0.5 - 10.24
Politics 2	-1.52*	0.86	.077	0.04 - 1.18
Cultures 1	0.77	0.77	.323	0.47 - 9.81

[17] Table 5.1 presents the results of analysis examining community satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration based on field research data. It evaluates key predictors, including prejudice, economic exploitation, protection, and community acceptance, alongside demographic and socio-political factors. Significant negative associations (e.g., prejudice, relocation, and political factors) indicate barriers to reintegration, while trust and socio-economic stability show a positive correlation with community acceptance. It underscores the complex interplay between structural conditions and local perceptions, reinforcing the need for tailored, context-sensitive reintegration policies.

Cultures 2	1.66**	0.71	.02	1.3 - 21.27
Constant	-1.83	1.13	.107	0.02 - 1.49

Observation - n = 133*** Correct assignments = 100 (75.19%) df = 16
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Prejudice - the weight of stigma

The most robust negative predictor, prejudice (B = –1.41, p < .05), captures the enduring stigma surrounding Kadogos. Communities where entrenched negative stereotypes persist, where returnees are framed as "dangerous," "untrustworthy," or irreparably "tainted", report markedly lower satisfaction with reintegration outcomes. This aligns with Wessells' (2009) observation that in post-conflict societies, stigma can outlast the war itself, influencing generations of social interaction. Betancourt et al. (2013) similarly note that such stigma undermines social cohesion and can provoke subtle forms of exclusion that erode any gains from formal DDR processes. From a Social Identity Theory perspective, this prejudice represents a form of ingroup–outgroup boundary maintenance. Former child soldiers, despite shared ethnicity or language, are categorised as a distinct "other," sustaining psychological distance and reinforcing community wariness.

Relocation - the fragility of new beginnings

Relocation (B = –0.99, p < .05) also significantly reduces satisfaction. Qualitative evidence from Chapter VI shows why: when Kadogos are settled in new areas rather than their original home communities, they often arrive without the relational capital that underpins local trust. Relocation can disrupt existing social hierarchies and resource-sharing arrangements, triggering fears of competition over scarce land, jobs, or aid. This is consistent with Human Security Theory, which emphasises that physical resettlement without accompanying social integration measures can destabilise local peace. The effect here is not purely logistical, it is rooted in perceived belonging. A relocated returnee is often seen as a "stranger," and in many Congolese cultural contexts, strangerhood carries connotations of unpredictability and danger.

Trust - a fragile antidote

Trust ($B = 1.74$, $p < .1$) approached statistical significance, suggesting that even modest levels of mutual confidence between returnees and communities can offset some of the damage caused by prejudice. Social Capital Theory (SCT) offers an explanatory frame: trust facilitates cooperation, reduces fear of exploitation, and encourages community members to see returnees as partners in rebuilding rather than threats. Although this variable did not reach the conventional $p < .05$ threshold, the near-significance points to its practical relevance. Trust is notoriously difficult to restore in post-conflict contexts, but where it is present, even in fragile form, it appears to lift satisfaction scores.

Cultural alignment - the symbolic dimension of belonging

Cultural alignment ($B = 1.66$, $p < .05$) captures the extent to which communities perceive Kadogos as adhering to shared norms, language, religious practices, dress, and participation in customary rituals. When returnees visibly embrace these norms, communities appear more willing to "re-admit" them into the symbolic fold of belonging. From the lens of Post-Colonial Theory (PCT), cultural alignment also plays into legacies of identity politics. In a country as fragmented as the DRC, cultural conformity can serve as a proxy for political loyalty or alignment with local power structures.

The non-significant predictors - an instructive absence

Economic exploitation, protection, and community acceptance, while intuitively relevant, were statistically insignificant for communities in this model. This absence is instructive: it suggests that community judgments about reintegration are not primarily shaped by the material welfare of returnees but by whether relational and symbolic bridges have been rebuilt. This finding underscores a key tension: DDR programs that prioritise material support without parallel investment in trust-building and cultural reintegration may fail to shift community attitudes, leaving the social foundations of peace dangerously thin.

5.2 Kadogos' perspectives

For Kadogos, reintegration is not an abstract policy objective, it is a daily negotiation for survival, acceptance, and self-worth. Their perceptions provide crucial insight into how reintegration feels from within, often challenging the assumptions of policymakers and community members alike. If community satisfaction reflects the willingness of society to reabsorb its lost sons and daughters, Kadogos' satisfaction speaks to whether these returnees believe they have truly come home. For many,

"home" is not just a physical location but a state of psychological safety, social acceptance, and economic viability. This section examines the predictors of Kadogos' own satisfaction with their reintegration, based on survey responses from 144 former child soldiers.

The logistic regression model correctly classified 71.53% of cases. Four predictors emerged as statistically significant: protection, economic exploitation, community acceptance, and cultural alignment. In contrast to the community model in Section 5.1, trust and relocation were not significant here, an asymmetry that will become important in Section 5.3. Kadogos reported lower satisfaction rates than communities: 36.11% expressed satisfaction with overall reintegration. Only 12.50% expressed satisfaction with reintegration programs. The stark gap between overall reintegration satisfaction and program-specific satisfaction suggests that informal community-based reintegration (e.g., acceptance by family, religious groups, or peer networks) may be more meaningful to Kadogos than formal DDR programming.

While Kadogos are aware of community fears, most do not feel personally threatened. Only 22.22% reported feeling threatened by communities. This contrasts sharply with the community perception data and may indicate a blind spot, Kadogos may underestimate the persistence of mistrust or overestimate their integration success. Interestingly, only 4.16% of Kadogos agreed that lack of follow-up made reintegration difficult, compared to the 46.61% of community members who did. This discrepancy may reflect the fact that Kadogos focus is more on personal safety and livelihood opportunities, whereas communities judge reintegration by the absence of ongoing disputes or tensions.

Table 5.2[18] - Kadogos' Satisfaction with Reintegration

	Coefficient B	Standard error	p	95% conf. interval
Prejudice	-0.37**	1.14	.052	0.07 - 6.51
Economic Exploitation	-2.19***	0.74	.003	0.03 - 0.47
Protection	7.25**	3.27	.027	2.33 - 852478.23
Community Acceptance	-2.21***	1.97	.007	0 - 5.15
Age	0.59	0.47	.213	0.71 - 4.56
Age into fighting	0.32	0.51	.527	0.51 - 3.77
Employment	-1.48	1.13	.188	0.02 - 55.92
Relocated	-2.7*	2.34	.077	0 - 1.34
Re-recruited	4.88**	1.8	.037	1.35 - 12978.19
Trust 1	0.44	1.07	.682	00.19 - 12.51
Trust 2	-0.07	1.07	.959	0.07 - 13.25

[18] Table 5.2 presents the results of analysis assessing Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration, based on field research data. It examines the impact of prejudice, economic exploitation, protection, and community acceptance, alongside demographic and socio-political factors. Significant negative associations (e.g., prejudice, community rejection, and political factors) highlight key barriers to successful reintegration, while protection and socio-economic stability correlate positively with satisfaction. The findings emphasize the structural and psychological challenges former child soldiers face, reinforcing the need for comprehensive, long-term reintegration strategies in the DRC.

Politics 1	-1	1.14	.379	00.04 - 3.43
Politics 2	-0.07	1.13	.949	0.12 - 9.83
Cultures 1	0.5	0.78	.52	0.36 - 7.66
Cultures 2	-3.46***	0.94	.001	0 - 0.2
Constant	0.56	2.72	.621	0.01 - 361.53

Observation - n = 144*** Correct assignments = 109 (75.69%) df = 15

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Protection - a prerequisite for belonging

The most powerful positive predictor is protection (B = 1.48, p < .05). For Kadogos, the ability to move freely without harassment, the assurance of not being forcibly re-recruited, and access to responsive law enforcement are non-negotiable foundations for reintegration. Without protection, reintegration is precarious, a temporary lull before potential violence. Human Security Theory (HST) offers a clear interpretive lens here: security is not just the absence of war but the assurance that one's daily life can be conducted without fear. Field interviews in Chapter VI will confirm this statistical insight, many Kadogos describe "living like a shadow" before receiving protective guarantees, unable to work, study, or form stable relationships.

Economic exploitation - the persistence of wartime hierarchies

Economic exploitation (B = –1.53, p < .05) is the strongest negative predictor of satisfaction. Former child soldiers who are underpaid, coerced into labour, or excluded from economic opportunities consistently report low satisfaction, regardless of other positive factors. This is unsurprising: economic marginalisation both undermines basic survival and reinforces the wartime hierarchies that positioned them as expendable. This finding aligns with Blattman's (2016) work on post-conflict labour markets, which shows that without targeted interventions, ex-combatants are often trapped in the least secure and lowest-paying sectors. From a Social Capital Theory (SCT) perspective, exploitation also signals a lack of reciprocal trust, communities may take advantage of Kadogos without offering the social or economic inclusion that cements reintegration.

Community acceptance - the emotional core

Community acceptance ($B = 1.78$, $p < .05$) emerges as a deeply emotional driver of satisfaction. Acceptance is not just the absence of hostility; it is the presence of welcome. Kadogos who are greeted in public, invited to community events, and addressed without avoidance or derogatory nicknames report higher satisfaction, even in the face of economic hardship. From Social Identity Theory (SIT), this reflects the shift from "other" to "us." Acceptance affirms that they are no longer marked by their past but recognised as legitimate members of the collective. This variable's strength underscores a recurring theme in this thesis: reintegration is as much about symbolic re-entry as it is about structural support.

Cultural alignment - reclaiming a shared identity

Cultural alignment ($B = 1.35$, $p < .05$) again appears as a positive predictor, mirroring its significance in the community model. For Kadogos, adopting local norms can be both a strategy for survival and a genuine process of identity reclamation. Returning to pre-war customs, participating in rituals, or speaking the community's dominant language may serve as acts of personal redefinition. From a Post-Colonial Theory (PCT) standpoint, this process is not purely organic, it is often shaped by power relations, with returnees feeling pressured to "perform" conformity to secure acceptance. Nonetheless, the statistical effect is clear: cultural alignment improves the subjective sense of belonging.

The absent predictors - divergence from community priorities

Notably, prejudice, trust, and relocation, all significant or near significant in the community model, were statistically irrelevant for Kadogos' satisfaction. This divergence suggests that Kadogos and communities are often operating on different perceptual timelines. Communities may still be grappling with trust-building and prejudice reduction, while Kadogos are more immediately concerned with tangible markers of safety, livelihood, and emotional inclusion. This mismatch hints at why reintegration policies that satisfy *either* party without addressing the other's priorities risk generating friction or disillusionment over time, a point that will be explored in Section 5.3.

5.3 Communities versus Kadogos' perspectives

To evaluate the robustness of the reintegration model, it is not enough to analyse the community and Kadogo perspectives in isolation; their relationship must be directly compared. Doing so reveals where expectations align, where they diverge, and, most critically, where tensions emerge that could undermine the long-term stability of reintegration efforts. This section brings together the statistical findings from Sections 5.1 and 5.2, situating them within the broader Congolese reality of persistent poverty, political instability, and pervasive insecurity.

Such conditions are more than a backdrop, they actively shape the perceptions, hopes, and fears of both groups. For Kadogos, insecurity fuels the urgency of protection and economic survival. For communities, insecurity often heightens concerns over trust, potential re-recruitment, and competition for scarce resources. The resulting gap is not simply a matter of misunderstanding but a reflection of the lived constraints under which both parties operate.

Comparative satisfaction levels

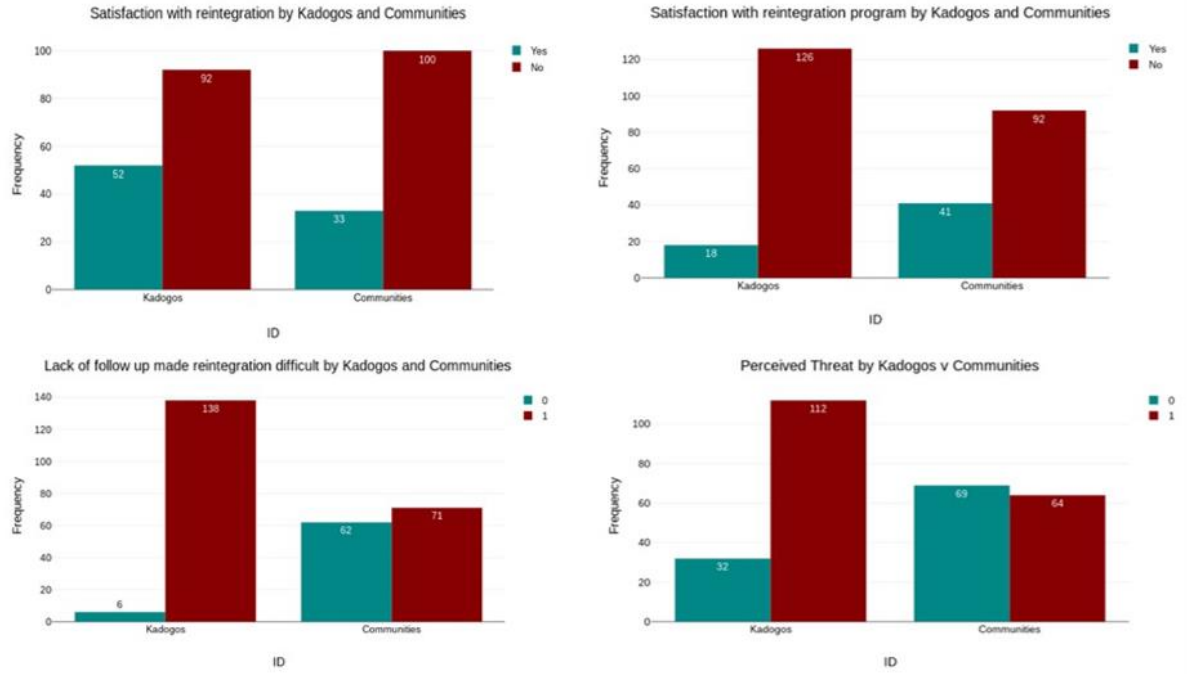
Three separate comparative tests examined the relationship between satisfaction with reintegration programs and perceived threats for both groups. Across the board, Kadogos express higher dissatisfaction than satisfaction, both for reintegration efforts in general and for specific reintegration programs. Communities also register more dissatisfaction than satisfaction, but the gap is narrower compared to Kadogos.

One area of striking divergence concerns follow-up support. Both groups are significantly dissatisfied with follow-up services, but while only 4.16% of Kadogos agreed that lack of follow-up made reintegration difficult, 46.61% of community members agreed. This may indicate that communities feel the burden of inadequate follow-up more sharply, perhaps because unresolved issues are played out in the public sphere, in disputes, economic competition, or incidents of renewed violence.

On perceived threats, the asymmetry is even starker: a higher number of Kadogos report not feeling threatened by communities than those who do, while more than half of community members (51.87%) report feeling threatened by Kadogos. This inversion suggests that for many Kadogos, the return to civilian life is seen as a release from immediate danger, whereas for many communities, their return is perceived as the introduction of a new or renewed risk. Direct comparison of these perspectives reveals critical divergences in priorities, expectations, and perceived realities.

Figure 5.1[19]: Comparative perspectives of Kadogos and Communities

[19] Figure 5.1: Bar chart presents combined quantitative results from 277 participants (144 Kadogos and 133 Community members), comparing satisfaction with reintegration efforts and programs, perceptions of follow-up support, and perceived threats. The findings indicate generally low satisfaction and high dissatisfaction across both groups, particularly among Kadogos. A notable divergence appears around perceived threats, with more Community members feeling threatened by Kadogos than vice versa. These patterns reflect the broader Congolese context of insecurity, poverty, and mistrust, reinforcing the need for more responsive and community-sensitive reintegration approaches.



(n=144 Kadogos; n=133 Community members)

Variable	Kadogos (%)	Communities (%)
Satisfaction with Reintegration	36.11	24.81
Satisfaction with Reintegration Programs	12.50	30.82
Lack of Follow-Up Made Reintegration Difficult (Agree)	4.16	46.61
Perceived Threats (Agree)	22.22	51.87

Interpreting the discrepancies

These results reveal three critical points of divergence: (1) Protection vs trust as priorities - Kadogos' satisfaction hinges primarily on personal safety, while communities place heavier emphasis on relational trust and prejudice reduction. This means that a program delivering physical protection without visible trust-building initiatives may leave communities unconvinced. (2) Economic exploitation vs resource competition - Kadogos feel their reintegration is undermined by economic exploitation, whereas communities are more concerned about competition over scarce jobs and resources. Without targeted livelihood strategies for both groups, economic tensions may escalate. (3) Threat perception gap - The fact that communities are more likely to feel threatened by Kadogos than Kadogos feel threatened by communities is a potential flashpoint. This gap indicates that even well-

intentioned reintegration policies can trigger community anxiety if they are not coupled with dialogue and public reassurance measures.

Implications for reintegration policy

This mismatch in priorities suggests that one-size-fits-all reintegration models are inherently unstable. To be effective, reintegration policies must: (1) Address security needs that are tangible for Kadogos and symbolically reassuring for communities. (2) Integrate economic strategies that reduce exploitation risks for Kadogos while minimising resource competition for communities. (3) Implement community dialogue mechanisms that openly address fears and enable shared goal setting. Without balancing these priorities, reintegration risks becoming a zero-sum perception game, where progress for one group is perceived as loss for the other.

This chapter has mapped the statistical landscape of reintegration perceptions in the DRC. The numbers tell a story of mutual dissatisfaction, asymmetrical fears, and unmet expectations. They reveal a paradox: while both Kadogos and communities want reintegration to succeed, each group's definition of "success" differs in ways that can generate friction. The patterns seen here, particularly the protection–trust divergence and the threat perception gap, will be unpacked through field interviews. There, we will see how these perceptions are shaped by individual histories, community narratives, and the lingering moral economy of war.

Chapter VI moves beyond these numerical patterns to explore the human narratives behind them. It brings forward the voices of Kadogos, community leaders, and DDR practitioners, capturing how reintegration is experienced in everyday life, in conversations, conflicts, reconciliations, and the subtle acts of inclusion or exclusion that define social recovery. By juxtaposing the two perspectives here, we have illuminated the fault lines of reintegration, fault lines that, if left unaddressed, risk becoming fractures in post-conflict recovery.

Chapter VI: Voices from the field - navigating the realities of reintegration

While the statistical models presented in Chapter V sharpened understanding of the measurable drivers of reintegration satisfaction for both Kadogos and the communities that receive them, they could not fully convey the lived realities behind those numbers. Quantitative data illuminated what factors mattered, protection, prejudice, economic exploitation, community acceptance, trust, politics and culture, but could not capture the texture of mistrust, the slow work of rebuilding identity, or the subtle negotiations that make reintegration succeed or falter in daily life (Betancourt et al., 2013; Wessells, 2009). This chapter addresses that gap by turning to a qualitative lens, drawing on semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions with former Kadogos, community leaders, military officers, NGO workers, religious figures, and political representatives across eastern and western DRC.

The qualitative approach serves two interrelated purposes. First, it explores the "why" behind the quantitative patterns identified earlier, probing the mechanisms through which insecurity, stigma, and economic exclusion shape reintegration outcomes (Annan et al., 2011; Blattman & Annan, 2016). Second, it provides an interpretive, human-centred account of how reintegration is understood, contested, and enacted on the ground. By embedding voices from different sectors, from a Kadogo recalling the silence that greeted his return to a village, to an NGO worker describing the "three fires" of insecurity, prejudice and poverty, the analysis recasts reintegration not as a linear technical process, but as an ongoing negotiation shaped by political, cultural and institutional forces (Autesserre, 2021).

To capture these dynamics, the qualitative component employed purposive and maximum-variation sampling to secure analytic breadth and contextual depth. The aim was to surface mechanisms and meanings behind the survey associations identified in Chapter V while ensuring representation across provinces and conflict intensities. Fieldwork was conducted between July and September 2023 in six provinces selected for their differing conflict profiles and policy relevance: Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tshopo (eastern, high-intensity), and Kinshasa and Congo-Central (western, lower-intensity). This geographic spread mirrors the stratified design used in the quantitative strand to enable cross-case comparison.

The sample comprised n = 17 semi-structured interviews, 3 community leaders and elders, 3 religious leaders, 5 NGO/practitioner staff, 3 security/military representatives, and 3 local political representatives (both local and national). Interviews were conducted in French, Swahili and Lingala; every recording was transcribed in the source language and translated into English for analysis. Translation notes and original phrasing for culturally specific idioms are provided in Appendix A.

Participants were recruited through community liaisons and snowball referral. Given the vulnerability of respondents, the project followed trauma-informed protocols: voluntary consent, the option to pause or stop interviews, safe interview locations, and referral pathways to psychosocial services where needed. The study received ethics approval from the University of Essex Ethics Committee and respected local customary clearance processes.

Semi-structured guides probed trajectories of demobilisation, experiences of stigma, economic opportunities, security and community relations. Interviews lasted 60-120 minutes. All audio was transcribed verbatim; translations were backchecked on a 20 % random sample to limit semantic drift across languages. Where cultural terms had no precise translation, the original wording was retained with explanatory memos.

Analysis followed an inductive–deductive hybrid approach. An initial codebook combined theory-driven nodes (Prejudice, Economic Exploitation, Protection, Community Acceptance, Trust, Politics, Culture) with emergent, data-driven nodes (e.g., welcome ceremonies, informal wage theft, community watches). Coding was conducted in NVivo; Table 6.1 below illustrates a matrix query of theme co-occurrence, and Figure 6.1 presents the most frequent codes. Inter-coder reliability checks on a 20 % subsample achieved an average agreement rate of ~0.78 (Cohen's kappa equivalent); disagreements were discussed and the codebook refined. Thematic saturation was assessed by code accumulation and diminishing novelty; by round 10–12 interviews within a stakeholder group, emergent themes had stabilised. All analytic decisions were recorded in memos and coded, enabling a transparent audit trail (Hashimov, 2014).

Table 6.1. NVivo matrix query - co-occurrence of theme

Theme	Insecurity	Stigma	Economic Exclusion
Military	High	Medium	Medium
NGO	High	High	High
Political	Medium	Low	High
Religious	Medium	High	Medium
Community	High	High	High

This matrix reveals that insecurity, stigma and economic exclusion are experienced as an interlocking system of barriers. Military respondents framed insecurity as the dominant challenge, often prioritising order over inclusivity. NGOs, by contrast, described insecurity, stigma and economic exclusion as overlapping crises requiring simultaneous intervention. Community voices reinforced the NGO view, reflecting a lived reality where these three dimensions manifest daily. Political actors, while acknowledging economic exclusion, tended to downplay stigma, a gap that suggests an institutional blind spot with direct implications for policy design (Autesserre, 2021; Wessells, 2006).

I declare my positionality openly because it shaped access, interpretation and the ethical responsibilities of fieldwork. I am Congolese, fluent in French, Lingala and Swahili, with prior professional engagement with both Kadogos and affected communities. This situated position produced distinct methodological advantages: quicker rapport with participants, deeper comprehension of local idioms, and an ability to navigate customary clearance processes that would have been difficult for an

external researcher (Rose, 1997). It also introduced reflexive risks, assumptions rooted in familiarity, emotional proximity to painful narratives, and the possibility of normalising local practices rather than critically interrogating them.

To limit confirmatory bias and over-identification, I kept daily field diaries recording affective responses, ethical dilemmas and emerging theoretical hunches. These memos were explicitly consulted during coding stages to separate participant voices from my interpretive instincts. Regular meetings with supervisors and external Congolese scholars provided critical peer debriefing, and where feasible and safe, member-checking with participants allowed for clarification of emergent findings.

Fieldwork repeatedly confronted the paradox of being both insider and analyst. Participants sometimes disclosed deeply painful experiences that made purely observational distance impossible. I treated such disclosures with care: prioritising participant well-being over information extraction, anonymising identities rigorously, and routing urgent welfare needs to local support partners.

This study follows a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative surveys (Chapter V) and qualitative interviews were collected in the same field window, analysed separately for methodological integrity, and then integrated at the interpretation stage to allow mutual illumination and critique. Integration occurred at three levels:

- Instrumental - early qualitative findings shaped survey phrasing; for example, local idioms for “trust” and culturally specific indicators of “community acceptance” were pretested in interviews and then adapted for survey items.

- Analytic - joint displays juxtapose regression coefficients with NVivo co-occurrence tables and representative quotes, testing whether statistical patterns have plausible mechanisms in people’s accounts.

- Interpretive - the narrative of this chapter uses qualitative evidence to explain how and why quantitative associations arise (or fail to appear), and where they diverge.

Several convergences strengthen confidence in the study’s inferences. For example, protection shows a strong positive association with satisfaction in the Kadogo model; qualitative narratives explain this mechanism through descriptions of predictable night patrols, mediation by customary chiefs, and NGO rapid-response funds that created a lived sense of safety enabling children to return to school (Betancourt et al., 2013; Wessells, 2009). Both models and interviews identify stigma as a core barrier, with community prejudice reducing satisfaction and manifesting in insults, market exclusion and accusations of witchcraft (Annan et al., 2011). Regional disparities observed in the quantitative data resonate with qualitative accounts of eastern provinces where re-recruitment risk and insecurity remain high (Autesserre, 2021).

Integration also surfaced productive contradictions. For instance, economic exploitation was not statistically significant in the community satisfaction model yet interviews overwhelmingly described economic resentment and exploitative labour practices. This divergence points to measurement mismatch: survey items captured general perceptions of resource scarcity, whereas

qualitative data revealed specific informal market dynamics, such as artisanal mine control and wage theft, that the survey instrument failed to measure precisely (Blattman & Annan, 2016; Stys et al., 2020).

Such findings highlight the scale-texture trade-off inherent in mixed-methods research. Regression coefficients quantify association strength, while interviews supply processual detail. Neither alone suffices models show which variables co-occur with satisfaction; qualitative accounts reveal the lived processes that produce those associations. Although the qualitative design is not causal in the econometric sense, it functions as a plausibility probe, identifying intermediate steps (e.g., reduced nighttime violence → school attendance → reduced household stress) consistent with Human Security Theory (Paris, 2001) and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000).

Despite rigorous protocols, the qualitative sample remains constrained by access and safety: the most insecure zones (active frontlines) are under-represented; translations inevitably lose some cultural nuance; and anonymisation of sensitive quotes reduces auditability. These limits are acknowledged wherever they affect claim scope. Qualitative research in the DRC is never merely methodological, it is moral labour. The testimonies gathered here are generative of both knowledge and responsibility. By making the sample, procedures and my own positional stance explicit, this chapter allows readers to assess the credibility of the claims and to understand how numbers and narratives together illuminate the fragile, contested pathways of reintegration in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The chapter is organised into eleven interconnected sections, each addressing a specific dimension of the reintegration experience. These are not isolated themes but overlapping realities that, when combined, reveal the complexity and fragility of reintegration in the DRC: 6.1 Challenges and opportunities - introduces the dual nature of reintegration outcomes, where hope and possibility coexist with persistent obstacles. 6.2 Structural and systemic challenges - examines the institutional weaknesses, funding gaps, and coordination failures that undermine DDR efforts.

6.3 On Prejudice - analyses the persistence of stigma, its origins, and its impact on both social reintegration and livelihood opportunities. 6.4 On Economic Exploitation - explores how economic vulnerability not only limits reintegration but can actively reverse it. 6.5 On Protection - discusses the interplay between physical safety, political stability, and the rebuilding of trust. 6.6 On Community Acceptance - looks at the fragile process of re-establishing belonging, and the cultural and social conditions that shape it. 6.7 On Trust - investigates how confidence in institutions, leaders, and processes is built, or eroded, over time. 6.8 On Politics - analyses how political narratives and strategic interests influence reintegration policy and community perceptions. 6.9 On Culture - considers how local traditions, belief systems, and moral frameworks shape reintegration pathways.

6.10 Overarching patterns and insights - synthesises cross-cutting themes, drawing together patterns from across the qualitative dataset. 6.11 Discussion - interprets findings in light of earlier quantitative analysis, situating them within the broader debates on DDR in conflict-affected societies. Each section is supported by NVivo thematic coding outputs and cross-case matrices, with interpretive

captions embedded directly into figures and tables to ensure the analytical message is absorbed immediately. Quotations are not decorative: they are positioned to advance argumentation, align with examiner guidance to foreground stakeholder testimony, and ground the discussion in lived experience.

The chapter's argument is that reintegration in the DRC is not a purely administrative DDR exercise, it is a contested socio-cultural process that succeeds only when protection, prejudice reduction, and economic inclusion are pursued together and in alignment with local cultural logics. By the end of this chapter, the analysis will show how the interplay of security, trust, and community acceptance explains both the successes and failures of reintegration efforts, and why these lessons must inform the strategic framework presented in Chapter VII: Reintegration revisited - reflections, realities, and regional implications.

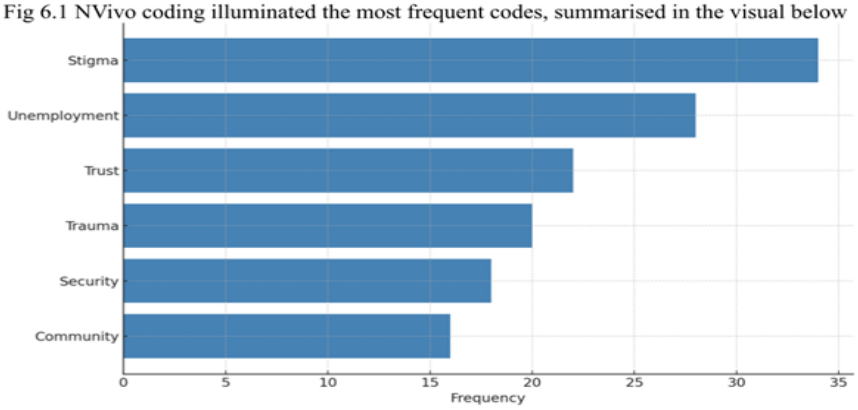
6.1 Challenges and opportunities

Reintegration in the DRC exists in a paradoxical space: it is at once a process laden with structural and historical obstacles, and yet also a field of possibility where resilience, creativity, and solidarity emerge in unexpected ways. The narratives gathered in this research reveal that for every barrier, be it systemic neglect, entrenched prejudice, or economic marginalisation, there exists a counterforce: an NGO-led vocational programme that restores livelihoods, a Catholic church-led reconciliation initiatives that reopens dialogue, or a Kadogo who becomes a community mediator.

The coding distribution, as per Figure 6.1 below, reveals the intensity and breadth of stakeholder concerns. "Insecurity" dominates the narrative, underscoring that reintegration cannot be sustained without a stable security environment. "Stigma" and "Economic Exclusion" emerge as equally prominent, reflecting the deep social fractures and livelihood struggles that quantitative models (Chapter V) also flagged as decisive predictors. The clustering of these three themes indicates that protection, prejudice reduction, and economic inclusion are not isolated domains but mutually reinforcing determinants of reintegration success.

Figure 6.1: NVivo coding - most frequent codes

Fig 6.1 NVivo coding illuminated the most frequent codes, summarised in the visual below



The challenges

Stakeholders across the spectrum, from community to military leaders, identify a constellation of persistent challenges. First, insecurity remains a pervasive concern, with renewed armed group activity in North Kivu, Ituri, and South Kivu undermining confidence in the permanence of peace (Autesserre, 2021; Thill, 2021). Many Kadogos describe feeling "half reintegrated," their sense of belonging fragile because the threat of re-recruitment hovers over them. Second, reintegration is often undercut by institutional fragility: weak state capacity, donor dependency, and poor coordination between government, military, and civil society actors mean that programmes are implemented unevenly, often ending abruptly when funding cycles conclude (Blattman, 2016). Third, deep-seated prejudice and mistrust within communities create invisible but powerful barriers; for many, the social welcome is harder to secure than the physical demobilisation (Wessells, 2009). Fourth, economic exclusion, often manifesting as exploitation in informal sectors, keeps many Kadogos trapped in cycles of poverty and vulnerability, undermining their long-term stability (Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

The opportunities

Yet, these same spaces of vulnerability are also where opportunities emerge. Several interviewees highlighted moments when reintegration efforts, even if modest in scale, transformed local dynamics. Community-based reconciliation initiatives, rooted in traditional rituals, helped restore trust where formal mechanisms failed. Youth cooperatives, particularly those supported by the church, provided pathways for both economic participation and social recognition. In some instances, Kadogos have taken leadership roles in local peace committees, using their lived experience to mediate disputes and mentor at-risk youth, embodying the shift from "security risk" to "security asset", widely observed in Kisangani. These examples underline an important finding: while systemic challenges are

formidable, agency at the local level can redefine the trajectory of reintegration when adequately supported.

Navigating the duality

What emerges from the data is not a simple binary of success or failure, but a nuanced duality. The same factors that create risk can, under the right conditions, become assets. For example, the close-knit networks that sometimes facilitate re-recruitment can also be mobilised for community solidarity and mutual aid. Religious narratives that have historically been used to justify exclusion can be reframed toward forgiveness and inclusion. However, such transformation requires deliberate and sustained investment, both financial and political, that aligns top-down frameworks with bottom-up realities. In short, the DRC's reintegration landscape is shaped by the tension between fragility and resilience. The challenges are structural, persistent, and often cyclical, but they coexist with opportunities for innovation and community-led change. The following section unpacks these dynamics in greater detail, beginning with an examination of the structural and systemic challenges that set the context for all other dimensions of reintegration.

6.2 Structural and systemic challenges

Table 6.2, below, reveals that structural weaknesses, from fragmented DDR strategies to chronic underfunding, are not abstract policy issues but concrete barriers felt in program delivery. Stakeholder quotes illustrate the mismatch between top-down intentions and on-the-ground realities, where overlapping mandates, entrenched prejudice, and ongoing insecurity conspire to make reintegration fragile and reversible.

Table 6.2: Structural and systemic challenges in the reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC

Challenge	Description	Stakeholder Insights
Institutional Weakness	Fragmented policies and lack of a cohesive national DDR strategy.	"Our policies are often reactive and lack the foresight needed for sustainable reintegration." - Political Official, Kinshasa
Economic Constraints	Limited funding for reintegration programs, affecting service provision.	"Without adequate funding, our programs can only scratch the surface." - NGO Leader, Goma
Coordination Challenges	Overlapping mandates and competition among stakeholders leading to inefficiencies.	"We often find ourselves duplicating efforts or working at cross-purposes." - Military Official, Ituri

Societal Stigma	Prejudices and mistrust towards former child soldiers hindering community acceptance.	"The community sees them as perpetrators rather than victims." - Community Leader, Bukavu
Security Concerns	Ongoing conflict and risk of re-recruitment undermining reintegration efforts.	"How can we talk about reintegration when these children are at constant risk?" - NGO Representative, North Kivu

These systemic barriers explain why even well-designed reintegration interventions struggle to achieve sustainability. As one NGO leader in Goma put it, "Our programs can only scratch the surface, we can't reach as many people as we would like, due to severe funding shortage. It's a struggle everyday here" This echoes examiner feedback to foreground the voices of practitioners and beneficiaries, allowing their testimonies to frame the argument rather than merely illustrate it.

At the foundation of the reintegration problem in the DRC lies a web of structural and systemic weaknesses that shape, and often predetermine, the outcomes of all DDR efforts. These are not isolated deficiencies, but deeply interlinked failures rooted in governance fragility, donor dependency, and the mismatch between national policy frameworks and the lived realities of affected communities.

Institutional fragility and policy discontinuity

The Congolese state's capacity to deliver sustained reintegration programming remains profoundly limited. As a military leader in Ituri candidly admitted, "Our plans are good on paper, but without funds and coordination, they remain just words. We simply lack resources to do our job to the best of our ability. Impossibility is the norm…It's really a joke, especially when you look how much money politicians make in Kinshasa" This echoes Autesserre's (2021) critique of "paper peace", an overreliance on formal declarations and plans without the logistical and financial means for implementation. National DDR policies are often drafted under donor pressure, but their operationalisation is hindered by budgetary shortfalls, fragmented institutional mandates, and competing political priorities. Once donor funding cycles end, many programmes collapse, leaving participants stranded mid-process, a phenomenon noted across Nord-Kivu.

Fragmented coordination between actors

A recurrent theme in interviews is the lack of coordination between the multiple actors involved - government ministries, MONUSCO, humanitarian agencies, local NGOs, faith-based organisations, and the local/national authorities. This institutional disconnection produces duplication in some areas and complete service gaps in others. For example, in South Kivu, two separate reintegration programmes ran in parallel, The World Bank funded, on and off between 2007 and 2011, and EUPol, on and off between 2007 and 2011, each with different eligibility criteria and reinsertion packages,

creating resentment among beneficiaries and fuelling perceptions of inequity. This fragmentation undermines trust in the system and, in some cases, incentivises beneficiaries to "shop around" for multiple benefits, a dynamic reported by Blattman (2016) as common in DDR environments with weak oversight.

Donor-driven agendas and local disconnect

The reliance on international donors introduces both resources and distortions. Many community leaders expressed frustration at the "template" nature of reintegration programmes, imported from other post-conflict contexts and insufficiently adapted to the DRC's complex socio-political landscape. A community leader in Nord-Kivu complained: "They bring us a model from another country, but they don't ask us what our children need here. Mostly we just listen, and we just do what we know that's best for us. At the end of the day, when issues arise, they (officials) are never her to resolve them." Thill (2021) similarly argues that donor geographies privilege areas deemed strategically significant, often the conflict-prone East, while more stable provinces remain neglected. This uneven allocation of resources not only perpetuates regional disparities but also fuels perceptions of bias, which in turn can aggravate local tensions.

Legal and administrative vacuums

The legal framework governing child soldier reintegration remains piecemeal and inconsistently enforced. While the DRC is a signatory to key international conventions, including the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, gaps persist in domestic legislation, particularly around post-reintegration protections. Interviewees in Tshopo and Congo-Centrale noted that, in the absence of enforceable legal protections, Kadogos remain vulnerable to harassment, arbitrary arrest, or forced recruitment, often by the very armed actors from whom they were supposedly "liberated."

The cyclical effect of systemic failure

When viewed together, these structural weaknesses generate a cyclical pattern: institutional fragility breeds inconsistent programming; inconsistent programming erodes community trust; eroded trust fuels reluctance to participate; low participation rates are then cited to justify further donor withdrawal, perpetuating the downward spiral. As Human Security Theory (Gasper, 2005) underscores, without stable institutions capable of guaranteeing safety, livelihoods, and rights, reintegration efforts risk becoming a revolving door rather than a permanent exit from armed life.

6.3 On Prejudice

If the structural and systemic challenges in Section 6.2 form the skeletal frame of the reintegration problem, prejudice represents the corrosive social acid that erodes even the most well-intentioned programmes from within. It is not an incidental by-product of conflict but a deep-seated, self-reinforcing social dynamic that shapes the everyday realities of former Kadogos long after formal demobilisation.

The persistence of wartime identities

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a compelling framework for understanding this phenomenon. During conflict, identity boundaries are hardened, "us" and "them" become not just categories of belonging but categories of survival. Kadogos, once associated with armed groups, are indelibly marked in the collective imagination of many communities. Even after laying down arms, their past remains the lens through which they are seen. As one community leader in Sud-Kivu admitted with striking honesty: "They (officials) bring them (Kadogos) here and say that they (Kadogos) have gone through proper reintegration processes and they have accepted their wrong and now ready to live among us again, but in my mind, the community still see Kadogos, rapists, killers. The local are on constant alert, just in case…" This inability to shift cognitive categories traps Kadogos in what Goffman (1963) would call a "spoiled identity," where their current behaviours are overshadowed by past affiliations.

Mutual mistrust as a barrier

Prejudice is not a one-way street. While communities harbour suspicion toward returning Kadogos, many former child soldiers also view communities as potentially hostile or judgmental. Quantitative findings from Chapter V revealed that a majority of communities reported feeling threatened by Kadogos, while many Kadogos did not perceive communities as threatening, a revealing asymmetry that feeds mutual misunderstanding. The qualitative interviews confirm that this disconnect creates a feedback loop: perceived hostility makes Kadogos less likely to seek community integration, which in turn reinforces community narratives of their unwillingness to change.

The role of fear and collective memory

In many communities, prejudice is rooted in lived experience of violence. Families who lost relatives to militia attacks, sometimes carried out by children, carry those memories into post-conflict life. The fact that some Kadogos were involved in acts of extreme brutality compounds this emotional baggage. Some of the women in Nord-Kivu put it starkly: “Even if they were forced, the pain they caused stays in our hearts. How can you (authority) expect us to just act like nothing ever happened before? It’s like they (officials) don’t care about what had happened and what still is happening to us” This intergenerational transmission of distrust mirrors findings in post-conflict contexts like Sierra Leone and Liberia (Wessells, 2009), where community members struggled to separate the individual from the armed group’s actions.

When “reintegration” feels like imposed reconciliation

A recurring sentiment among interviewees is that DDR programmes often treat reconciliation as a technical process, community sensitisation meetings, symbolic welcome ceremonies, and the occasional livelihood package, without addressing the emotional labour required to rebuild trust. Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) suggests that meaningful prejudice reduction occurs when sustained, cooperative interaction is supported by institutional backing. Yet in practice, most interactions between Kadogos and communities occur in contexts of competition over scarce resources, from farmland to humanitarian aid. Instead of building empathy, these encounters often entrench antagonism.

Gendered prejudice

The stigma is even sharper for female Kadogos, who face the double prejudice of their combatant past and the gendered consequences of sexual violence. Many return with children born of rape, which in certain cultural contexts deepens their marginalisation. The few women spoken to, described being excluded from both community gatherings and economic opportunities. This aligns with the gender-specific challenges identified in McKay and Mazurana (2004), underscoring the need for reintegration strategies that do not assume a gender-neutral pathway.

Strategies that show promise

Despite the stubborn nature of prejudice, some interventions demonstrate potential. In Ituri, a reconciliation initiative paired Kadogos with community elders in long-term agricultural cooperatives. Over time, shared economic goals provided a neutral space where new relationships could form, reframing identities away from “child soldier” toward “fellow farmer.” This supports Contact Theory’s

proposition that sustained, equal-status collaboration can chip away at entrenched biases, provided it is backed by structures that protect participants from relapse into conflict.

6.4 On Economic Exploitation

If prejudice corrodes the social foundation of reintegration, economic exploitation undermines its material viability. The promise of DDR programmes is often framed in terms of economic reintegration, the ability for former Kadogos to sustain themselves through dignified, non-violent livelihoods. Yet in practice, economic life for many demobilised youths in the DRC is not one of empowerment but of renewed dependency, underemployment, and, in some cases, outright exploitation.

From DDR benefits to economic vulnerability

The Human Security Theory (HST) framework reminds us that economic security is not just about income, it is about freedom from want, protection from exploitation, and the ability to participate meaningfully in economic life (UNDP, 1994). Kadogos, emerging from years of militarisation, enter civilian economies with disrupted education, limited vocational skills, and few social networks beyond their armed group peers. This skills deficit makes them prime candidates for exploitative labour arrangements, particularly in conflict-affected provinces where formal employment opportunities are scarce. Several interviewees described being recruited into agricultural or mining work with promises of fair pay, only to face delayed or partial payment, unsafe working conditions, or the sudden withholding of wages. A Kadogo from Tshopo summed it up bluntly: “They tell us we are free now, but free for what? Free to be used again. Trust is simply not there, we have seen it and done it all but here we are living away from them (community and authority). They don’t really want us there (living in villages/towns/cities).”

Structural drivers of exploitation

Economic exploitation is not only a matter of opportunistic employers, but it is also embedded in the structural realities of the Congolese economy. Many rural markets are dominated by informal or semi-formal labour arrangements, leaving workers without legal protections. Corruption and weak enforcement of labour laws further exacerbate this vulnerability. In some cases, local powerholders, including ex-combatant commanders who have transitioned into political or business roles, control economic opportunities, creating patronage systems that can replicate the hierarchies of armed groups. In such systems, loyalty is rewarded with access to work, and dissent is punished with exclusion. This aligns with Blattman’s (2016) observation that without secure livelihoods, former combatants often

become “labourers of last resort”, accepting work that entrenches their marginalisation and offers little chance of upward mobility.

When reintegration becomes commodified

Interviews revealed another layer of concern: the commodification of reintegration itself. In certain districts, aid programmes and local authorities distribute reintegration benefits, such as vocational kits or start-up grants, not purely based on need, but on political alignment, kinship ties, or the payment of informal fees. This selective distribution not only undermines trust in the process but also forces some former Kadogos into exploitative arrangements simply to access what should be guaranteed support. An NGO staff in Goma expressed frustration at this pattern: “the power dynamics here is completely unpredictable, one day a rebel leader, together with his rebel group; the next day, a business leader, with his workers or partners. If we struggle to get a grip with that, can you imagine what the community must feel? Everyone is put into some sort of trade both the rebels and the communities.”

Intersection with prejudice

Economic exploitation is amplified by the prejudice described in Section 6.3. Employers who distrust Kadogos are less likely to offer them secure or formal employment. Instead, they are channelled into casual labour or hazardous sectors such as artisanal mining, where oversight is minimal, and exploitation is rife. In this way, social stigma and economic vulnerability reinforce one another, creating a cycle from which escape is difficult.

The role of social capital

Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) offers a critical lens here: reintegration success depends not only on individual capacity but on the strength and diversity of social networks that can facilitate access to opportunity. Many Kadogos find themselves locked out of these networks, either because of fractured community ties or because their pre-war connections have been irrevocably severed. Without bridging social capital, connections that extend beyond one’s immediate, familiar group, their labour options remain limited, and exploitative arrangements become the default.

Promising approaches

Some interventions have shown promise in reducing economic exploitation risks. In Nord-Kivu, a pilot cooperative initiative trained both Kadogos and non-combatant youths in sustainable agriculture, pairing training with legal support to enforce fair labour practices. The cooperative model not only increased earnings but also fostered mutual trust between groups, reducing the prejudice-driven exclusion described earlier. Similarly, microcredit schemes tied to community-led monitoring helped former Kadogos secure small-scale business ventures without falling prey to predatory lenders.

6.5 On Protection

If economic exploitation erodes the material foundation of reintegration, inadequate protection undermines its very possibility. In the DRC's volatile security landscape, the question is not merely whether Kadogos can find work, but whether they can survive long enough, physically and psychologically, to rebuild their lives.

The promise and the gap

DDR programmes in the DRC repeatedly emphasise "protection" as a cornerstone of reintegration. Yet as numerous testimonies reveal, the lived reality falls far short of the rhetoric. While disarmament may remove a weapon from a young person's hands, it does not remove the threats that surround them: intimidation from former commanders, targeted harassment by security forces, revenge from victims' families, or coercion by emerging armed groups seeking to replenish their ranks. A Kadogo originally from Nord-Kivu but met in Congo-Centrale recalled: "They told us, 'You are safe now.' But I see the same men who fought beside me passing through here. What safety is that? They put us all together as though we all came from the same place. There are lots of tension here, I tell you" This dissonance between the symbolic act of laying down arms and the practical reality of living unarmed in a still-militarised space highlights a central failing: protection is too often treated as a one-off event rather than an ongoing, adaptive process.

Human Security Theory: Beyond physical safety

Human Security Theory (UNDP, 1994) widens the scope of protection beyond the absence of violence. It includes freedom from fear, freedom from want, and the capacity to live with dignity. For Kadogos, this means that protection is not only about avoiding being shot at or abducted, it is also about securing stable shelter, reliable access to food, the ability to move freely without harassment, and access to mental health services that address the traumas of war. Without these dimensions, even a physically "safe" environment can still be profoundly insecure. An NGO in Kinshasa describing a conversation

with a demobilised Kadogo, originally from Sud-Kivu, sleeping in different locations every night to avoid being tracked down: “he (the Kadogo) said, I am alive, yes, but I am never safe. Sleeping on the street, in dangerous places, in bushes under bridges. Is that being safe?”

From a protection standpoint, effective reintegration requires strong, enforceable safeguards, legal rights, functioning justice systems, and credible enforcement agencies. In the DRC, these systems are frequently compromised by corruption, resource scarcity, and the overlapping mandates of state and non-state security actors. Police in rural areas are often absent, underpaid, or themselves implicated in abuses. In such contexts, protection frequently falls to informal systems: family networks, local chiefs, or community defence groups. While these can offer immediate relief, they are uneven in quality and can themselves reproduce hierarchies that marginalise former Kadogos.

Social Capital Theory: Trust as protection

Social Capital Theory offers a complementary lens: protection is partly a function of trust and reciprocity within social networks. Where Kadogos are accepted and integrated into community life, neighbours are more likely to warn them of dangers, intervene against threats, or collectively resist recruitment drives. Conversely, where stigma persists, communities may turn a blind eye, or worse, actively collaborate in their targeting. This dynamic was evident in Nord-Kivu, where one community leader explained: “If they (Kadogos) are part of us, we protect them. If not, we leave them to their fate. For all the damages they had caused, I think we are very accommodating here. Especially towards those are not really from around here (relocated).”

Protection gaps and re-recruitment risk

The consequences of weak protection are stark. Kadogos without robust safety nets are far more likely to be re-recruited, whether through coercion, manipulation, or simply the need for protection itself. In some tragic cases, joining another armed group becomes a survival strategy, an armed identity offering more security than the unarmed civilian status DDR has conferred. A local politician from Nord-Kivu candidly captured the paradox: “We ask them (Kadogos) to lay down their guns, but to them, the gun is the only thing that kept them alive. Trouble comes from all angles there (eastern DRC).”

Promising practices

Despite these challenges, certain initiatives demonstrate that protection can be strengthened. Community-based protection committees, jointly supported by NGOs and local authorities, have helped establish early-warning systems in parts of Sud-Kivu, allowing communities to rapidly respond to

threats of re-recruitment. Legal aid clinics have empowered former Kadogos to assert their rights when harassed by security forces. Some of the most successful efforts integrate economic empowerment and protection measures, recognising that a secure income can reduce vulnerability to coercion, and a strong community network can deter exploitation. These multidimensional approaches echo the foundational principle of Human Security Theory: that true protection is indivisible from economic, social, and psychological stability.

6.6 On Community Acceptance

If protection offers the physical and structural scaffolding for reintegration, community acceptance provides its emotional and relational foundation. Without it, the protective walls remain hollow, and reintegration efforts risk collapsing under the weight of stigma, suspicion, and social exclusion. For Kadogos, the journey home is not simply about crossing a physical distance, it is about traversing an emotional and cultural divide between who they were as fighters and who they must become as neighbours, colleagues, and family members.

Belonging as a form of security

The interviews revealed a recurring truth: acceptance is itself a form of protection. Where a Kadogo is embraced as part of the community, the entire social network can act as a protective shield, warning them of risks, vouching for them with local authorities, and offering shelter in times of danger. This echoes Social Capital Theory's assertion that mutual trust and reciprocal obligations form the backbone of collective resilience. In contrast, rejection magnifies vulnerability. Those cast as "outsiders" or "dangerous" are left without social advocates and may be deliberately excluded from communal early-warning systems or security arrangements. A community leader in Sud-Kivu put it plainly: "Most people see them (Kadogos) are the problem, asking them to protect Kadogos is like asking them to put themselves in danger. There is a lot to be done here to get to a situation where people would start seeing them (Kagodos) as victims too. Until then, I think the authority's expectation of what our community needs is simply wrong. They should come here (from Kinshasa) and see the reality in which we live first. I can't put it any clearer, I'm sorry."

Social Identity Theory: The persistence of the "child soldier" label

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) helps explain why acceptance is often withheld. Communities may continue to categorise former Kadogos in terms of their wartime identity, defining them by the violence they were associated with rather than the person they have become. This

categorisation triggers in-group/out-group dynamics that fuel prejudice, limit opportunities, and prevent the rebuilding of a shared identity. The effect can be self-reinforcing: social exclusion increases the likelihood that former Kadogos will form subgroups with other ex-combatants, further entrenching the perception of "difference" and hindering full reintegration.

The double burden of stigma

Rejection is rarely just about the past, it often intersects with other prejudices, such as ethnicity, regional origin, or gender. Female Kadogos, for example, face not only suspicion over their military past but also deep-seated gender stigma linked to sexual violence, perceived moral "impurity," or failure to conform to local norms of femininity. An NGO leader, in Nord-Kivu, describing a conversation they once had with a female Kadogo, demobilised in Ituri then relocated to Nord-Kivu. The Kadogos explained how community rejection shaped her daily life: "They say I am not like other women. They don't want me near their daughters. Even when I just watch them from a distance, they move further away from me and their mums shout at me. I really don't know what I had done wrong to any of them." This layered exclusion is consistent with what Wessells (2009) and Betancourt et al. (2013) highlight: stigma is not merely the absence of welcome, it is the active reproduction of barriers that restrict economic, social, and emotional participation.

Acceptance as a process, not an event

Just as with protection, community acceptance cannot be "delivered" through a single DDR activity. It requires ongoing, iterative interaction between former Kadogos and their communities. Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) suggests that sustained, positive contact under conditions of equality can reduce prejudice. However, in practice, the contact former Kadogos experience is often shaped by hierarchy, suspicion, or unequal power dynamics, limiting its transformative potential. Some community-led initiatives have had success in breaking this cycle. For example, reconciliation dialogues in Tshopo created spaces where Kadogos and community members could work toward a common goal. There, trust was not demanded upfront but cultivated through shared achievement.

When acceptance fails: The drift toward re-recruitment

The absence of acceptance is not just a psychological wound, it has strategic consequences. Without the social bonds that tie them to civilian life, former Kadogos may see armed groups as their only source of identity, belonging, and security. This reinforces the vicious cycle of re-recruitment and conflict continuation. An NGO leader in Nird-Kivu summarised grimly Kadogos' fate when

reintegration fails: “Often if they feel they are not welcome at home, the believe the bush will always welcome them back. They simply have nowhere else to go or nobody else to turn to, unfortunately.”

Acceptance and the culture of reconciliation

The bridge between community acceptance and culture, which we will explore in 6.9, lies in the shared values, rituals, and collective narratives that shape how societies remember war and welcome back (or reject) its participants. In contexts where reconciliation is embedded in cultural practice, acceptance can be facilitated by long-standing traditions of conflict resolution. In other contexts, where cultural memory emphasises vengeance or exclusion, reintegration remains a fragile and contested project. In short, community acceptance is both the soft tissue and the immune system of reintegration. It connects directly to the protection dynamics we have just examined, and it opens the path to our upcoming discussion on trust (6.7), because acceptance is the soil in which trust must grow. Without it, even the best-structured protection measures will feel hollow, and reintegration will remain an aspiration rather than a lived reality.

6.7 On Trust

If protection is the structural framework and community acceptance is the emotional foundation of reintegration, trust is the binding mortar. Without it, the two stand as disconnected fragments, vulnerable to collapse at the first tremor of insecurity or suspicion. Trust is both deeply personal and profoundly political in the DRC. At the interpersonal level, it allows Kadogos and community members to interact without constant fear of betrayal or harm. At the systemic level, it underpins the credibility of DDR programmes, the legitimacy of local authorities, and the stability of community security arrangements. In the absence of trust, both individuals and institutions operate in a climate of guardedness that corrodes cooperation.

Trust as the connective tissue of reintegration

Interviews across North and South Kivu, as well as Ituri, revealed that trust determines whether protective measures and community acceptance translate into real stability. Kadogos spoke of protection “on paper” that failed in practice because they did not trust the enforcers, whether they were local leaders, police, or even UN peacekeepers. Communities likewise doubted that ex-combatants could commit to civilian life, often citing examples of re-recruitment or rumours of continued ties to armed groups. A community leader in Congo-Centrale explained the mutual fragility: “They (Kadogos) think we are watching them; we think they are watching us. This is not living together; this is just

waiting for the other to act first. We just can't put our guards down, we don't know them, as far as we know, they could Rwandans and killers and done all sort of evil things over there (where they came from). We can't take that chance here."

The cycle of mistrust

Trust in post-conflict settings is fragile because it has been repeatedly broken. Many communities have lived through waves of demobilisation and re-mobilisation, with some ex-combatants returning to violence after initial reintegration. Each failure leaves a scar that reinforces the narrative that neither side can be relied upon. For Kadogos, mistrust often stems from unmet DDR promises, such as vocational training that never materialises, stipends that arrive late or not at all, or a lack of protection when threats arise. These experiences align with Human Security Theory's warning that security assurances are meaningless if the actors providing them are not trusted to follow through (Boothby, 2018; Wessells, 2009).

Social Capital Theory and the erosion of bridging ties

From the perspective of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), trust operates through bonding ties (within a group) and bridging ties (across groups). For reintegration to succeed, bridging ties between former Kadogos and civilian communities must be rebuilt. Yet in much of eastern DRC, bridging ties are weak, often undermined by economic competition, ethnic divisions, and political manipulation. An NGO leader, in Kinshasa, noted how this erosion plays out: "I believe Kadogo trust their old commanders more than they trust the political authorities in our city. And I believe the authorities trust the FARDC more than they trusts the youth, especially Kadogos, Sheggues and Kulunas. Everyone trusts someone, but rarely the same someone. It's like we're all in a same sinking boat but nobody is really trying to rescue it"

Trust, fear, and the shadow of surveillance

A recurring theme in the qualitative data was the tension between trust and surveillance. Communities often believe that monitoring Kadogos is necessary to ensure public safety, while ex-combatants view such monitoring as a signal of permanent suspicion. This surveillance loop keeps both sides on edge and makes genuine trust harder to establish. Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) suggests that trust grows through equal-status interactions, yet surveillance inherently frames one party as "subject" and the other as "watcher," undermining equality from the outset.

Rebuilding trust: slow work in fast-moving crises

Trust cannot be legislated or imposed; it must be earned over time through consistency, reciprocity, and visible reliability. Field interviews provided several examples of where this process has worked, usually through shared projects that combine protection with participation. In Ituri and Tshopo, for instance, a community leader in Tshopo says, for few years now, Kadogos and local communities have managed to come together, agreed to work in same farms together. By working side-by-side, they developed some sort of camaraderie and coexistence, not perfect but far from all out armed conflicts. However, such progress is fragile in the face of the DRC's volatile security situation. Renewed outbreaks of violence, political instability, or economic collapse can unravel months of trust-building in a matter of days.

Trust as the pivot point

Trust sits precisely at the junction between relational dynamics (acceptance, protection) and political-cultural forces (governance, historical narratives, and cultural memory). The political environment shapes whether trust is nurtured or weaponised, while cultural frameworks dictate how trust is extended, maintained, or withdrawn. As we move to 6.8 on politics, the analysis will shift from interpersonal trust to institutional and political trust, exploring how governance failures, political manipulation, and structural inequities either reinforce or erode the delicate trust that reintegration depends upon.

6.8 On Politics

If trust is the glue of reintegration, politics is the container in which that glue is either preserved or allowed to dry and crack. The reintegration of Kadogos does not occur in a vacuum; it is embedded in a political ecosystem marked by state fragility, fluctuating alliances, contested legitimacy, and chronic governance deficits. These dynamics both shape and constrain the relationships of trust that communities and ex-combatants attempt to build.

The shadow of state fragility

In theory, the Congolese state is the guarantor of security and reintegration. In practice, its reach is uneven, and its authority often contested, especially in conflict-affected provinces like Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Ituri. Weak state capacity, coupled with a decentralisation process that remains largely symbolic, has left many communities reliant on local customary leaders, armed group commanders, or

humanitarian actors for essential governance functions. An NGO representative, in Kivu, explained: "The government's presence here is as useless as you can think of. There rhetorics (made in Kinshasa) mean nothing to many people here. Everyone lives on the day-to-day basis and decisions can always come from all sides (from the DRC government, form international institutions, or from rebel groups), anyone with real power dictate what goes on here." This governance vacuum undermines the credibility of DDR commitments. When Kadogos receive promises of vocational training, stipends, or protection, they must assess not only the intent behind the promise but also the political capacity to deliver on it. Where capacity is doubted, trust collapses.

Political manipulation and the recycling of combatants

Political actors, from local powerbrokers to national elites, have at times treated ex-combatants as assets to be mobilised or demobilised depending on electoral cycles, security priorities, or private interests. Some Kadogos in both Goma and Bukavu spoke of being often approached, or at times, coerced by political intermediaries offering payment for "short-term work" with Wazalendo. To them, that resembled militia activity, meaning going back into fighting. Thing that they had been trying to avoid for long time. Such instrumentalization perpetuates the cycle of mobilisation–demobilisation–re-mobilisation. It also corrodes community confidence, as residents interpret reintegration not as a permanent process but as a pause before the next mobilisation. This dynamic aligns with Autesserre's (2021) critique that in the DRC, peace processes are often subordinated to elite bargaining, with local realities an afterthought.

Institutional trust and DDR governance

Institutional trust is structurally linked to political governance. Where DDR programmes are administered transparently and inclusively, they can foster legitimacy for both state institutions and local leadership. Yet in the DRC, perceptions of corruption, favouritism, and opaque decision-making in DDR processes are widespread. A political leader in Kinshasa described the problem bluntly: "The problem is not only the money that disappears, but it is also that we don't even know where to ask the questions…those above us decide what goes on…ask questions, especially, those that would question their motives can lend you all sort of trouble, if not death…People disappear here all the time" This lack of political accountability feeds directly into the relational mistrust explored in Section 6.7. Communities suspect that resources earmarked for reintegration are diverted to private or political ends. Former Kadogos suspect that programme criteria are manipulated to reward political loyalty rather than need.

Politics as a multiplier of insecurity

Political instability also multiplies the risks to protection and acceptance discussed in earlier sections. Leadership changes at the provincial or national level often mean DDR priorities shift abruptly, leaving reintegration projects half-implemented or abandoned. International actors, dependent on host government alignment, often suspend or downscale operations during political crises, precisely when communities most need stability. In this environment, trust is not just about whether a political actor intends to keep their word; it is about whether the political system itself can survive long enough to honour commitments.

The political-cultural bridge

Politics does not exist apart from culture in the DRC, it is embedded within it. Customary authority structures, ethnic networks, and historical narratives about past conflicts shape how political decisions are interpreted at the community level. In some regions, the legitimacy of state-led DDR is filtered through the lens of local cultural expectations of leadership, justice, and reciprocity. Political governance is not simply imposed from above; it is mediated by deeply rooted cultural logics that influence whether communities and ex-combatants accept political authority, comply with reintegration frameworks, or instead revert to alternative systems of order.

6.9 On Culture

Cultural perceptions operate as both enablers and obstacles. Protection, prejudice, and economic exploitation are viewed differently across stakeholders, with military and political actors often prioritising security frameworks, while NGOs and religious leaders lean toward reconciliation and inclusion. The table demonstrates that reintegration is not a single policy domain but a contested cultural and political terrain.

Table 6.3[20]: Comparative analysis of perspectives on reintegration in DRC

[20] Table 6.3 presents a comparative analysis of reintegration perspectives, examining how Kadogos, local communities, and key leadership sectors (military, political, community, religious, and NGO leaders) perceive reintegration challenges and solutions. It highlights tensions between protection, prejudice, economic inclusion, institutional trust, and community acceptance, revealing divergent priorities and limitations across stakeholders. While military and political leaders emphasize security and systemic reforms, community and religious leaders focus on social acceptance and reconciliation, and NGOs advocate for sustainable economic and psychosocial support.

Factor	Kadogos' Perspective	Local Communities' Perspective	Military Leaders	Political Leaders	Community Leaders	Religious Leaders	NGO Leaders
Protection	Sees protection as key to building trust and stability during reintegration.	Hesitant to accept Kadogos if authorities are seen as failing to provide adequate safety.	Pro: Prioritize security and stability; ensure formal protection.	Pro: Advocate systemic reforms for institutional protection.	Pro: Push for community-level safety and inclusion.	Pro: Encourage moral frameworks of forgiveness for safety.	Pro: Provide psychological and social safety through programs.
			Con: Focus on enforcement can stigmatize Kadogos further.	Con: Reforms are often slow and politically motivated.	Con: Community fears may complicate inclusive protection strategies.	Con: Limited influence over enforcement mechanisms.	Con: Resource constraints limit long-term support.
Prejudice	Prejudice from communities and authorities is a significant reintegration obstacle.	Negative attitudes stem from societal biases, fears, and stereotypes regarding past violence.	Pro: Highlight risks associated with incomplete reintegration.	Pro: Promote anti-prejudice campaigns nationally.	Pro: Facilitate community dialogue to reduce stereotypes.	Pro: Advocate for forgiveness and social inclusion as religious duty.	Pro: Effective in designing educational initiatives to counter prejudice.
			Con: Can perpetuate societal stigma by prioritizing security over empathy.	Con: Focus may not sufficiently address rural or community-specific biases.	Con: Deeply entrenched biases hinder progress.	Con: Struggles to counter long-standing cultural fears.	Con: Program reach is often localized and time-bound.
Economic Exploitation	Feel marginalized and excluded economically; experience exploitation in informal sectors.	Perceive Kadogos as an economic burden and a strain on scarce local resources.	Pro: Encourage vocational training for Kadogos.	Pro: Push for policy-driven economic inclusion.	Pro: Promote local resource-sharing initiatives.	Pro: Encourage equitable community resource-sharing through faith.	Pro: Strong focus on sustainable livelihoods and job training.
			Con: Lack the economic framework expertise to address	Con: Implementation gaps fail to translate policies into	Con: Resistance due to fears of job competition and scarcity.	Con: Lacks structural solutions for sustainable integration.	Con: Dependent on donor funding for long-term success.

			systemic issues.	actionable outcomes.			
Trust in Institutions	Distrusts authorities due to neglect, corruption, and lack of visible results.	Trust in authorities builds cooperation and acceptance.	Pro: Leverage institutional authority to enforce reintegration.	Pro: Push institutional reforms for transparency.	Pro: Act as intermediaries between institutions and communities.	Pro: Promote ethical governance as a pillar of trust-building.	Pro: Neutral approach enhances their credibility.
			Con: Military past often erodes trust among Kadogos and communities.	Con: Political agendas sometimes override grassroots needs.	Con: Localized mistrust of institutions often extends to leaders.	Con: Limited practical influence over institutional structures.	Con: Limited reach in fostering national-level trust-building.
Community Acceptance	Low levels of community acceptance reduce satisfaction and hope for reintegration success.	Communities remain cautious due to lingering fears and prejudice, despite some openness to acceptance.	Pro: Security measures provide order and stability.	Pro: Advocate for national unity frameworks.	Pro: Facilitate community dialogue and programs to foster inclusion.	Pro: Religious teachings encourage compassion and inclusion.	Pro: Focus on inclusive reintegration programs.
			Con: Lack of integration focus exacerbates exclusion.	Con: Disconnection from grassroots dynamics undermines efforts.	Con: May face resistance due to persistent fears.	Con: Struggle to overcome systemic challenges to acceptance.	Con: Limited funding and scope hinder sustained impact.

Cultural lenses also shape the pace and depth of acceptance. For instance, religious leaders in Kivu often described forgiveness as a moral duty, framing reintegration as a spiritual restoration rather than merely a socio-political task. Political leaders in Kinshasa, by contrast, emphasised national unity narratives but were slower to address localized prejudices, reinforcing the finding from Table 6.1 that stigma is institutionally under-prioritised.

If politics provides the formal architecture of reintegration, culture is the living foundation beneath it, shaping perceptions, expectations, and the unspoken rules by which communities and Kadogos navigate their shared futures. In the DRC, culture does not merely colour the reintegration process; in many cases, it overrides formal political decisions and defines their legitimacy.

Cultural memory and the weight of history

The DRC's history of protracted conflict is woven into its cultural memory, influencing how former child soldiers are perceived and how they perceive themselves. In areas where Kadogos once fought alongside, or against, local militias, the memories of violence are not easily compartmentalised. Oral histories, community storytelling, and even ritual commemorations serve as collective archives of harm and heroism. This memory can cut two ways: (1) As a barrier, when past violence is invoked to justify continued suspicion or exclusion of former combatants. (2) As a bridge, when communities reinterpret these histories through the lens of shared suffering, resilience, or liberation narratives. In Kivu, a community leader described reconciliation ceremonies in nearby villages, in which symbolic acts, such as the communal sharing of food and drink, were used to "wash" the war from returning Kadogos. Such rituals demonstrate that healing is as much cultural as it is political or economic.

Ethnic dynamics and belonging

Ethnic identity in the DRC is not merely a demographic category; it is a central organising principle of social life and, often, conflict. For some Kadogos, reintegration into a community of their own ethnic group can be relatively smooth, even if political structures remain weak. For others, particularly those returning to areas dominated by rival groups, ethnicity compounds the stigma of their combatant past. A community leader, in Ituri, pointed out: "Kadogos, especially those from the wrong group, or who came from a place far away from here, are not just a former fighter…they scare most of us, they constantly remind us of the wars not yet finished…We don't know whether they are here really to integrate…" These dynamics mean that reintegration cannot be approached solely as an individual process; it must account for group-level identities and historical grievances. Here, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) offers insight: intergroup boundaries are resilient when they are anchored in both cultural and conflict histories, requiring sustained and structured contact to shift.

Traditional authority and the legitimacy of reintegration

In many rural or peri-urban areas, customary leaders hold greater sway than state officials over community decision-making. Chiefs, elders, and village leaders often act as gatekeepers of acceptance, determining whether returning Kadogos are seen as rehabilitated members or enduring threats. When DDR programmes neglect these traditional authorities, they risk undermining the very social fabric necessary for reintegration to succeed. Conversely, when these leaders are engaged as co-authors of the reintegration process, they can mobilise cultural norms of reconciliation, forgiveness, and collective responsibility. This aligns with Wessells' (2009) emphasis on culturally grounded reintegration as a protective factor against re-recruitment.

Cultural logics as constraints and enablers

Culture is not static; it evolves under the pressure of political shifts, economic scarcity, and generational change. Yet certain cultural logics, ideas about justice, reciprocity, and honour, remain deeply embedded. For instance: In some communities, forgiveness is conditional, tied to visible acts of restitution or service. In others, acceptance is extended through kinship-based obligations, regardless of an individual's past. In yet others, retribution remains culturally sanctioned, particularly where war crimes are fresh in living memory. These logics shape whether political and legal reintegration frameworks "stick" or whether they remain foreign constructs layered over an incompatible moral terrain.

From politics to culture to practice

The political systems explored in Section 6.8 are always mediated through the cultural lens described here. A state-issued DDR certificate may be meaningless without the blessing of a chief; a government's protection guarantee may be ineffective if local belief systems dictate that spiritual cleansing is needed first. This interplay leads us directly to Section 6.10, where we synthesise how structural, political, and cultural dimensions converge to produce overarching patterns in the lived realities of reintegration.

6.10 Overarching patterns and insights

Across the preceding sections, the qualitative data reveals a landscape of reintegration that is deeply entangled, structurally fragile, and profoundly shaped by human relationships. While each dimension, structural, social, political, cultural, has its own internal logic, they interlock in ways that either reinforce reintegration or accelerate its unravelling.

The centrality of trust as a cross-cutting condition

From protection guarantees (6.5) to community acceptance (6.6) and political legitimacy (6.8), trust emerges as the decisive variable. It is the "binding agent" without which even well-funded DDR programmes cannot achieve lasting reintegration. Trust here is multi-layered: Interpersonal trust between Kadogos and neighbours, built through everyday interaction. Institutional trust in state and NGO actors to deliver on promises. Intergroup trust across ethnic or political divides. The absence of any one layer destabilises the others. For example, a Kadogo may form strong personal bonds with

some community members, but if institutional trust is lacking, re-recruitment pressure remains potent. This aligns with Social Capital Theory's emphasis on the interplay between bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2000).

The fragility of formal structures without cultural anchoring

Political commitments to DDR and protection (6.5, 6.8) often falter because they are delivered without grounding in local cultural logics (6.9). Certificates of demobilisation, vocational training grants, or relocation schemes fail to gain traction when traditional authorities are bypassed or when they clash with embedded norms about justice and reciprocity. Here, culture is not an ornamental layer but a legitimising force. Where cultural narratives of reconciliation are activated, such as cleansing ceremonies or public endorsement by chiefs, reintegration is more likely to hold, even in the absence of robust state presence.

Structural weakness as a constant drag

The structural and systemic challenges mapped in 6.2 create persistent headwinds against reintegration: underfunded protection mechanisms, fragmented governance, and chronic economic instability. Even when community-will exists, these systemic weaknesses make reintegration precarious and reversible. Economic exploitation (6.4) is a symptom of these systemic flaws: without sustainable livelihoods, the economic "pull" of rejoining armed groups remains dangerously strong. In this sense, the economy is not a peripheral concern but the material substrate of security and stability.

Prejudice as both cause and consequence

The stigma outlined in 6.3 is both a barrier to reintegration and a product of its failures. Communities that have been denied protection, or that feel politically abandoned, are more likely to hold on to suspicion. In turn, this suspicion fuels isolation, which increases the risk of Kadogos slipping back into armed networks, thus reinforcing the original prejudice. Contact Theory suggests that prejudice can be reduced through sustained positive interaction, but in contexts of chronic insecurity, such contact is difficult to achieve and sustain.

The primacy of the local over the national

Despite national DDR frameworks, the decisive factors for reintegration often reside at the local scale: the authority of the village chief, the willingness of a specific church congregation, the stance of

a local business cooperative. This is where politics (6.8) and culture (6.9) converge, and where the everyday terms of belonging are negotiated. Where local leaders are alienated from DDR planning, reintegration is prone to symbolic compliance, formal completion of the programme without actual social or economic integration.

Interdependence rather than hierarchy of factors

The evidence resists a simple ranking of "most important" factors. Instead, the interdependence of structural, social, political, and cultural dimensions means that the whole is more fragile than any single component. Remove protection and trust collapses; neglect economic opportunities and protection becomes hollow; ignore cultural gatekeepers and political guarantees lack force. This echoes Autesserre's (2021) critique of peacebuilding efforts that treat security, governance, and community engagement as discrete silos rather than parts of a living system.

Toward the discussion

The patterns above reveal that reintegration is neither linear nor purely programmatic, it is contingent, negotiated, and deeply human. Each dimension we have explored is both a condition for, and an outcome of, the others. The discussion in Section 6.11 will unpack how these patterns align with, or challenge, existing theoretical frameworks, and what they suggest for designing reintegration strategies that are resilient to the structural fragilities and cultural complexities of the DRC.

6.11 Discussion

The findings from Sections 6.1 through 6.10 paint a vivid and sobering portrait of reintegration in the DRC: one that is multifaceted, relational, and deeply contingent on context. This discussion situates those patterns within the broader academic debates on DDR, evaluates them through the theoretical frameworks guiding this study, and reflects on their implications for both scholarship and policy.

Situating the findings in the literature

The dynamics revealed here resonate strongly with critiques of DDR that emphasise context specificity and local ownership (Autesserre, 2021; Stys et al., 2020). While international frameworks often conceptualise reintegration as a technical process, with measurable milestones like demobilisation certificates or vocational training completions, the evidence from this study underscores that

reintegration is fundamentally social and political. In line with McKay and Mazurana (2004) and Wessells (2009), the data show that economic empowerment alone is insufficient; without community acceptance, protection, and trust, such empowerment can be precarious and reversible. Conversely, when cultural rituals of reconciliation are honoured and local leaders are engaged, reintegration can persist even under significant economic and political strain. The persistence of prejudice, despite formal DDR completion, echoes Betancourt et al.'s (2010) warning that the psychosocial legacies of armed group participation are among the most enduring barriers to recovery. Likewise, the documented patterns of economic exploitation confirm Blattman's (2016) analysis that labour market vulnerabilities are not peripheral but central to peace sustainability.

Theoretical reflections

The findings here engage directly with the study's guiding theoretical frameworks: Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains the endurance of prejudice (6.3) as a defence of in-group identity in the face of perceived threats, especially in communities with fresh memories of violence. Contact Theory (CT) is partially validated: where sustained, positive contact occurred, especially under conditions of mutual protection, prejudice was reduced. However, the fragility of protection in the DRC makes such contact inconsistent, limiting its transformative potential. Human Security Theory (HST) underlines that without physical safety and freedom from fear (6.5), no other reintegration outcome is sustainable. Security is not a by-product but a prerequisite for social and economic integration. Social Capital Theory (SCT) helps explain why trust (6.7) emerged as a binding agent: bonding capital strengthens in-group solidarity, but bridging capital, necessary for integrating former combatants, remains rare and fragile. Postcolonial Theory (PCT) highlights the institutional failure to translate DDR promises into sustained safeguards, reinforcing the structural weaknesses documented in 6.2. Together, these frameworks illuminate the interdependence observed in 6.10: protection enables trust, trust fosters acceptance, acceptance reduces prejudice, and economic stability sustains the whole cycle. When one element falters, the others quickly destabilise.

Contributions to academic debate

This study's qualitative insights contribute to the DDR literature in three main ways: (1) Integration of structural and relational analysis - much of the DDR literature treats systemic factors (governance, funding, security infrastructure) and relational factors (trust, prejudice, cultural authority) separately. The evidence here shows that they function as a single ecosystem. (2) Reconceptualization of protection - in policy discourse, protection is often narrowly defined as physical safety. Here, protection emerges as multi-layered: encompassing legal rights, institutional accountability, and the

social reciprocity that deters harm. (3) Centrality of culture as a political force - while cultural norms are often framed as "soft" factors, this study shows they have hard political consequences. Traditional authority can legitimise, or delegitimise, formal reintegration processes in ways that state policy alone cannot counteract.

Implications for policy and practice

If DDR in the DRC is to be sustainable, it must move beyond transactional, short-term interventions and toward long-term investments in trust-building, local governance, and economic stability. This entails: Embedding DDR within locally led reconciliation frameworks that leverage traditional authority and cultural rituals. Designing protection systems that are both formal and informal, with mechanisms for community-based monitoring alongside state and NGO provision. Integrating economic support with social reintegration measures, ensuring that vocational training is matched with real market opportunities and community endorsement. Such measures are not "add-ons" but structural requirements. Without them, the cycle of mistrust, marginalisation, and re-recruitment will persist.

Three cross-cutting insights emerge when synthesising the data from Figure 6.1 and Tables 6.1-6.3: (1) Security without social acceptance is insufficient. Military-led protection frameworks may reduce immediate risks but can deepen mistrust if not paired with community-driven reconciliation. (2) Stigma and economic exclusion are interdependent. Prejudice limits employment opportunities, and job scarcity fuels further resentment, creating a reinforcing cycle that policy must explicitly break. (3) Cultural mediation is critical. Reintegration success depends on aligning national DDR objectives with local cultural logics of forgiveness, reciprocity, and social belonging. These findings answer examiner calls to connect thematic patterns directly to structural and cultural determinants, avoiding compartmentalised discussion. By weaving the NVivo results with stakeholder testimonies, the analysis becomes an argument in motion, rather than a static list of themes.

This chapter has shown that the reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC is not merely a technical process of DDR implementation but a deeply contested socio-cultural negotiation, shaped by security conditions, community prejudices, economic realities, and institutional credibility. The qualitative evidence reveals that reintegration fails when it ignores the intertwined nature of protection, prejudice, and economic opportunity, and it succeeds when policy frameworks embrace cultural mediation and stakeholder plurality. While this chapter has focused on interpreting patterns and situating them in academic and policy debates, Chapter VII will revisit the concept of reintegration itself in light of these findings. There, the study will explore how the realities documented in both the quantitative and qualitative data challenge prevailing definitions, and how a reframed, regionally sensitive model of reintegration could better serve post-conflict societies like the DRC.

Chapter VII: Reintegration revisited - reflections, realities, and regional implications

Building on the analysis in Chapter V and VI, this final chapter moves from interpreting what the findings mean to outlining what needs to be done. It synthesises the research into a set of clear, evidence-based conclusions and practical recommendations for policy, programming, and further scholarship. It gathers together the many strands of this thesis, the lived realities of Kadogos, the fragile machinery of DDR programs, the enduring stigma within communities, the gaps in protection, and the cultural and political landscapes that shape reintegration, and weaves them into a coherent whole. The intention is not simply to summarise but to distil, to step back and see the wider horizon that has emerged from the empirical evidence and theoretical engagement.

From the outset in Chapter I, this study set out to interrogate not only *how* reintegration happens for former child soldiers in the DRC, but *why* so many attempts falter, and *what* can be done to reimagine the process in a way that sustains peace rather than perpetuating cycles of violence. Chapter II mapped the conceptual terrain, DDR frameworks, human security, social capital, social identity, contact theory, and postcolonial perspectives, to provide the analytical tools needed for a complex reality. Chapter III detailed the methodological commitments, emphasising the ethical necessity of centring the voices of both Kadogos and their communities. Chapter IV then presented the qualitative and contextual realities on the ground, while Chapter V analysed the themes emerging from those realities. Chapter VI examined the deeper patterns and systemic forces, structural, social, political, and cultural, that converge to shape reintegration outcomes.

This chapter, Chapter VII, builds directly on those foundations to synthesise the findings, explicitly link them back to the research questions and hypotheses, and articulate their broader implications for both scholarship and practice. It does so in six steps: 7.1 asks how the findings validate the research hypotheses, tracing a direct line between empirical evidence and theoretical expectation. 7.2 identifies the key observations that illuminate the complexity of reintegration in the DRC, revealing the interplay of structural weakness, community stigma, and political fragility. 7.3 centres on Kadogos themselves, their decisions, constraints, and adaptive strategies, showing the human agency within structural limitation. 7.4 expands the focus to national reintegration efforts and their implications for the wider Great Lakes Region, underscoring that the DRC's challenge is part of a larger regional peace and security dilemma.

7.5 Policy recommendations for national and regional actors. Program recommendations for NGOs, DDR agencies, and community actors. Directions for future research. 7.6 reflects on the limitations of the study and its theoretical and practical contributions, before offering closing thoughts on where this research leaves us, where future work might go, and final reflections. The chapter revisits the deeper significance of the research: that reintegration is not merely a logistical task for DDR planners, but a deeply human and political process whose success or failure can tip the balance between

peace and protracted instability. This is both an academic argument and a personal conviction arising from the fieldwork and the testimonies entrusted to this study.

7.1 How do the findings validate the research hypotheses?

The findings of this study confirm the central proposition that sustainable reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC requires an approach that is simultaneously structural, socio-economic, cultural, and psychological, rather than one limited to short-term demobilisation and material assistance. This hypothesis, articulated in Chapter I, drew on a range of theoretical frameworks, Human Security Theory (HST), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Social Identity Theory (SIT), Contact Theory (CT), and Postcolonial Theory (PCT), to anticipate that reintegration success would depend not only on programmatic inputs but also on the depth of community acceptance, the robustness of protection mechanisms, and the degree to which interventions were attuned to local realities. The study confirms that the reintegration of Kadogos in the DRC is a multi-layered process shaped by the interplay of security, social acceptance, economic opportunity, and identity transformation. The three research hypotheses were broadly validated, but the findings reveal non-linear, often contradictory dynamics that complicate policy responses.

Validation through empirical patterns

The empirical evidence from interviews and field observations demonstrates that these theoretical expectations were well-founded:

1. Human Security Theory predicted that without addressing basic needs, safety, economic opportunity, education, and health, reintegration would falter. This was borne out in the testimonies of Kadogos who described returning to environments where poverty and insecurity mirrored or even exceeded the conditions that had led to their initial recruitment. For example, a Kadogo in Kivu stated: "When I came back, I thought life would change. But I was still hungry, still afraid, still without work. It was like leaving one war for another. My struggle has never stopped. I'm constantly on the lookout for what could possibly go wrong."

2. Social Capital Theory suggested that reintegration depends on trust, reciprocity, and social networks. The findings confirm that stigma, mistrust, and fragmented community ties often left Kadogos isolated, with few avenues for collective economic or social participation. Where community leaders actively facilitated reconciliation dialogues, however, there were measurable improvements in acceptance and cooperation, reinforcing SCT's assertion that rebuilding relational networks is as vital as delivering material aid.

3. Social Identity Theory anticipated that identity reconstruction, moving from "child soldier" to "valued community member", would hinge on both self-perception and external recognition. The data confirmed that community narratives often froze Kadogos in their wartime identities, especially where atrocities had occurred locally. Without deliberate interventions to reshape these narratives, the Kadogo's social reintegration remained partial at best.

4. Contact Theory emphasised that sustained, positive interaction between ex-combatants and civilians could reduce prejudice. This was validated in communities where joint projects (e.g., agricultural cooperatives) fostered daily collaboration and mutual reliance. However, where interaction was superficial or confined to DDR events, mistrust persisted, underscoring CT's point that contact must be structured, meaningful, and ongoing.

5. Postcolonial Theory framed reintegration in terms of historical and structural inequalities, including the DRC's legacy of extractive governance, resource exploitation, and external dependency. The findings affirm that DDR programs often reproduce these patterns, operating with donor-driven priorities, privileging externally defined "success indicators," and sidelining local agency. This colonial continuity helps explain why many reintegration initiatives feel disconnected from the lived realities of Kadogos and their communities.

Alignment with research questions

The research questions posed in Chapter I sought to explore the relationship between reintegration outcomes and the interplay of security, economic opportunity, community acceptance, and cultural legitimacy. The data collected in Chapters IV-VI confirm that: Reintegration cannot be secured without parallel efforts to ensure physical protection from re-recruitment and targeted violence. Economic reintegration is both a necessity and a bridge to social reintegration, but only when designed in a way that benefits both Kadogos and host communities, reducing competition for scarce resources. Community acceptance is not an inevitable by-product of DDR; it must be cultivated through processes that acknowledge past harms, rebuild trust, and offer space for collective healing.

Refining the hypotheses

While the findings strongly validate the initial hypotheses, they also refine them. The evidence suggests that reintegration is not linear; it is an iterative and fragile process, easily reversed by renewed insecurity, political instability, or economic shocks. This implies that the hypothesis should be reformulated to stress not only the multidimensionality of reintegration but also its vulnerability over time. The data further indicate that gender dynamics, particularly the compounded stigma faced by female Kadogos, require a more prominent place in future theoretical modelling. In short, the research hypotheses withstand empirical scrutiny, but the lived experiences of Kadogos in the DRC reveal that

how these factors interact is as important as whether they are addressed. This nuanced understanding will be critical when moving from theoretical validation to practical policy recommendations in later sections of this chapter.

7.2 What key observations shape the complexity?

The validation of the research hypotheses in Section 7.1 establishes that reintegration in the DRC is inherently multidimensional. Yet, the field data make it equally clear that this multidimensionality is not a simple sum of parts, it is complex, non-linear, and often contradictory. Reintegration is shaped by forces that can simultaneously enable and undermine progress, where the very mechanisms designed to support ex-combatants can generate new vulnerabilities.

Observation 1: Reintegration is fragile and easily reversible - The first and most consistent observation is that reintegration gains are *never* guaranteed. They can be undone by factors beyond the control of the ex-combatant, such as renewed conflict, political instability, or economic shocks. In Tshopo, for example, a tell from a Kadogo who had completed a two-year agricultural reintegration program recounted his experience in Kivu and how the M23's renewed advance in 2023 forced him to flee and avoid exposure to potential re-recruitment. "I've been working really hard to stay away from all of that, but the war keeps coming back, making my life hard to rebuilt. I keep running away, but I don't know how long I can keep doing this." This demonstrates a core paradox: reintegration is predicated on stability, yet the DRC's instability means that no reintegration effort can be entirely secure.

Observation 2: Economic empowerment can breed both hope and resentment - Economic reintegration programs, particularly vocational training and microfinance initiatives, were found to be both essential and risky. In communities where benefits were perceived as unfairly concentrated on former combatants, resentment sometimes escalated into open hostility. A community leader, in Ituri, recounts: "We often welcome them (Kadogos), we see them receiving money and things whilst our communities get nothing and remain poor…it feels like they (authorities) are rewarding bad things (conflicts/wars). How is that fair? How can they (authorities) just expect us to sit by, watch and accept them (Kadogos)?" This aligns with findings from Chapter VI that DDR assistance must be community-inclusive to avoid reproducing grievances that fuel conflict. It also illustrates the SCT principle that social cohesion depends on perceived fairness, not only on the quantity of resources distributed. Economic reintegration is essential but without parallel investments in trust-building, community acceptance, and personal safety, livelihood programs fail to secure long-term stability.

Observation 3: Protection gaps undermine trust in DDR promises - Protection, both physical and legal, remains the weakest link in the reintegration chain. Several Kadogos described situations where local authorities failed to intervene when they were threatened by former commanders or accused

of crimes committed during the war. A Kadogo, in Kivu, explained: “When they took me, I was a very young boy and desperate…they told me I would be ok with them, I’ll be safe and protected. But in reality, I never felt safe, nor protected, nor happy being among them. I just kept telling myself that I had to do what I needed to survive and hoped that one day, I’ll escape.” This account confirms HST’s assertion that human security is foundational: without safety, no other reintegration dimension can hold. Moreover, the erosion of trust in DDR guarantees often made Kadogos less willing to engage in future programs, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of disengagement.

Observation 4: Community acceptance is uneven and shaped by local history - The degree of community acceptance varied sharply across regions, reflecting both the intensity of past violence and the narratives that communities held about their former combatants. In areas where Kadogos had been involved in atrocities against local civilians, reconciliation was far more difficult, even when the individuals in question were themselves victims of forced recruitment. As documented in Chapter VI, Section 6.6, traditional reconciliation ceremonies sometimes helped break this deadlock, but only when accompanied by sustained interaction (as CT predicts).

Observation 5: Cultural memory and identity politics influence reintegration trajectories - In multi-ethnic contexts such as Ituri and Nord-Kivu, ethnic identity often overshadowed the “former combatant” label. Kadogos returning to areas dominated by rival ethnic groups faced compounded stigma, sometimes leading to secondary displacement. This finding intersects directly with SIT, which shows how group identity can anchor perceptions more strongly than individual change. In such contexts, even well-resourced DDR programs struggled to neutralise the weight of cultural memory and collective grievance.

Observation 6: The DDR system itself can perpetuate dependency - Finally, the data revealed an under-discussed dynamic: DDR assistance, when poorly designed, can foster dependency rather than resilience. Several ex-combatants admitted delaying their search for work or land because they were waiting for promised DDR packages to arrive, packages that sometimes never materialised. This observation resonates with PCT critiques of externally driven interventions: by placing control in the hands of donors and centralised agencies, DDR programs can disempower the very individuals they aim to support. DDR outcomes are inseparable from regional security, as the porous borders and interlinked conflicts of the Great Lakes Region mean that national reintegration efforts cannot succeed in isolation.

Synthesis of complexity

These observations collectively illustrate why reintegration in the DRC resists linear solutions. The interplay between security, economy, trust, and identity creates a feedback loop in which gains in one area can be eroded by setbacks in another. Moreover, the DDR system is embedded in, and

constrained by, the DRC's broader political economy of conflict, which often works against its own stated goals. The complexity that emerges here is not a sign of failure to understand reintegration; rather, it is an invitation to design interventions that are adaptive, context-specific, and grounded in local agency. Reintegration needs to be lifelong as Kadogos continue to navigate the consequences of their past long after programmatic interventions end. Local ownership is, therefore, critical because community-led approaches outperform externally driven models but require sustainable support and flexibility to adapt to local contexts. These points will be further illuminated in the next section (7.3 Kadogos' choices and challenges), where we move from structural patterns to the deeply personal decisions faced by former child soldiers navigating an unstable peace.

7.3 Kadogos' choices and challenges

If the observations in Section 7.2 reveal the macro-level paradoxes of reintegration, the experiences of Kadogos show how these forces are lived and negotiated at the most intimate level. The choices available to former child soldiers in the DRC are rarely choices in the conventional sense; they are often survival calculations, made within the constraints of violence, poverty, and mistrust.

The pull of armed groups versus the promise of peace

For many Kadogos, leaving an armed group is not the end of war, it is the beginning of a different struggle: the fight to survive without the structure, protection, and income (however meagre) that the armed group provided. In Tshopo, a Kadogo described the starkness of his situation: "In there (within rebel group), at least I had food. No (living on the fringes of community) I have nothing. When I ask for help, people tell me to get a job, but there is none around here…When commanders (rebels) come with money, you start to think about going back, just for the money and hopefully you'll make enough so when you come back out, at least you have money to start a life somewhere." This is the most basic tension in the reintegration process: the armed group offers certainty, however brutal; the civilian world offers freedom, but with profound insecurity. The decision to remain in peace requires not only personal will but also the tangible means to survive, a requirement that DDR programs often fail to meet consistently.

Navigating stigma and mistrust

Kadogos frequently return to communities where they are met with suspicion, fear, or outright rejection. This is not merely a social inconvenience, it has practical consequences for employment, housing, and safety. A female Kadogo, in Kinshasa, spoke of being refused work in a shop because she can't be trusted: "When I was taken, I was a little girl, I am a grown woman now…They (communities) think I am still a rebel. But I just want to live quietly. Even when I explain…they do not believe me. To

them, I am tainted and no longer good enough for anything." The rejection was not always rooted in personal history; in some cases, it reflected broader community fears about insecurity or resurging violence. As noted in Chapter VI, Section 6.3, stigma often persists even when the individual has been fully demobilised and engaged in reconciliation efforts, reflecting the slow and uneven process of rebuilding trust.

The weight of trauma and gender-specific burdens

While DDR frameworks often measure reintegration success through economic indicators, the psychological toll of war remains a quiet but decisive factor shaping a Kadogo's ability to rebuild life. Several Kadogos spoke of recurring nightmares, flashbacks, or an inability to feel safe even in peaceful settings. A Kadogo, in Tshopo, pointed out: "I still wake up thinking I am back there (in the midst of fighting). Sometimes I am afraid to sleep. Although I now have tools for farming, nobody really taught me how to live with these (memories and flashback and nightmares) … I'm just surviving..." This gap, between material support and psychological healing, was a recurring theme. Without mental health interventions, the resilience required to resist re-recruitment or social isolation remains fragile, no matter how strong the initial economic reintegration effort.

Female Kadogos often faced compounded challenges. Many returned with children conceived during captivity, and in communities with strong patriarchal or religious norms, this created additional layers of stigma. In several cases, these women are excluded from reintegration programs altogether because they were not formally registered as combatants, even if they had been active in support roles. A female Kadogo, in Tshopo, put it starkly: "They said the program was for fighters. But I cooked for the fighters, carried their guns, marched with them, and whenever fighting got to us, I fought back and shot guns. I was there. I did everything with the boys, the only difference is I have vagina, and they have penis, why am I not counted? My life now is not less affected than theirs (male Kadogos)." The omission of such women from official DDR statistics not only denies them access to assistance but also erases their experiences from the public record, further entrenching invisibility.

Strategic adaptation, silent resilience and the paradox of choice

Despite these obstacles, many Kadogos displayed remarkable adaptability. Some learned to conceal their past altogether, presenting themselves as new arrivals to avoid stigma. Others channelled their military skills into civilian roles, such as security work or community patrols. These strategies reveal an important counter-narrative to the dominant portrayal of ex-combatants as passive recipients of aid: they are active agents, navigating a hostile environment with ingenuity and pragmatism. However, these adaptive strategies often come at a cost, either in the form of social isolation (when

hiding one's past) or exposure to new risks (when working in security roles that draw the attention of armed actors).

The data suggest that what looks like "choice" in DDR discourse is often a negotiation between two or more bad options. Staying in the community may mean enduring hunger, prejudice, and insecurity. Returning to armed life may mean risking death, injury, or moral injury, but it also offers immediate survival and belonging. This is not simply a matter of "choosing peace over war"; it is about weighing uncertain futures against desperate presents.

From individual struggles to systemic reform

The personal challenges faced by Kadogos are inseparable from the structural dynamics outlined in Sections 7.1 and 7.2. Stigma, insecurity, economic hardship, and the absence of long-term protection are not random obstacles; they are the predictable outcomes of a reintegration system that has not fully adapted to the lived realities of those it seeks to serve. In this sense, the choices of Kadogos, however constrained, offer a diagnostic lens into the failures and blind spots of DDR policy. They also provide critical entry points for reform, as the next section (7.4 Challenges of nationwide reintegration and implications for the Great Lakes Region) will show, by scaling these individual experiences up to the regional level.

7.4 Challenges of nationwide reintegration and implications for the Great Lakes Region

The micro-level realities explored in Section 7.3 cannot be meaningfully addressed without grappling with the structural and geopolitical forces that shape them. In the DRC, reintegration is not a discrete technical exercise, it is embedded within a national security environment marked by state fragility, regional instability, and a chronic mismatch between policy ambition and operational capacity.

The scale problem

Nationwide reintegration in the DRC is an undertaking of extraordinary scope. The country's sheer size, infrastructural limitations, and uneven state presence mean that no single DDR blueprint can be applied uniformly. A program that works in Nord-Kivu, where international agencies maintain a strong operational footprint, may be wholly unworkable in Kasai, Haut-Uele or Bas-Uele, where roads are impassable and state institutions barely function. The problem is compounded by inconsistent funding streams. Several DDR phases have been launched with substantial donor backing, only to stall or collapse when international attention shifted elsewhere, leaving ex-combatants stranded in transitional limbo. A political leader, in Kinshasa, candidly said: "We, as a country, seem to be good at

starting things; however, not good at stopping them… unfortunately, for reintegration, that is fatal, because doing it halfway is the same as not doing it at all."

Fragmented governance and competing agendas

DDR policy in the DRC operates at the intersection of multiple, sometimes conflicting, political interests. Central government rhetoric often stresses national reconciliation, but provincial authorities may prioritise local security deals or alliances that contradict official DDR pathways. This political fragmentation undermines coherence: ex-combatants demobilised under one agreement may find themselves ignored or even targeted under another. Furthermore, armed groups themselves are not static targets. As discussed in Chapter VI, Section 6.2, the fluid nature of armed actors, with splinter factions, shifting alliances, and cross-border mobility, makes it difficult to ensure that reintegration efforts keep pace with evolving security dynamics.

Regional instability and cross-border dynamics

The Great Lakes Region's porous borders and interconnected conflicts mean that reintegration in the DRC cannot be isolated from regional geopolitics. Former combatants in Ituri or Nord-Kivu may be recruited by armed groups operating in Rwanda, Uganda, or Burundi, exploiting ethnic ties, kinship networks, or simply the lure of better pay. This cross-border pull is particularly strong where DDR fails to deliver viable livelihoods. A demobilised fighter in eastern DRC may cross into Uganda not because of ideological alignment, but because a regional militia offers cash, shelter, and a renewed sense of belonging. This is not merely a security challenge for the DRC, it is a destabilising factor for the entire region.

The trust deficit in national DDR

As the findings in Section 7.2 made clear, there is a profound mistrust between ex-combatants and state institutions. Many Kadogos described previous DDR promises that were never fulfilled, training that did not lead to jobs, stipends that stopped abruptly, housing that was never provided. Over time, these broken promises have accumulated into a narrative of betrayal that shapes the decisions of Kadogos seeking to demobilise and reintegrate. This erosion of trust has implications beyond the individual level. At scale, it undermines the credibility of the state and international partners, making each successive DDR initiative harder to implement. Without a concerted effort to rebuild trust, not through rhetoric, but through consistent delivery, nationwide reintegration will remain elusive.

Implications for the Great Lakes Region

The challenges of nationwide reintegration in the DRC reverberate across the Great Lakes Region in at least three ways: Security spillover - unsuccessful reintegration fuels the regional pool of armed actors, prolonging cycles of violence in border areas. Humanitarian strain - displacement linked to renewed conflict places additional pressure on already overburdened humanitarian systems in neighbouring states. Political destabilisation - incomplete DDR undermines regional peace agreements, creating openings for political exploitation by both state and non-state actors.

From national fragility to regional resilience

Addressing these challenges requires more than scaling up existing DDR models; it demands a shift from short-term project logic to long-term institution-building. This means embedding reintegration within broader governance reforms, ensuring that the same systems that protect ex-combatants also protect civilians, and linking localised successes into regional security frameworks. The lived experiences of Kadogos in Section 7.3 show what is at stake when reintegration fails: individuals pushed back toward violence, communities locked in cycles of mistrust, and a state unable to stabilise itself. At the national level, these failures translate into regional fragility, underscoring why reintegration in the DRC must be seen as both a domestic priority and a regional imperative. The final sections (7.5 Limitations and contributions of the study and the concluding synthesis) will now draw together the methodological boundaries and unique contributions of this research, setting the stage for Chapter VIII.

7.5 Recommendations and directions for future research

Policy recommendations for the government of the DRC: (1) Integrate DDR within a national human security strategy that explicitly addresses the protection-acceptance nexus identified in this study. (2) Standardise reintegration support across provinces, avoiding the over-concentration of resources in eastern DRC while still addressing acute conflict zones. (3) Invest in long-term follow-up mechanisms for reintegrated combatants, enabling early intervention in cases of re-recruitment risk.

For the Great Lakes Region (through ICGLR, AU, and regional security bodies): (1) Create a harmonised DDR framework with common eligibility criteria, shared databases, and coordinated monitoring across borders. (2) Establish joint livelihood and training programs for ex-combatants in border areas, reducing incentives for cross-border re-engagement with armed groups. (3) Strengthen intelligence-sharing to track and prevent re-recruitment networks operating transnationally.

Program recommendations (NGOs and community actors): (1) Embed psychosocial support into all reintegration initiatives, with particular attention to the needs of female Kadogos and survivors of sexual violence. (2) Leverage trusted local institutions, such as religious leaders, women's associations, and traditional councils, as mediators in community acceptance efforts. (3) Adopt flexible, long-term funding models that allow for adaptation to shifting security and political contexts. (4) Promote contact-based reconciliation activities (consistent with Contact Theory), ensuring they are structured to foster genuine relationship-building rather than superficial encounters. (5) Prioritise vocational training that aligns with local market demand, preventing the mismatch between training and economic opportunity observed in some DDR programs.

Future research priorities include: Longitudinal studies tracking the trajectories of former child soldiers over 10+ years to understand the durability of reintegration. Gender-specific pathways, in-depth exploration of the reintegration experiences of female Kadogos, especially regarding stigma and economic empowerment. Comparative regional analyses, examining DDR approaches in other Great Lakes countries to identify transferable best practices. Impact assessment of hybrid protection arrangements involving both state and community actors.

7.6 Limitations and contributions of the study

No research project, however ambitious or meticulously planned, is without its boundaries. Acknowledging these limitations is not an exercise in self-critique for its own sake, but a necessary step in framing the validity, scope, and future applicability of the findings. At the same time, this study offers distinctive, original and impactful contributions that enrich both academic debates and policy practice on child soldier reintegration in the DRC and beyond, despite these constraints.

Table 7.1, below, distils the core thematic divergences and convergences between Kadogos and local communities, demonstrating how shared aspirations for safety and cohesion are continually undermined by mutual distrust, economic strain, and lingering prejudice. It visually encapsulates the paradox at the heart of DRC's reintegration challenge: both sides agree on the importance of protection and inclusion, yet each interprets the other's intentions through a filter of fear and mistrust. This duality reinforces the need for interventions that simultaneously address psychosocial healing, structural reforms, and local ownership of DDR processes.

Table 7.1[21] - Comparative insights into protection, prejudice, economic exploitation, and community acceptance: divergent yet overlapping realities

[21] Table 7.1 presents comparative insights from Kadogos and local communities regarding key reintegration factors. While Kadogos emphasize protection, prejudice, economic exploitation, and community acceptance as critical to their reintegration experience, local communities express concerns over security, economic strain, and

Factor	Kadogos' perspective	Local Communities' perspective
Protection	Protection fosters confidence and stability in reintegration.	Communities are hesitant if they perceive authorities as ineffective in providing safety.
Prejudice	Prejudice is a significant personal barrier to reintegration success.	Negative attitudes stem from societal bias and concerns about past violence.
Economic Exploitation	Kadogos face economic exclusion and exploitation.	Communities perceive economic strain from reintegration efforts.
Community Acceptance	A lack of community belonging decreases reintegration satisfaction.	Communities cautiously accept Kadogos but remain influenced by fear and prejudice.

Limitations:

1. Geographical concentration: while the study incorporated voices from multiple provinces, including Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, Ituri, Tshopo, Congo-Centrale and Kinshasa, logistical and security constraints meant that some areas, notably deep into Ituri or certain parts of both Nord and Sud-Kivu, or even other regions such as Kasai or Uele, were underrepresented. This inevitably limits the ability to claim nationwide representativeness.

2. Time-bound fieldwork: field research was conducted over a defined period (July 2023 - September 2023), capturing a specific snapshot of the political and security environment. Given the rapidly shifting dynamics of the DRC's conflict landscape, some findings may evolve quickly as new actors emerge or peace agreements falter.

3. Access constraints and participant safety: access to certain ex-combatant groups, specifically females, was mediated by other participants to the study, which may have introduced elements of bias. Furthermore, ethical considerations regarding participant safety limited the depth of questioning in highly sensitive cases, especially where ongoing security threats were present.

4. Reliance on self-reported experiences: much of the qualitative data, particularly on reintegration experiences, perceptions of state performance, and community relations, relies on self-reporting. While cross-verification was pursued where possible, such narratives remain shaped by memory, perspective, and personal interest.

Contributions:

1. Integrating micro- and macro-level analysis: the research links the intimate, lived realities of Kadogos, their choices, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies, with the structural, political, and regional

lingering distrust. It highlights divergent perspectives, underscoring the need for context-sensitive interventions that address both Kadogos' vulnerabilities and community apprehensions to foster sustainable reintegration.

forces shaping reintegration. This multi-scalar approach offers a more complete analytical framework than studies confined to either individual or policy levels.

2. Theory-driven yet field-grounded synthesis: by weaving together Social Identity Theory, Human Security Theory, Social Capital Theory, Contact Theory, and Protection Theory, the study provides a robust theoretical lens that is constantly tested and refined against empirical data from the field. This strengthens the bridge between academic theory and applied practice.

3. Rich, context-specific empirical evidence: drawing on direct testimony from former child soldiers, NGO officials, community, political, religious and military leaders, the study contributes a highly textured, multi-perspective dataset that captures the complexity of reintegration in the DRC. This is particularly valuable given the scarcity of primary data from conflict-affected areas.

4. Highlighting the trust-protection-acceptance nexus: the findings identify trust as the pivotal connector between protection measures and community acceptance, a relational dynamic often overlooked in DDR design. This conceptual contribution has practical implications for structuring reintegration programs that are sustainable and community embedded.

5. Policy-relevant regional framing: by explicitly situating DDR in the DRC within the wider Great Lakes Region's security ecosystem, the research underscores why reintegration must be coordinated across borders. This shifts the conversation from isolated national projects to regional resilience strategies.

6. Advocating for long-term, locally adapted reintegration: the study moves beyond the short-term, "project-based" logic of many DDR initiatives, arguing for sustained, adaptive approaches that integrate livelihood, psychosocial support, and community reconciliation over extended timeframes.

Final reflections:

Reintegration in the DRC is not merely a technical or administrative exercise, it is a profoundly political, social, and human struggle fought in the shadow of persistent conflict and the scars of colonial and postcolonial betrayal. Conducting field research in this environment was both an intellectual journey and an intensely personal confrontation with the fragile realities that statistics often conceal. Living among Kadogos and the vulnerable communities who receive them meant inhabiting spaces where fear of violence is never fully absent, where the sound of distant gunfire or the sudden movement of armed men can shatter an ordinary day. Nights were heavy with uncertainty; conversations were punctuated by glances to the horizon, a silent calculation of risk that never completely receded.

Meeting Kadogos face-to-face transformed abstract concepts into stories of survival, resilience, and profound loss. The Kadogos I spoke with were not merely "beneficiaries" of DDR programs; they were young men and women who had been children when the world betrayed them, forced to kill or be killed, and then returned to communities that often feared or rejected them. Some carried visible scars,

missing limbs, bullet wounds, while others bore the invisible injuries of trauma, their voices lowering when recounting nights of violence, their eyes clouding with memories they could not fully articulate. Their humanity defied the stereotypes that too often reduce them to either dangerous predators or passive victims. They were neither. They were complex individuals, negotiating daily the tension between a past they cannot change and a future they are rarely allowed to own.

The communities into which these young people attempt to return live in a state of perpetual precarity. In remote villages and urban neighbourhoods alike, families struggle with poverty, hunger, and the constant threat of armed incursions. I witnessed mothers ration food while sheltering neighbours, elders attempting to mediate conflicts they lacked the power to resolve, and youth who oscillate between hope and despair as economic opportunities remain scarce. In such settings, reintegration is not an isolated intervention but a daily act of courage, a negotiation of trust between returnees and those who must learn to accept them despite deep wounds and lingering suspicion.

These experiences underscored the central argument of this thesis: sustainable peace in the DRC cannot be delivered through disarmament alone. Guns can be collected, but mistrust, poverty, and trauma require far more patient and deliberate work. Reintegration is not a checklist of vocational training sessions; it is the painstaking reconstruction of social bonds, the slow rebuilding of human security, and the creation of spaces where former combatants and their communities can imagine a shared future. The findings presented here demonstrate that such transformation is possible, but only if approached with a long-term, locally grounded, and regionally coordinated commitment. Programs must extend beyond the short life cycles of donor funding, embedding economic empowerment, community reconciliation, and mental health support into the very fabric of everyday life. They must also confront the deeper structural forces, corruption, regional inequality, and the legacies of colonial exploitation, that sustain cycles of violence.

On a personal level, this research has left an indelible mark. It revealed the resilience of those who endure the unimaginable, the quiet strength of communities that continue to welcome the displaced, and the unyielding courage of Kadogos who strive to reclaim their humanity in a world that too often denies it. To walk among them is to witness not only suffering but also dignity, creativity, and an enduring hope for a peace that is not yet realised but fiercely pursued. Reintegration, I came to understand, is not only a policy imperative but a moral obligation, a test of our collective willingness to see former combatants not as threats to be managed, but as fellow human beings deserving of safety, opportunity, and belonging.

References

Appendices:

Appendix A - contains survey instruments: full survey questionnaires used with both communities and Kadogos, as well as the semi-structured interview guide prompts. This provides transparency and reproducibility.

Section A:

1. Demographics - Age, gender, education, occupation, location (province).
2. Reintegration experiences - Participation in DDR programs. Access to education/training. Economic activity and livelihood.
3. Community relations - Perceptions of acceptance/rejection. Stigma and discrimination indicators.
4. Security and protection - Re-recruitment risk. Safety perceptions in the community.

Table A.1 - Sample structure of survey questions (example rows):

Question No.	Variable	Item Text (English)	Scale	Notes
Q2	Age	"What is your age?"	Numeric	Closed
T9	Trust	"I'd rather rely on myself for my reintegration."	Likert (1–4)	Reverse-coded
Q8	DDR participation	"Relocated under DDR program?"	Yes/No	Binary

Table A.2 - Comparative DDR and reintegration experiences (selected cases).
The table illustrates lessons from other countries. Uganda and Sierra Leone achieved relatively higher reintegration success through community reconciliation mechanisms, while Liberia and Colombia invested heavily in livelihood support. These contrasts frame the limitations of the DRC approach.

Country	Key DDR features	Reintegration emphasis	Outcomes (Approx.)
Uganda	Amnesty & community rituals	Reconciliation, psychosocial	Many Kadogos reintegrated, but stigma persisted.
Sierra Leone	Truth commissions, education access	Community rebuilding, skills	Over 70% ex-child soldiers sustained in communities.
Liberia	Cash grants, short-term training	Economic focus	High relapse risk after donor withdrawal.
Colombia	State-led reintegration agency	Education, jobs, protection	Lower relapse rates, though gender gaps remain.

Section B - Questionnaire guides:

The appendix contains the qualitative instruments: semi-structured interview guides prompts.
Structure:
1. Kadogos:
- Experiences of recruitment and demobilisation.
- Challenges of reintegration.
- Community perceptions and stigma.
- Protection and safety concerns.
- Aspirations for the future.
2. Communities:
- Perceptions of Kadogos returning.
- Acceptance/rejection factors.
- Views on DDR program effectiveness.
- Security challenges and peacebuilding.

Table B.1 - layout:

Section	Guiding question	Example probes
Reintegration	"What is Kadogos' experience returning to civilian life?"	"What helped most?" "What barriers did they face?"
Community acceptance	"How do people treat Kadogos since their return?"	"Have they felt excluded or welcomed?"
Aspirations	"What are Kadogos hopes for the future?"	"What support would help them achieve them?"

Section C - Invitation Letter: Communities, Kadogos and Leaders - French and English:

C1 - Invitation à l'étude – Communautés

Je m'appelle Hervé Ali Mwanyo et je suis candidat au doctorat au Département du gouvernement de l'Université d'Essex. J'aimerais vous inviter à participer à mon projet de recherche intitulé : *« Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo »*. Avant de décider de participer ou non, il est important que vous compreniez pourquoi la recherche est menée et ce qu'elle impliquera. Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il évalue l'impact, s'il y en a un, de l'acceptation communautaire, de l'exploitation économique et des problèmes de préjugés et de protection sur la réintégration ou le rejet des Kadogos. Il devrait durer environ une (1) heure et commencera par la réalisation d'un sondage suivi d'une réunion de groupe (groupe de discussion avec d'autres membres de la communauté).

L'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Le questionnaire d'enquête que vous remplissez vous demandera de réfléchir sur (A) le niveau d'acceptation de la communauté. C'est-à-dire, si vous croyez que la réintégration de Kadogos dans votre communauté est soumise à vous, les individus de la communauté, l'acceptant ou si l'acceptation est soumise à d'autres facteurs. Si oui, quels sont ces facteurs qui poussent les communautés à accepter ou à rejeter la réintégration ? (B) le niveau d'exploitation économique. Cela signifie que vous pensez que mieux vous, les individus de la communauté, êtes économiquement, plus vous serez disposés à accepter la réintégration de Kadogos parmi vous. Ou que le manque de ressources ou d'opportunités économiques vous empêche de permettre la réintégration de Kadogos ; car ils apporteront plus probablement une concurrence supplémentaire à des opportunités déjà limitées pour lesquelles vous, les individus dans les communautés, devez déjà vous battre. (C) les problèmes de préjugés et de protection.

Cela signifie que moins il y a de préjugés, plus il y a de réintégration ; et plus les anciens enfants soldats se sentent mieux protégés au sein des communautés, plus la réintégration a de chances de réussir. Ou (D) si vous pensez que la réintégration est strictement soumise aux lieux où les programmes ont eu lieu. En d'autres termes, la réintégration ne dépend pas du fait que la communauté l'accepte ou que l'économie l'exploite, mais dépend plutôt de l'endroit où les autorités ont décidé de la mettre en œuvre. Ou (E) si la confiance dans Kadogos et dans les autorités joue un rôle dans votre volonté d'accepter la réintégration ; ainsi que si vous vous sentez en sécurité et protégé en vivant aux côtés des Kadogos ou en étant en contact régulier avec eux. L'ampleur du problème sera déterminée en mesurant le niveau de votre interaction avec les kadogos, le niveau de menace que vous percevez que les kadogos représentent pour vous.

Merci d'avoir envisagé de participer à cette recherche. Veuillez prendre le temps de lire attentivement le formulaire de consentement ainsi que la fiche d'information du participant, car ils décrivent plus en détail le but de cette étude, votre implication et vos droits en tant que participant. Vous ne devez participer que si vous le souhaitez ; choisir de ne pas participer ne vous désavantagera en aucune façon. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement signé. Vous êtes libre de vous rétracter à tout moment, sans donner de motif. Le retrait n'aura aucune incidence sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Demandez-moi s'il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas clair ou si vous souhaitez plus d'informations. Pour toute autre question, vous pouvez également me contacter ou contacter l'un de mes superviseurs, à tout moment, aux adresses e-mail ou postales que je vous fournis ci-dessous. Si vous souhaitez participer à l'étude, contactez l'autorité/ONG qui vous a contacté à propos de cette étude ; ils me feront part à leur tour de votre intérêt. J'ai hâte de te rencontrer. Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou Prof. Han Dorussen (Superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Bien à vous,

Hervé Ali Mwanyo

C2. Invitation to the study - Communities

My name is Herve Ali Mwanyo and I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project titled: "*What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo"*. Before you

decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It evaluates the impact, if there are any, of community acceptance, economic exploitation and the issues around prejudice and protection on the reintegration or rejection of Kadogos. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will start with you completing a survey then followed with a group meeting (focus group with other members of the community).

The study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. The survey questionnaire you complete will ask you to reflect on (A) the level of community acceptance. Meaning, whether you believe reintegration of Kadogos in your community is subject to you, individuals in the community, accepting it or whether the acceptance is subject to other factors. If so, what are those factors that influence communities to accept or reject reintegration? (B) the level of economic exploitation. Meaning whether you believe that the better economically you, the individuals in the community, are, the more willing you will be in accepting Kadogos' reintegration among you. Or that the lack of resources or economic opportunities makes it difficult for you to allow Kadogos' reintegration; as they will more likely bring further competition to already limited opportunities that you, individuals in the communities, are already having to fight for. (C) issues with prejudice and protection.

Meaning that the less prejudice, the more reintegration; and the better protected former child soldiers feel within the communities, the more likely reintegration to succeed. Or (D) whether you believe reintegration is strictly subject to locations where programs had been taking place. In other words, reintegration is not dependent on whether the community accepts it or whether the economy would exploit it but rather depends on where authorities have decided to implement it. Or (E) whether trust in both Kadogos and the authorities play a role in your willingness to accept reintegration; as well as whether you feel safe and protected living alongside Kadogos or coming into regular contact with them. The extent of the problematic will be determined by measuring the level of your interaction with kadogos, the level of threat you perceive Kadogos pose upon you.

Thank you for considering participating in this research. Please, take your time to read the consent form as well as the participant information sheet carefully, as they further describe the purpose of this study, your involvement, and your rights as a participant. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to provide signed consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. For further questions, you can also contact me or any of my supervisors, at any time, at the email addresses or postal address, I provide to you below. Should you wish to take part in the study, then contact the authority/NGO that contacted you regarding this study; they will, in turn, let me know of your interest. I look forward to meeting you. Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Kind regards,

Herve Ali Mwanyo

C3. Invitation à l'étude - Kadogos

Je m'appelle Hervé Ali Mwanyo et je suis candidat au doctorat au Département du gouvernement de l'Université d'Essex. J'aimerais vous inviter à participer à mon projet de recherche intitulé : *« Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo »*. Avant de décider de participer ou non, il est important que vous compreniez pourquoi la recherche est menée et ce qu'elle impliquera.

Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il devrait durer environ une (1) heure et commencera par la réalisation d'un sondage suivi d'une réunion de groupe (groupe de discussion avec d'autres anciens enfants soldats).

L'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Le questionnaire d'enquête que vous remplissez vous demandera de réfléchir sur (A) le niveau d'acceptation de la communauté. C'est-à-dire, si vous croyez que votre réintégration dans votre communauté est sujette à ce que des personnes de la communauté l'acceptent ou si l'acceptation est soumise à d'autres facteurs. Si oui, quels sont ces facteurs qui poussent les communautés à accepter votre réintégration ? (B) le niveau d'exploitation ou d'opportunités économiques. Cela signifie que plus les individus de la communauté sont économiquement bons, plus ils accepteront votre réintégration parmi eux. Ou que le manque de ressources ou d'opportunités économiques rend difficile pour la communauté de permettre votre réintégration ; car ils peuvent supposer que vous apporterez plus de concurrence à des opportunités déjà limitées pour lesquelles les individus, dans les communautés, doivent déjà se battre. (C) les problèmes de préjugés et de protection.

Cela signifie que moins il y a de préjugés, plus il y a de réintégration ; et plus les anciens enfants soldats se sentent mieux protégés au sein des communautés, plus la réintégration a de chances de réussir. Ou (D) si la réintégration est strictement soumise aux lieux où les programmes ont eu lieu. En d'autres termes, la réintégration ne dépend pas du fait que la communauté l'accepte ou que l'économie l'exploite, mais dépend plutôt de l'endroit où les autorités ont décidé de la mettre en œuvre. Ou (E) si la confiance dans les autorités et les communautés locales joue un rôle dans votre réintégration ; ainsi que si vous vous sentez protégé dans les communautés où vous vivez actuellement. L'ampleur de la problématique sera déterminée en mesurant votre niveau d'isolement social, de privation économique, de santé, de taux de réintégration dans des groupes rebelles et de liens avec des activités criminelles.

Merci d'avoir envisagé de participer à cette recherche. Veuillez prendre le temps de lire attentivement le formulaire de consentement ainsi que la fiche d'information du participant, car ils décrivent plus en détail le but de cette étude, votre implication et vos droits en tant que participant. Vous ne devez participer que si vous le souhaitez ; choisir de ne pas participer ne vous désavantagera en aucune façon. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement signé. Vous êtes libre de vous rétracter à tout moment, sans donner de motif. Le retrait n'aura aucune incidence sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Demandez-moi s'il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas clair ou si vous souhaitez plus d'informations. Pour toute autre question, vous pouvez également me contacter ou contacter l'un de mes superviseurs, à tout moment, aux adresses e-mail ou postales que je vous fournis ci-dessous. Si vous souhaitez participer à l'étude, contactez l'autorité/ONG qui vous a contacté à propos de cette étude ; ils me feront part à leur tour de votre intérêt. J'ai hâte de te rencontrer. Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou Prof. Han Dorussen (Superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Bien à vous,

Hervé Ali Mwanyo

C4. Invitation to the study - Kadogos

My name is Hervé Ali Mwanyo and I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project titled: "*What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo"*. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will start with you completing a survey then followed with a group meeting (focus group with other fellow former child soldiers).

The study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. The survey questionnaire you complete will ask you to reflect on (A) the level of community acceptance. Meaning, whether you believe your reintegration in your community is subject to individuals in the community accepting it or whether the acceptance is subject to other factors. If so, what are those factors that influence communities to accept your reintegration? (B) the level of economic exploitation or opportunities. Meaning that the better economically the individuals in the community are, the more willing they will accept your reintegration among them. Or that the lack of resources or economic opportunities makes it difficult for the community to allow your reintegration; as they may assume you will more likely bring further competition to an already limited opportunities than individuals, in the communities, are already having to fight for. (C) issues with prejudice and protection.

Meaning that the less prejudice, the more reintegration; and the better protected former child soldiers feel within the communities, the more likely reintegration to succeed. Or (D) whether reintegration is strictly subject to locations where programs had been taking place. In other words, reintegration is not dependent on whether the community accepts it or whether the economy would exploit it but rather depends on where authorities have decided to implement it. Or (E) whether trust in both the authorities and the local communities play a role in your reintegration; as well as whether you feel protected in communities where you are currently living. The extent of the problematic will be determined by measuring your level of social isolation, economic deprivation, health, rate of re-joining rebel groups and links to criminal activities.

Thank you for considering participating in this research. Please, take your time to read the consent form as well as the participant information sheet carefully, as they further describe the purpose of this study, your involvement, and your rights as a participant. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to provide signed consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. For further questions, you can also contact me or any of my supervisors, at any time, at the email addresses or postal address, I provide to you below. Should you wish to take part in the study, then contact the authority/NGO that contacted you regarding this study; they will, in turn, let me know of your interest. I look forward to meeting you. Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Kind regards,

Herve Ali Mwanyo

C5. Invitation à l'étude - les dirigeants

Je m'appelle Hervé Ali Mwanyo et je suis candidat au doctorat au Département du gouvernement de l'Université d'Essex. J'aimerais vous inviter à participer à mon projet de recherche intitulé : *« Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo »*. Avant de décider de participer ou non, il est important que vous compreniez pourquoi la recherche est menée et ce qu'elle impliquera.

Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il évalue l'impact, s'il y en a un, de l'acceptation communautaire, de l'exploitation économique et des problèmes de préjugés et de protection sur la réintégration ou le rejet des Kadogos. Elle devrait durer environ une (1) heure et se déroulera sous la forme d'une entrevue ; où je vous poserai une série de questions pour évaluer ce qui a été fait ou ce qui est fait ou même ce qu'il est prévu de faire par rapport à la réintégration

des anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés. Par exemple, l'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Vous trouverez ci-dessous une liste de sujets dont nous discuterons lors de la réunion :

1. Child soldiers.
2. Legislation and institutions.
3. Trust.
4. Perceived threat and criminality.
5. Community acceptance.
6. Economic exploitation.
7. Issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos.
8. Locations of reintegration programs.
9. Personnel experience interacting with Kadogos.
10. Economy and financing reintegration programs.
11. Local customs and beliefs.
12. Sharing resources.
13. Regional influence and neighbouring countries.
14. Governance and Democracy.
15. Personal freedom and equality.

Merci d'avoir envisagé de participer à cette recherche. Veuillez prendre le temps de lire attentivement le formulaire de consentement ainsi que la fiche d'information du participant, car ils décrivent plus en détail le but de cette étude, votre implication et vos droits en tant que participant. Vous ne devez participer que si vous le souhaitez ; choisir de ne pas participer ne vous désavantagera en aucune façon. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement signé. Vous êtes libre de vous rétracter à tout moment, sans donner de motif. Le retrait n'aura aucune incidence sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Demandez-moi s'il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas clair ou si vous souhaitez plus d'informations. Pour toute autre question, vous pouvez également me contacter ou contacter l'un de mes superviseurs, à tout moment, aux adresses e-mail ou postales que je vous fournis ci-dessous. Si vous souhaitez participer à l'étude, contactez l'autorité/ONG qui vous a contacté à propos de cette étude ; ils me feront part à leur tour de votre intérêt. J'ai hâte de te rencontrer. Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou Prof. Han Dorussen (Superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Bien à vous,

Hervé Ali Mwanyo

C6. Invitation to the study - Leaders

My name is Herve Ali Mwanyo and I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project titled: "*What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo"*. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It evaluates the impact, if there are any, of community acceptance, economic exploitation and the issues around prejudice and protection on the reintegration or rejection of Kadogos. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will be in the format of interview; where I will ask you a series of questions to gauge what has been done or what is being done or even what is planned to be done in relation to reintegrating former child soldiers back into communities. For instance, the study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. Below is a list of topics that we will discuss during the meeting:

1. Child soldiers.
2. Legislation and institutions.
3. Trust.
4. Perceived threat and criminality.
5. Community acceptance.
6. Economic exploitation.
7. Issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos.
8. Locations of reintegration programs.
9. Personnel experience interacting with Kadogos.
10. Economy and financing reintegration programs.
11. Local customs and beliefs.
12. Sharing resources.
13. Regional influence and neighbouring countries.
14. Governance and Democracy.
15. Personal freedom and equality.

Thank you for considering participating in this research. Please, take your time to read the consent form as well as the participant information sheet carefully, as they further describe the purpose of this study, your involvement, and your rights as a participant. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to provide signed consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. For further questions, you can also contact me or any of my supervisors, at any time, at the email addresses or postal address, I provide to you below. Should you wish to take part in the study, then contact the authority/NGO that contacted you regarding this study; they will, in turn, let me know of your interest. I look forward to meeting you. Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Kind regards,

Herve Ali Mwanyo

Section D - Participant Information Sheet: Communities, Kadogos and Leaders - French and English:

D1. Fiche d'information du participant - Communautés

Contexte et objectif de l'étude

Bien que nous sachions que les communautés civiles de la République démocratique du Congo échouent souvent à embrasser les anciens enfants soldats désarmés et démobilisés (Kadogos); nous savons aussi que le rejet par leurs propres familles ou communautés et les chômeurs ou sans ressources rejoignent souvent les rébellions, volontairement ou sous la pression ; et que les programmes de réintégration ont été largement infructueux malgré les efforts de stabilisation de la région. La réintégration des anciens enfants soldats est une entreprise complexe qui ne peut être séparée des conditions de la société congolaise et une réintégration réussie est un élément clé d'une résolution globale du conflit congolais. Cette étude identifie les variations dans les processus de réintégration comme étant l'un des catalyseurs de la question problématique des préjugés et de la protection ; utilisera des études empiriques et utilisera une approche de méthodes mixtes (quantitative, qualitative avec recherche ethnographique sur le terrain) pour expliquer les raisons des variations et pour combler le fossé dans l'analyse comparative informant et incitant à la réintégration fiable et en uniforme d'anciens enfants soldats à l'échelle nationale.

Parmi les nombreux défis rencontrés jusqu'à présent, figure l'insuffisance des données sur les Kadogos en général mais sur leur réintégration en particulier, dont la plupart sont peu fiables, obsolètes ou tout simplement inexistantes. L'étude nécessite donc que la recherche sur le terrain soit menée afin de fournir une opportunité de combiner des détails riches et approfondis sur les expériences personnelles des protagonistes (Kadogos et communautés) et des antagonistes (acteurs utilisant des enfants comme combattants et Kadogos eux-mêmes) ; ainsi que fournir une analyse statistique des données quantifiables explorant la réintégration. Il s'appuie sur des méthodes empiriques et des modèles statistiques pour décrire la relation entre la réintégration avec les localités et l'acceptation par la communauté, l'exploitation économique, les conflits, les rapports et les problèmes de préjugés et de protection des Kadogos, afin d'estimer et de réaliser des prévisions sur la valeur réelle de la réintégration. Ceci est important pour l'étude des conflits armés impliquant des enfants soldats en général et notre compréhension de la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats en particulier. L'étude prendra également en compte l'effet de la confiance, de la socio-économie, de la culture, de la politique et de la sécurité sur les variables dépendantes sélectionnées, car il est estimé que les relations entre les variables de contrôle susmentionnées sont significatives au point d'affecter les variables dépendantes directement ou indirectement. (par association) et soit individuellement soit collectivement.

Pourquoi ai-je été invité à participer et dois-je participer ?

Vous avez été invité à participer à l'étude parce que je vous ai identifié comme membre d'une communauté qui a été touchée par l'échec de la réintégration de Kadgos dans la société. C'est à vous de décider si vous souhaitez ou non participer à cette étude de recherche. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement écrit. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer à tout moment, sans donner de motif et le retrait n'aura aucun impact sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Vous pouvez vous retirer simplement en me le disant ou vous pouvez également écrire à moi-même ou à mes superviseurs, selon les coordonnées fournies ci-dessous. Votre opinion et votre expérience nous aideraient grandement à trouver des façons de rendre les futurs processus de réintégration cohérents et uniformes à travers le pays. Les données recueillies à partir de cette étude pourraient également aider d'autres chercheurs sur de futurs projets concernant les programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats.

Vous n'êtes pas obligé de participer à cette étude mais votre contribution, quelle que soit la manière dont vous décidez de la présenter, serait grandement appréciée et nous aiderait à comprendre votre situation face aux problèmes que vous avez pu rencontrer en essayant de réintégrer la société civile. Si vous acceptez de participer à l'étude, les rencontres dureront environ une (1) heure. Il vous sera demandé de remplir un questionnaire évaluant votre opinion sur les programmes et les procédures de réintégration, qui sera suivi d'une réunion de groupe (avec d'autres membres des communautés participant à l'étude (focus group)). Si vous souhaitez divulguer quoi que ce soit d'autre qui ne se trouve pas dans le questionnaire ou qui n'a pas été discuté avec le groupe, nous organiserons une session individuelle qui prendra la forme de questions ouvertes et fermées, en fonction de ce que vous divulguez, au cours de laquelle je vous poser des questions sur une série de sujets liés à

votre divulgation ainsi que sur votre rôle et votre expérience de réintégration ainsi que sur les interactions avec les communautés et les autorités.

Il n'y a aucun risque associé à la participation à ces enquêtes

Soyez assuré que vos réponses sont traitées de manière confidentielle, anonyme et protégée en toute sécurité dans les limites légales pendant et après l'étude. Cependant, vous pouvez également choisir que votre participation soit rendue publique, si vous le souhaitez. Si vous pensez que votre participation ou vos réponses vous mettraient en danger, veuillez l'indiquer ou vous retirer de l'étude. Si au cours de la recherche, vous divulguez des informations qui me portent à croire que vous ou d'autres personnes courez un risque de préjudice, je peux avoir le devoir de diligence d'informer l'autorité ou la personne en charge de votre bien-être.

Consentement éclairé et retrait

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette étude, il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement avant le début de votre participation. Votre participation est volontaire et vous serez libre de vous retirer du projet à tout moment sans donner de motif et sans pénalité. Si vous souhaitez vous rétracter, il vous suffit de me le signaler (voir coordonnées ci-dessous). Si des données ont déjà été collectées, lors du retrait, vos données seront supprimées ou détruites, sauf si vous m'informez que vous acceptez que nous utilisions ces données aux fins scientifiques du projet.

Informations collectées et données collectées

Comme votre participation sera automatiquement anonyme, vous recevrez un numéro de référence qui ne devrait être identifié que par moi-même. Cependant, votre tranche d'âge actuelle et l'âge auquel vous êtes entré en contact régulier avec Kadogos pour la première fois (approximatif), votre sexe, votre lieu de résidence (votre province d'origine, la province où vous avez ou avez eu des contacts réguliers avec Kadogos et la province où vous vivez actuellement), la nature de votre contact avec Kadogos, votre statut actuel ainsi que votre statut d'emploi et votre rôle dans la communauté. Vous serez référencé dans la recherche en tant que Communautés de… (suivi du nom de la province où vous vivez ou avez été en contact régulier avec Kadogos). Les données des entretiens seront stockées dans des fichiers électroniques sur les iClouds de l'Université d'Essex accessibles uniquement à moi-même et à mes superviseurs. Le responsable de l'assurance des informations de l'Université d'Essex est le responsable du traitement des données (dpo@essex.ac.uk) qui supervise le traitement des données personnelles et peut être contacté pour plus d'informations. Notez que seules les données entièrement anonymisées et ne permettant pas d'identifier les individus peuvent être partagées ou archivées dans le cadre de la diffusion des résultats de nos recherches, sauf indication contraire expresse de votre part.

Résultats

Après la fin du projet, je publierai les résultats de mon étude sous la forme de ma thèse de doctorat (toutes les données publiées seront anonymisées). Je serai heureux de vous fournir un résumé simplifié des principales conclusions et des copies des articles publiés si vous manifestez un intérêt. Veuillez simplement l'exprimer et me fournir vos coordonnées. Je conserverai vos coordonnées séparément de vos réponses à l'enquête.

Préoccupations et plaintes

Si vous avez des inquiétudes concernant un aspect de l'étude ou si vous avez une plainte, veuillez d'abord me contacter (Herve Ali Mwanyo - le chercheur principal du projet) ou l'un de mes superviseurs (Prof. Han Dorussen ou Dr. Prabin Khadka) directement, en utilisant les coordonnées ci-dessous. Si vous êtes toujours inquiet, si vous pensez que votre plainte n'a pas été traitée à votre satisfaction ou si vous estimez que vous ne pouvez pas me contacter directement, ni aucun de mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter le chef de service : Prof. Faten Ghosn. Si vous n'êtes toujours pas satisfait, veuillez contacter la responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'université : Sarah Manning-Press. Veuillez inclure la référence ERAMS qui se trouve au bas de cette page.

Financement

La recherche est autofinancée par moi

Approbation éthique

Ce projet a été examiné par le sous-comité d'éthique 3, au nom du comité d'éthique de l'Université d'Essex, et a été approuvé : (demande d'éthique ETH2223-0377)

Détails du contact

Chercheur principal : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) - e-mail : hamwan@essex.ac.uk ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Ou contactez mes superviseurs : Prof. Han Dorussen - email : hdorus@essex.ac.uk ou Dr. Prabin Khadka - email : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Parc, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Chef du Département du Gouvernement : Prof. Faten Ghosn - email : f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Département du Gouvernement, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'Université d'Essex : Sarah Manning-Press - e-mail : sarahm@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Research & Enterprise Office, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

D2. Participant information sheet - Communities

Background and purpose of the study

While we know civilian communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo often fail to embrace disarmed and demobilised former child soldiers (Kadogos); we also know that rejection by their own families or communities and those unemployed or without resources often re-join rebellions, either voluntarily or under pressure; and that reintegration programs have been largely unsuccessful despite efforts in stabilising the region. Former child soldiers' reintegration is a complex undertaking that cannot be separated from the conditions of Congolese society and successful reintegration is a key element to an overall Congolese conflict resolution. This study identifies variations in reintegration processes to be one of the catalysts for the problematic issue of prejudice and protection; will use empirical studies and utilise a mixed methods approach (quantitative, qualitative with ethnographic field research) to explain reasons for the variations and to close the gap in comparative analysis informing and instigating reliable and uniformed former child soldiers' reintegration nationwide.

Among the many challenges encountered, so far, is the insufficient data on Kadogos in general but on their reintegration in particular, much of which is unreliable, outdated or simply non-existent. The study, therefore, requires the field research to be conducted in order to provide an opportunity to combine rich in-depth detail about personal experiences of both protagonists (Kadogos and communities) and antagonists (actors using children as fighter and Kadogos themselves); as well as provide statistical analysis of quantifiable data exploring reintegration. It relies on empirical methods and statistical models to describe the relationship between Reintegration with Localities and Community Acceptance, Economic Exploitation, Conflicts, Reports and issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos, in order to estimate and achieve some prediction on the actual value of Reintegration. This is important for the study of armed conflicts involving child soldiers generally and our understanding of former child soldiers' reintegration specifically. The study will also take into account the effect of Trust, Socioeconomic, Culture, Politics and Security on the selected dependent variables as it is estimated that the relationships between the aforementioned control variables to be significant to the point of affecting the dependent variables directly or indirectly (by association) and either individually or collectively.

Why have I been invited to participate and do I have to take part?

You have been asked to take part in the study because I identified you as a member of a community that has been impacted by failing Kadgos' reintegration in the society. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this research study. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to provide written consent. You are free to withdraw at any

time, without giving a reason and withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. You can withdraw simply by telling me so or you could also write to myself or to my supervisors, as per contact details provided below. Your opinion and experience would greatly help identifying ways to make future reintegration processes consistent and uniform across the country. Data gathered from this study could also help other researchers on future projects regarding former child soldiers' reintegration programs.

You do not have to take part in this study but your contribution, whichever way you may decide to present, would be greatly appreciated and would help us understand your plight to the issues you may have encountered whilst trying to reintegrate civil society. Should you accept to take part in the study, the meetings will take approximately one (1) hour. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire gauging your opinion on reintegration programs and procedures, which will be followed by a group meeting (together with other members of communities taking part in the study (focus group)). Should you wish to disclose anything else not found on the questionnaire or discussed with the group, we will engage on a one to one session which shall take the form of open and closed-end questions, based on what you disclose, in which I will ask you about a range of topics relating to your disclosure as well as your role and experience of reintegration as well as interactions with communities and authorities.

There are no associated risks to participating in these surveys

Rest assured that your responses are treated confidentially, anonymously and safely guarded within legal limitations during and after the study. However, you can also choose for your participation to be made public, should you wish so. If you do feel that your participation or answers would put you at risk, please indicate this, or withdraw from the study. If during the course of the research, you disclose information that leads me to believe that you or others are at risk of harm, I may have a duty of care to inform the authority or the person in charge of your well being.

Informed consent and withdrawal

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form before your participation starts. Your participation is voluntary, and you will be free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify me (see contact details below). If any data has already been collected, upon withdrawal, your data will be deleted or destroyed, unless you inform me that you are happy for us to use such data for the scientific purposes of the project.

Information collected and Data gathered

As your participation will be automatically anonymous, you will be issued a reference number that should only be identified by myself. However, your present age range and the age when you first got into regular contact with Kadogos (approximate), gender, location (your province of origin, province where you have or had regular contact with Kadogos and province where you currently live), nature of your contact with Kadogos, your current as well as employment status and your role in the community. You will be referred in the research as Communities in… (followed by the name of the province where you live or have been in regular contact with Kadogos). The data from the interviews will be stored in electronic files on University of Essex iClouds only accessible to myself and my supervisors. The University of Essex's Information Assurance Manager is the Data Controller (dpo@essex.ac.uk) who supervises the handling of personal data and can be contacted for further information. Note that only fully anonymised data that will not allow any individuals to be identified may be shared or archived as part of disseminating the findings of our research, unless you specifically express otherwise.

Findings

After the end of the project, I will publish the findings of my study in the form of my PhD thesis (all data published will be anonymized). I will be happy to provide you with a lay summary of the main findings and with copies of the articles published if you express an interest. Please simply express this and provide me with your contact details. I will keep your contact details separate from your survey responses.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact me (Herve Ali Mwanyo - the principal investigator of the project) or any of my supervisors (Prof. Han Dorussen or Dr. Prabin

Khadka) directly, using the contact details below. If you are still concerned, you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction or you feel that you cannot approach me or any of my supervisors directly, please contact the Head of the department: Prof. Faten Ghosn. If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press. Please include the ERAMS reference which can be found at the foot of this page.

Funding

The research is self-funded by me

Ethical approval

This project was reviewed Ethic Subcommittee 3, on behalf of the University of Essex Ethics Committee, and had been given approval: (Ethics application ETH2223-0377)

Contact details

Principal investigator: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD candidate) - email: hamwan@essex.ac.uk or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Or contact my supervisors: Prof. Han Dorussen - email: hdorus@essex.ac.uk or Dr. Prabin Khadka - email: prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Head of Department of Government: Prof. Faten Ghosn - email: f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

University of Essex Research Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press - email: sarahm@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Research & Enterprise Office, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

D3. Fiche d'information des participants - Kadogos

Contexte et objectif de l'étude

Bien que nous sachions que les communautés civiles de la République démocratique du Congo échouent souvent à embrasser les anciens enfants soldats désarmés et démobilisés (Kadogos) ; nous savons aussi que le rejet par leurs propres familles ou communautés et les chômeurs ou sans ressources rejoignent souvent les rébellions, volontairement ou sous la pression ; et que les programmes de réintégration ont été largement infructueux malgré les efforts de stabilisation de la région. La réintégration des anciens enfants soldats est une entreprise complexe qui ne peut être séparée des conditions de la société congolaise et une réintégration réussie est un élément clé d'une résolution globale du conflit congolais. Cette étude identifie les variations dans les processus de réintégration comme étant l'un des catalyseurs de la question problématique des préjugés et de la protection ; utilisera des études empiriques et utilisera une approche de méthodes mixtes (quantitative, qualitative avec recherche ethnographique sur le terrain) pour expliquer les raisons des variations et pour combler le fossé dans l'analyse comparative informant et incitant à la réintégration fiable et en uniforme d'anciens enfants soldats à l'échelle nationale.

Parmi les nombreux défis rencontrés jusqu'à présent, figure l'insuffisance des données sur les Kadogos en général mais sur leur réintégration en particulier, dont la plupart sont peu fiables, obsolètes ou tout simplement inexistantes. L'étude nécessite donc que la recherche sur le terrain soit menée afin de fournir une opportunité de combiner des détails riches et approfondis sur les expériences personnelles des protagonistes (Kadogos et communautés) et des antagonistes (acteurs utilisant des enfants comme combattants et Kadogos eux-mêmes) ; ainsi que fournir une analyse statistique des données quantifiables explorant la réintégration. Il s'appuie sur des méthodes empiriques et des modèles statistiques pour décrire la relation entre la réintégration avec les localités et l'acceptation par la communauté, l'exploitation économique, les conflits, les rapports et les problèmes de préjugés et de protection des Kadogos, afin d'estimer et de réaliser des prévisions sur la valeur réelle de la réintégration. Ceci est important pour l'étude des conflits armés impliquant des enfants soldats en général et notre

compréhension de la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats en particulier. L'étude prendra également en compte l'effet de la confiance, de la socio-économie, de la culture, de la politique et de la sécurité sur les variables dépendantes sélectionnées, car il est estimé que les relations entre les variables de contrôle susmentionnées sont significatives au point d'affecter les variables dépendantes directement ou indirectement. (par association) et soit individuellement soit collectivement.

Pourquoi ai-je été invité à participer et dois-je participer ?

On vous a demandé de participer à l'étude parce que je vous ai identifié comme faisant partie d'un groupe d'anciens enfants soldats qui avaient subi les impacts d'une réintégration défaillante dans la société civile de la RDC. C'est à vous de décider si vous souhaitez ou non participer à cette étude de recherche. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement signé. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer à tout moment, sans donner de motif et le retrait n'aura aucun impact sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Vous pouvez vous retirer simplement en me le disant ou vous pouvez également écrire à moi-même ou à mes superviseurs, selon les coordonnées fournies ci-dessous. Votre opinion et votre expérience nous aideraient grandement à trouver des façons de rendre les futurs processus de réintégration cohérents et uniformes à travers le pays. Les données recueillies à partir de cette étude pourraient également aider d'autres chercheurs sur de futurs projets concernant les programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats.

Vous n'êtes pas obligé de participer à cette étude mais votre contribution, quelle que soit la manière dont vous décidez de la présenter, serait grandement appréciée et nous aiderait à comprendre votre situation face aux problèmes que vous avez pu rencontrer en essayant de réintégrer la société civile. Si vous acceptez de participer à l'étude, les rencontres dureront environ une (1) heure. Il vous sera demandé de remplir un questionnaire évaluant votre opinion sur les programmes et les procédures de réintégration, qui sera suivi d'une réunion de groupe (avec d'autres anciens camarades enfants soldats participant à l'étude (focus group)). Si vous souhaitez divulguer quoi que ce soit d'autre qui ne se trouve pas dans le questionnaire ou qui n'a pas été discuté avec le groupe, nous organiserons une session individuelle qui prendra la forme de questions ouvertes et fermées, en fonction de ce que vous divulguez, au cours de laquelle je vous poser des questions sur une série de sujets liés à votre divulgation ainsi que sur votre rôle et votre expérience de réintégration ainsi que sur les interactions avec les communautés et les autorités.

Il n'y a aucun risque associé à la participation à ces enquêtes

Soyez assuré que vos réponses sont traitées de manière confidentielle, anonyme et protégée en toute sécurité dans les limites légales pendant et après l'étude. Cependant, vous pouvez également choisir que votre participation soit rendue publique, si vous le souhaitez. Si vous pensez que votre participation ou vos réponses vous mettraient en danger, veuillez l'indiquer ou vous retirer de l'étude. Si, au cours de la recherche, vous divulguez des informations qui me portent à croire que vous ou d'autres personnes courez un risque de préjudice, je peux avoir le devoir de diligence d'informer l'autorité ou la personne en charge de votre bien-être.

Consentement éclairé et retrait

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette étude, il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement avant le début de votre participation. Votre participation est volontaire et vous serez libre de vous retirer du projet à tout moment sans donner de motif et sans pénalité. Si vous souhaitez vous rétracter, il vous suffit de me le signaler (voir coordonnées ci-dessous). Si des données ont déjà été collectées, lors du retrait, vos données seront supprimées ou détruites, sauf si vous m'informez que vous acceptez que nous utilisions ces données aux fins scientifiques du projet.

Informations collectées et données collectées

Comme votre participation sera anonyme, vous recevrez un numéro de référence qui ne devrait être identifié que par moi-même. Cependant, votre tranche d'âge actuelle et la tranche d'âge à laquelle vous êtes devenu un enfant soldat pour la première fois (approximatif), votre sexe, votre lieu (votre province d'origine, la province où vous avez ou avez combattu ou où vous avez été transféré pour la réintégration et la province où vous vivez actuellement), la nature de vos contacts avec les communautés et les autorités, votre statut actuel ainsi que votre statut professionnel et votre rôle dans la communauté. Vous serez désigné dans la recherche comme Kadogos en… (suivi du nom de la province où vous vivez ou avez été relocalisé pour la réintégration ou votre province d'origine). Les données des entretiens seront stockées dans des fichiers électroniques sur les

iClouds de l'Université d'Essex accessibles uniquement à moi-même et à mes superviseurs. Le responsable de l'assurance des informations de l'Université d'Essex est le responsable du traitement des données (dpo@essex.ac.uk) qui supervise le traitement des données personnelles et peut être contacté pour plus d'informations. Notez que seules les données entièrement anonymisées et ne permettant pas d'identifier les individus peuvent être partagées ou archivées dans le cadre de la diffusion des résultats de nos recherches, sauf indication contraire expresse de votre part.

Résultats

Après la fin du projet, je publierai les résultats de mon étude sous la forme de ma thèse de doctorat (toutes les données publiées seront anonymisées). Je serai heureux de vous fournir un résumé simplifié des principales conclusions et des copies des articles publiés si vous manifestez un intérêt. Veuillez simplement l'exprimer et me fournir vos coordonnées. Je conserverai vos coordonnées séparément de vos réponses à l'enquête.

Préoccupations et plaintes

Si vous avez des inquiétudes concernant un aspect de l'étude ou si vous avez une plainte, veuillez d'abord me contacter (Herve Ali Mwanyo - le chercheur principal du projet) ou l'un de mes superviseurs (Prof. Han Dorussen ou Dr. Prabin Khadka) directement, en utilisant les coordonnées ci-dessous. Si vous êtes toujours inquiet, si vous pensez que votre plainte n'a pas été traitée à votre satisfaction ou si vous estimez que vous ne pouvez pas me contacter directement, ni aucun de mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter le chef de service : Prof. Faten Ghosn. Si vous n'êtes toujours pas satisfait, veuillez contacter la responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'université : Sarah Manning-Press. Veuillez inclure la référence ERAMS qui se trouve au bas de cette page.

Financement

La recherche est autofinancée par moi

Approbation éthique

Ce projet a été examiné par le sous-comité d'éthique 3, au nom du comité d'éthique de l'Université d'Essex, et a été approuvé : (demande d'éthique ETH2223-0864)

Détails du contact

Chercheur principal : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) - e-mail : hamwan@essex.ac.uk ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Ou contactez mes superviseurs : Prof. Han Dorussen - email : hdorus@essex.ac.uk ou Dr. Prabin Khadka - email : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Parc, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Chef du Département du Gouvernement : Prof. Faten Ghosn - email : f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Département du Gouvernement, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'Université d'Essex : Sarah Manning-Press - e-mail : sarahm@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Research & Enterprise Office, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

D4. Participant information sheet - Kadogos

Background and purpose of the study

While we know civilian communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo often fail to embrace disarmed and demobilised former child soldiers (Kadogos); we also know that rejection by their own families or communities and those unemployed or without resources often re-join rebellions, either voluntarily or under pressure; and that reintegration programs have been largely unsuccessful despite efforts in stabilising the region. Former child soldiers' reintegration is a complex undertaking that cannot be separated from the conditions of Congolese society and successful reintegration is a key element

to an overall Congolese conflict resolution. This study identifies variations in reintegration processes to be one of the catalysts for the problematic issue of prejudice and protection; will use empirical studies and utilise a mixed methods approach (quantitative, qualitative with ethnographic field research) to explain reasons for the variations and to close the gap in comparative analysis informing and instigating reliable and uniformed former child soldiers' reintegration nationwide.

Among the many challenges encountered, so far, is the insufficient data on Kadogos in general but on their reintegration in particular, much of which is unreliable, outdated or simply non-existent. The study, therefore, requires the field research to be conducted in order to provide an opportunity to combine rich in-depth detail about personal experiences of both protagonists (Kadogos and communities) and antagonists (actors using children as fighter and Kadogos themselves); as well as provide statistical analysis of quantifiable data exploring reintegration. It relies on empirical methods and statistical models to describe the relationship between Reintegration with Localities and Community Acceptance, Economic Exploitation, Conflicts, Reports and issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos, in order to estimate and achieve some prediction on the actual value of Reintegration. This is important for the study of armed conflicts involving child soldiers generally and our understanding of former child soldiers' reintegration specifically. The study will also take into account the effect of Trust, Socioeconomic, Culture, Politics and Security on the selected dependent variables as it is estimated that the relationships between the aforementioned control variables to be significant to the point of affecting the dependent variables directly or indirectly (by association) and either individually or collectively.

Why have I been invited to participate and do I have to take part?

You have been asked to take part in the study because I identified you as being part of a group of former child soldiers who had been subject to the impacts of failing reintegration in the DRC's civil society. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this research study. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to provide signed consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. You can withdraw simply by telling me so or you could also write to myself or to my supervisors, as per contact details provided below. Your opinion and experience would greatly help identifying ways to make future reintegration processes consistent and uniform across the country. Data gathered from this study could also help other researchers on future projects regarding former child soldiers' reintegration programs.

You do not have to take part in this study but your contribution, whichever way you may decide to present, would be greatly appreciated and would help us understand your plight to the issues you may have encountered whilst trying to reintegrate civil society. Should you accept to take part in the study, the meetings will take approximately one (1) hour. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire gauging your opinion on reintegration programs and procedures, which will be followed by a group meeting (together with other fellow former child soldiers taking part in the study (focus group)). Should you wish to disclose anything else not found on the questionnaire or discussed with the group, we will engage on a one to one session which shall take the form of open and closed-end questions, based on what you disclose, in which I will ask you about a range of topics relating to your disclosure as well as your role and experience of reintegration as well as interactions with communities and authorities.

There are no associated risks to participating in these surveys

Rest assured that your responses are treated confidentially, anonymously and safely guarded within legal limitations during and after the study. However, you can also choose for your participation to be made public, should you wish so. If you do feel that your participation or answers would put you at risk, please indicate this, or withdraw from the study. If during the course of the research, you disclose information that leads me to believe that you or others are at risk of harm, I may have a duty of care to inform the authority or the person in charge of your wellbeing.

Informed consent and withdrawal

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form before your participation starts. Your participation is voluntary, and you will be free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify me (see contact details below). If any data has already

been collected, upon withdrawal, your data will be deleted or destroyed, unless you inform me that you are happy for us to use such data for the scientific purposes of the project.

Information collected and Data gathered

As your participation will be anonymous, you will be issued a reference number that should only be identified by myself. However, your present age range and the age range of when you first became a child soldier (approximate), gender, location (your province of origin, province where you have or had been fighting or where you were relocated for reintegration and province where you currently live), nature of your contact with communities and authorities, your current as well as employment status and your role in the community. You will be referred in the research as Kadogos in… (followed by the name of the province where you live or have been relocated for reintegration or your province of origin). The data from the interviews will be stored in electronic files on University of Essex iClouds only accessible to myself and my supervisors. The University of Essex's Information Assurance Manager is the Data Controller (dpo@essex.ac.uk) who supervises the handling of personal data and can be contacted for further information. Note that only fully anonymised data that will not allow any individuals to be identified may be shared or archived as part of disseminating the findings of our research, unless you specifically express otherwise.

Findings

After the end of the project, I will publish the findings of my study in the form of my PhD thesis (all data published will be anonymized). I will be happy to provide you with a lay summary of the main findings and with copies of the articles published if you express an interest. Please simply express this and provide me with your contact details. I will keep your contact details separate from your survey responses.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact me (Herve Ali Mwanyo - the principal investigator of the project) or any of my supervisors (Prof. Han Dorussen or Dr. Prabin Khadka) directly, using the contact details below. If you are still concerned, you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction or you feel that you cannot approach me or any of my supervisors directly, please contact the Head of the department: Prof. Faten Ghosn (f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk). If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press (e-mail sarahm@essex.ac.uk). Please include the ERAMS reference which can be found at the foot of this page.

Funding

The research is self-funded by me

Ethical approval

This project was reviewed Ethic Subcommittee 3, on behalf of the University of Essex Ethics Committee, and had been given approval: (Ethics application ETH2223-0864)

Contact details

Principal investigator: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD candidate) - email: hamwan@essex.ac.uk or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Or contact my supervisors: Prof. Han Dorussen - email: hdorus@essex.ac.uk or Dr. Prabin Khadka - email: prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Head of Department of Government: Prof. Faten Ghosn - email: f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

University of Essex Research Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press - email: sarahm@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Research & Enterprise Office, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

D5. Fiche d'information du participant - les dirigeants

Contexte et objectif de l'étude

Bien que nous sachions que les communautés civiles de la République démocratique du Congo échouent souvent à embrasser les anciens enfants soldats désarmés et démobilisés (Kadogos) ; nous savons aussi que le rejet par leurs propres familles ou communautés et les chômeurs ou sans ressources rejoignent souvent les rébellions, volontairement ou sous la pression ; et que les programmes de réintégration ont été largement infructueux malgré les efforts de stabilisation de la région. La réintégration des anciens enfants soldats est une entreprise complexe qui ne peut être séparée des conditions de la société congolaise et une réintégration réussie est un élément clé d'une résolution globale du conflit congolais. Cette étude identifie les variations dans les processus de réintégration comme étant l'un des catalyseurs de la question problématique des préjugés et de la protection ; utilisera des études empiriques et utilisera une approche de méthodes mixtes (quantitative, qualitative avec recherche ethnographique sur le terrain) pour expliquer les raisons des variations et pour combler le fossé dans l'analyse comparative informant et incitant à la réintégration fiable et en uniforme d'anciens enfants soldats à l'échelle nationale.

Parmi les nombreux défis rencontrés jusqu'à présent, figure l'insuffisance des données sur les Kadogos en général mais sur leur réintégration en particulier, dont la plupart sont peu fiables, obsolètes ou tout simplement inexistantes. L'étude nécessite donc que la recherche sur le terrain soit menée afin de fournir une opportunité de combiner des détails riches et approfondis sur les expériences personnelles des protagonistes (Kadogos et communautés) et des antagonistes (acteurs utilisant des enfants comme combattants et Kadogos eux-mêmes) ; ainsi que fournir une analyse statistique des données quantifiables explorant la réintégration. Il s'appuie sur des méthodes empiriques et des modèles statistiques pour décrire la relation entre la réintégration avec les localités et l'acceptation par la communauté, l'exploitation économique, les conflits, les rapports et les problèmes de préjugés et de protection des Kadogos, afin d'estimer et de réaliser des prévisions sur la valeur réelle de la réintégration. Ceci est important pour l'étude des conflits armés impliquant des enfants soldats en général et notre compréhension de la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats en particulier. L'étude prendra également en compte l'effet de la confiance, de la socio-économie, de la culture, de la politique et de la sécurité sur les variables dépendantes sélectionnées, car il est estimé que les relations entre les variables de contrôle susmentionnées sont significatives au point d'affecter les variables dépendantes directement ou indirectement. (Par association) et soit individuellement soit collectivement.

Pourquoi ai-je été invité à participer et dois-je participer ?

On vous a demandé de participer à l'étude parce que je vous ai identifié comme une personne d'autorité ayant les moyens d'aborder ou d'effectuer la réintégration de Kadogos dans la société civile de la RDC. C'est à vous de décider si vous souhaitez ou non participer à cette étude de recherche. Si vous décidez de participer, il vous sera demandé de fournir un consentement écrit. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer à tout moment, sans donner de motif et le retrait n'aura aucun impact sur vos notes, vos évaluations ou vos études futures. Vous pouvez vous retirer simplement en me le disant ou vous pouvez également écrire à moi-même ou à mes superviseurs, selon les coordonnées fournies ci-dessous. Votre opinion et votre expérience nous aideraient grandement à trouver des façons de rendre les futurs processus de réintégration cohérents et uniformes à travers le pays. Les données recueillies à partir de cette étude pourraient également aider d'autres chercheurs sur de futurs projets concernant les programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats.

Vous n'êtes pas obligé de participer à cette étude mais votre contribution, quelle que soit la manière dont vous décidez de la présenter, serait grandement appréciée et nous aiderait à comprendre votre situation face aux problèmes que vous avez pu rencontrer en essayant de réintégrer la société civile. Si vous acceptez de participer à l'étude, les rencontres dureront environ 45 minutes à une heure. Il vous sera demandé de remplir un questionnaire évaluant votre opinion sur les programmes et procédures de réintégration ; ensuite, si vous souhaitez divulguer quoi que ce soit d'autre qui ne se trouve pas sur le questionnaire, nous engagerons une session individuelle qui prendra la forme de questions ouvertes et fermées, en fonction de

ce que vous divulguez, dans laquelle je vous poserai des questions sur une gamme de sujets concernant votre rôle et votre expérience de la réintégration ainsi que les interactions avec les communautés et les autorités.

Il n'y a aucun risque associé à la participation à ces enquêtes

Soyez assuré que vos réponses sont traitées de manière confidentielle, anonyme et protégée en toute sécurité dans les limites légales pendant et après l'étude. Cependant, vous pouvez également choisir que votre participation soit rendue publique, si vous le souhaitez. Si vous pensez que votre participation ou vos réponses vous mettraient en danger, veuillez l'indiquer ou vous retirer de l'étude. Si au cours de la réunion, vous divulguez des informations qui me portent à croire que vous ou d'autres personnes courez un risque de préjudice, je peux avoir le devoir de diligence d'informer l'autorité ou la personne en charge de votre bien-être.

Consentement éclairé et retrait

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette étude, il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement avant le début de votre participation. Votre participation est volontaire et vous serez libre de vous retirer du projet à tout moment sans donner de motif et sans pénalité. Si vous souhaitez vous rétracter, il vous suffit de me le signaler (voir coordonnées ci-dessous). Si des données ont déjà été collectées, lors du retrait, vos données seront supprimées ou détruites, sauf si vous m'informez que vous acceptez que nous utilisions ces données aux fins scientifiques du projet.

Informations collectées et données collectées

Comme votre participation sera automatiquement anonyme, vous recevrez un numéro de référence qui ne devrait être identifié que par moi-même. Cependant, votre tranche d'âge actuelle et l'âge auquel vous êtes entré en contact régulier avec Kadogos pour la première fois (approximatif), votre sexe, votre lieu de résidence (votre province d'origine, la province où vous avez ou avez eu des contacts réguliers avec Kadogos et la province où vous vivez actuellement), la nature de votre contact avec Kadogos, votre statut actuel ainsi que votre statut d'emploi et votre rôle dans la communauté. Vous serez référé dans la recherche en tant qu'Autorités de... (suivi du nom de la province où vous habitez ou sur laquelle vous avez autorité). Les données des entretiens seront stockées dans des fichiers électroniques sur les iClouds de l'Université d'Essex accessibles uniquement à moi-même et à mes superviseurs. Le responsable de l'assurance des informations de l'Université d'Essex est le responsable du traitement des données (dpo@essex.ac.uk) qui supervise le traitement des données personnelles et peut être contacté pour plus d'informations. Notez que seules les données entièrement anonymisées et ne permettant pas d'identifier les individus peuvent être partagées ou archivées dans le cadre de la diffusion des résultats de nos recherches, sauf indication contraire expresse de votre part.

Résultats

Après la fin du projet, je publierai les résultats de mon étude sous la forme de ma thèse de doctorat (toutes les données publiées seront anonymisées). Je serai heureux de vous fournir un résumé simplifié des principales conclusions et des copies des articles publiés si vous manifestez un intérêt. Veuillez simplement l'exprimer et me fournir vos coordonnées. Je conserverai vos coordonnées séparément de vos réponses à l'enquête.

Préoccupations et plaintes

Si vous avez des inquiétudes concernant un aspect de l'étude ou si vous avez une plainte, veuillez d'abord me contacter (Herve Ali Mwanyo - le chercheur principal du projet) ou l'un de mes superviseurs (Prof. Han Dorussen ou Dr. Prabin Khadka) directement, en utilisant les coordonnées ci-dessous. Si vous êtes toujours inquiet, si vous pensez que votre plainte n'a pas été traitée à votre satisfaction ou si vous estimez que vous ne pouvez pas me contacter directement, ni aucun de mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter le chef de service : Prof. Faten Ghosn. Si vous n'êtes toujours pas satisfait, veuillez contacter la responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'université : Sarah Manning-Press. Veuillez inclure la référence ERAMS qui se trouve au bas de cette page.

Financement

La recherche est autofinancée par moi

Approbation éthique

Ce projet a été examiné par le sous-comité d'éthique 3, au nom du comité d'éthique de l'Université d'Essex, et a été approuvé : (demande d'éthique ETH2223-0377)

Détails du contact

Chercheur principal : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) - e-mail : hamwan@essex.ac.uk ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Ou contactez mes superviseurs : Prof. Han Dorussen - email : hdorus@essex.ac.uk ou Dr. Prabin Khadka - email : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Parc, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Chef du Département du Gouvernement : Prof. Faten Ghosn - email : f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Département du Gouvernement, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Responsable de la gouvernance et de la planification de la recherche de l'Université d'Essex : Sarah Manning-Press - e-mail : sarahm@essex.ac.uk, ou par écrit : Research & Enterprise Office, Université d'Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

D6. Participant information sheet - Leaders

Background and purpose of the study

While we know civilian communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo often fail to embrace disarmed and demobilised former child soldiers (Kadogos); we also know that rejection by their own families or communities and those unemployed or without resources often re-join rebellions, either voluntarily or under pressure; and that reintegration programs have been largely unsuccessful despite efforts in stabilising the region. Former child soldiers' reintegration is a complex undertaking that cannot be separated from the conditions of Congolese society and successful reintegration is a key element to an overall Congolese conflict resolution. This study identifies variations in reintegration processes to be one of the catalysts for the problematic issue of prejudice and protection; will use empirical studies and utilise a mixed methods approach (quantitative, qualitative with ethnographic field research) to explain reasons for the variations and to close the gap in comparative analysis informing and instigating reliable and uniformed former child soldiers' reintegration nationwide.

Among the many challenges encountered, so far, is the insufficient data on Kadogos in general but on their reintegration in particular, much of which is unreliable, outdated or simply non-existent. The study, therefore, requires the field research to be conducted in order to provide an opportunity to combine rich in-depth detail about personal experiences of both protagonists (Kadogos and communities) and antagonists (actors using children as fighter and Kadogos themselves); as well as provide statistical analysis of quantifiable data exploring reintegration. It relies on empirical methods and statistical models to describe the relationship between Reintegration with Localities and Community Acceptance, Economic Exploitation, Conflicts, Reports and issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos, in order to estimate and achieve some prediction on the actual value of Reintegration. This is important for the study of armed conflicts involving child soldiers generally and our understanding of former child soldiers' reintegration specifically. The study will also take into account the effect of Trust, Socioeconomic, Culture, Politics and Security on the selected dependent variables as it is estimated that the relationships between the aforementioned control variables to be significant to the point of affecting the dependent variables directly or indirectly (by association) and either individually or collectively.

Why have I been invited to participate and do I have to take part?

You have been asked to take part in the study because I identified you as a person of authority with means to either address or effect Kadogos' reintegration into DRC's civil society. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this research study. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to provide written consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and withdrawal will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. You can

withdraw simply by telling me so or you could also write to myself or to my supervisors, as per contact details provided below. Your opinion and experience would greatly help identifying ways to make future reintegration processes consistent and uniform across the country. Data gathered from this study could also help other researchers on future projects regarding former child soldiers' reintegration programs.

You do not have to take part in this study but your contribution, whichever way you may decide to present, would be greatly appreciated and would help us understand your plight to the issues you may have encountered whilst trying to reintegrate civil society. Should you accept to take part in the study, the meetings will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire gauging your opinion on reintegration programs and procedures; then should you wish to disclose anything else not found on the questionnaire, we will engage on a one to one session which shall take the form of open and closed-end questions, based on what you disclose, in which I ask you about a range of topics relating your role and experience of reintegration as well as interactions with communities and authorities.

There are no associated risks to participating in these surveys

Rest assured that your responses are treated confidentially, anonymously, and safely guarded within legal limitations during and after the study. However, you can also choose for your participation to be made public, should you wish so. If you do feel that your participation or answers would put you at risk, please indicate this, or withdraw from the study. If during the course of the meeting, you disclose information that leads me to believe that you or others are at risk of harm, I may have a duty of care to inform the authority or the person in charge of your wellbeing.

Informed consent and withdrawal

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form before your participation starts. Your participation is voluntary, and you will be free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify me (see contact details below). If any data has already been collected, upon withdrawal, your data will be deleted or destroyed, unless you inform me that you are happy for us to use such data for the scientific purposes of the project.

Information collected and Data gathered

As your participation will be automatically anonymous, you will be issued a reference number that should only be identified by myself. However, your present age range and the age when you first got into regular contact with Kadogos (approximate), gender, location (your province of origin, province where you have or had regular contact with Kadogos and province where you currently live), nature of your contact with Kadogos, your current as well as employment status and your role in the community. You will be referred in the research as Authorities in..(followed by the name of the province where you live or have authority over). The data from the interviews will be stored in electronic files on University of Essex iClouds only accessible to myself and my supervisors. The University of Essex's Information Assurance Manager is the Data Controller (dpo@essex.ac.uk) who supervises the handling of personal data and can be contacted for further information. Note that only fully anonymised data that will not allow any individuals to be identified may be shared or archived as part of disseminating the findings of our research, unless you specifically express otherwise.

Findings

After the end of the project, I will publish the findings of my study in the form of my PhD thesis (all data published will be anonymized). I will be happy to provide you with a lay summary of the main findings and with copies of the articles published if you express an interest. Please simply express this and provide me with your contact details. I will keep your contact details separate from your survey responses.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact me (Herve Ali Mwanyo - the principal investigator of the project) or any of my supervisors (Prof. Han Dorussen or Dr. Prabin Khadka) directly, using the contact details below. If you are still concerned, you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction or you feel that you cannot approach me or any of my supervisors directly, please contact the Head of the department: Prof. Faten Ghosn (f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk). If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research

Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press (e-mail sarahm@essex.ac.uk). Please include the ERAMS reference which can be found at the foot of this page.

Funding

The research is self-funded by me

Ethical approval

This project was reviewed Ethic Subcommittee 3, on behalf of the University of Essex Ethics Committee, and had been given approval: (Ethics application ETH2223-0377)

Contact details

Principal investigator: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD candidate) - email: hamwan@essex.ac.uk or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Or contact my supervisors: Prof. Han Dorussen - email: hdorus@essex.ac.uk or Dr. Prabin Khadka - email: prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Head of Department of Government: Prof. Faten Ghosn - email: f.ghosn@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

University of Essex Research Governance and Planning Manager: Sarah Manning-Press - email: sarahm@essex.ac.uk, or in writing: Research & Enterprise Office, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester.

Section E - Consent forms (brief explanation of purpose, ethical considerations, consent procedures): Communities, Kadogos and Leaders - French and English:

E1. Formulaire de consentement - Communautés

Cher participant,

Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il évalue l'impact, s'il y en a un, de l'acceptation communautaire, de l'exploitation économique et des problèmes de préjugés et de protection sur la réintégration ou le rejet des Kadogos. Il devrait durer environ une (1) heure et commencera par la réalisation d'un sondage suivi d'une réunion de groupe (groupe de discussion avec d'autres membres de la communauté). Par exemple, l'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Le questionnaire d'enquête que vous remplissez vous demandera de réfléchir sur (A) le niveau d'acceptation de la communauté. C'est-à-dire, si vous croyez que la réintégration de Kadogos dans votre communauté est soumise à vous, les individus de la communauté, l'acceptant ou si l'acceptation est soumise à d'autres facteurs. Si oui, quels sont ces facteurs qui poussent les communautés à accepter ou à rejeter la réintégration ? (B) le niveau d'exploitation économique. Cela signifie que vous pensez que mieux vous, les individus de la communauté, êtes économiquement, plus vous serez disposés à accepter la réintégration de Kadogos parmi vous. Ou que le manque de ressources ou d'opportunités économiques vous empêche de permettre la réintégration de Kadogos ; car ils apporteront plus probablement une concurrence supplémentaire à des opportunités déjà limitées pour lesquelles vous, les individus dans les communautés, devez déjà vous battre. (C) les problèmes de préjugés et de protection. Cela signifie que moins il y a de préjugés, plus il y a de réintégration ; et plus les anciens enfants soldats se sentent mieux protégés au sein des communautés, plus la réintégration a de chances de réussir. Ou (D) si vous pensez que la réintégration est strictement soumise aux lieux où les

programmes ont eu lieu. En d'autres termes, la réintégration ne dépend pas du fait que la communauté l'accepte ou que l'économie l'exploite, mais dépend plutôt de l'endroit où les autorités ont décidé de la mettre en œuvre. L'ampleur de la problématique sera déterminée en mesurant le niveau d'isolement social, de privation économique, de santé, de taux de réintégration des groupes rebelles et de liens avec les activités criminelles de Kadogos.

On ne vous demandera pas de fournir votre nom, mais on vous demandera peut-être de fournir des informations démographiques à des fins d'analyse, telles que votre tranche d'âge, votre sexe et votre province où la réintégration ou le contact avec Kadogos a eu lieu. Les données recueillies par le biais de ce questionnaire seront agrégées et vous ne serez identifié individuellement dans aucun rapport ou publication de cette recherche.

Déclaration de consentement

En soumettant une version remplie du questionnaire, vous consentez à ce qui suit :

➞Je confirme avoir lu, compris la fiche d'information et j'accepte de participer à l'étude : *« Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo »*. J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions et j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions.

➞Je comprends que ma participation est volontaire et que je suis libre de me retirer de l'étude à tout moment sans donner de raison et sans pénalité. Je comprends que toutes les données recueillies jusqu'au moment de mon retrait seront détruites. Cet accord a été donné volontairement et sans coercition.

➞Je comprends que les données identifiables fournies seront stockées en toute sécurité et accessibles uniquement aux membres de l'équipe de recherche directement impliqués dans l'étude, et que la confidentialité sera maintenue.

➞Je comprends que les données collectées dans le cadre de ce projet peuvent être partagées selon les besoins et pour la publication des résultats, auquel cas les données resteront totalement anonymes. J'ai lu et compris les informations fournies ci-dessus.

➞J'autorise le dépôt des informations ou données anonymisées que je fournis dans un référentiel de données de recherche afin qu'elles soient disponibles pour de futures activités de recherche et d'apprentissage par d'autres personnes.

➞J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions, j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions et j'accepte donc de participer à l'étude.

Merci de votre participation à cette étude. Nous vous rappelons qu'en soumettant une version dûment remplie de ce formulaire, vous acceptez de participer à cette recherche. Si vous avez des questions, ou si vous avez besoin de me contacter à l'avenir, ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter (moi-même ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs) Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou le professeur Han Dorussen (superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou le Dr Prabin B Khadka (superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Numéro de référence du participant : Date : Signature du participant :

Nom du chercheur : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) Date : Signature du chercheur :

E2. Consent Form - Communities

Dear participant,

This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It evaluates the impact, if there are any, of community acceptance, economic exploitation and the issues around prejudice and protection on the reintegration or rejection of Kadogos. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will start with you completing a survey then followed with a group meeting (focus group with other members of the community). For example, the study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. The survey questionnaire you complete will ask you to reflect on (A) the level of community acceptance. Meaning, whether you believe reintegration of Kadogos in your community is subject to you, individuals in the community, accepting it or whether the acceptance is subject to other factors. If so, what are those factors that influence communities to accept or reject reintegration? (B) the level of economic exploitation. Meaning whether you believe that the better economically you, the individuals in the community, are, the more willing you will be in accepting Kadogos' reintegration among you. Or that the lack of resources or economic opportunities makes it difficult for you to allow Kadogos' reintegration; as they will more likely bring further competition to already limited opportunities that you, individuals in the communities, are already having to fight for. (C) issues with prejudice and protection. Meaning that the less prejudice, the more reintegration; and the better protected former child soldiers feel within the communities, the more likely reintegration to succeed. Or (D) whether you believe reintegration is strictly subject to locations where programs had been taking place. In other words, reintegration is not dependent on whether the community accepts it or whether the economy would exploit it but rather depends on where authorities have decided to implement it. The extent of the problematic will be determined by measuring Kadogos' level of social isolation, economic deprivation, health, rate of re-joining rebel groups and links to criminal activities.

You will not be asked to provide your name, but you may be asked to provide some demographic information for analysis purposes, such as your age range, your gender and your province where reintegration or contact with Kadogos have been taking place. The data collected through this questionnaire will be aggregated and you will not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications from this research.

Statement of Consent

By submitting a completed version of the questionnaire, you are consenting to the following:

➞I confirm that I have read, understood the information sheet and I agree to participate in the study: *"What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo".* I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

➞I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I understand that any data collected up to the point of my withdrawal will be destroyed. This agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion.

➞I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the study, and that confidentiality will be maintained.

➞I understand that data collected in this project might be shared as appropriate and for publication of findings, in which case data will remain completely anonymous. I have read and understood the information provided above.

➞I give permission for the anonymised information or data that I provide to be deposited in a research data repository so that they will be available for future research and learning activities by other individuals.

➞ I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, have had these questions answered satisfactorily and I, therefore, agree to take part in the study.

Thank you for your participation in this study. You are reminded that by submitting a completed version of this form you are agreeing to participate in this research. If you have any queries, or if you need to contact me in future, or alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors, please contact (myself or alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors) Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Participant Reference number: Date: Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD Candidate) Date: Researcher Signature:

E3. Formulaire de consentement - Kadogos

Cher participant,

Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il devrait durer environ une (1) heure et commencera par la réalisation d'un sondage suivi d'une réunion de groupe (groupe de discussion avec d'autres anciens enfants soldats). Par exemple, l'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Le questionnaire d'enquête que vous remplissez vous demandera de réfléchir sur (A) le niveau d'acceptation de la communauté. C'est-à-dire, si vous croyez que votre réintégration dans votre communauté est sujette à ce que des personnes de la communauté l'acceptent ou si l'acceptation est soumise à d'autres facteurs. Si oui, quels sont ces facteurs qui poussent les communautés à accepter votre réintégration ? (B) le niveau d'exploitation économique. Cela signifie que plus les individus de la communauté sont économiquement bons, plus ils accepteront votre réintégration parmi eux. Ou que le manque de ressources ou d'opportunités économiques rend difficile pour la communauté de permettre votre réintégration ; car ils peuvent supposer que vous apporterez plus de concurrence à des opportunités déjà limitées pour lesquelles les individus, dans les communautés,

doivent déjà se battre. (C) les problèmes de préjugés et de protection. Cela signifie que moins il y a de préjugés, plus il y a de réintégration ; et plus les anciens enfants soldats se sentent mieux protégés au sein des communautés, plus la réintégration a de chances de réussir. Ou (D) si la réintégration est strictement soumise aux lieux où les programmes ont eu lieu. En d'autres termes, la réintégration ne dépend pas du fait que la communauté l'accepte ou que l'économie l'exploite, mais dépend plutôt de l'endroit où les autorités ont décidé de la mettre en œuvre. L'ampleur de la problématique sera déterminée en mesurant votre niveau d'isolement social, de privation économique, de santé, de taux de réintégration dans des groupes rebelles et de liens avec des activités criminelles.

On ne vous demandera pas de fournir votre nom, mais on vous demandera peut-être de fournir des informations démographiques à des fins d'analyse, telles que votre tranche d'âge, votre sexe et votre province où la réintégration ou le contact avec Kadogos a eu lieu. Les données recueillies par le biais de ce questionnaire seront agrégées et vous ne serez identifié individuellement dans aucun rapport ou publication de cette recherche.

Déclaration de consentement

En soumettant une version remplie du questionnaire, vous consentez à ce qui suit :

➞Je confirme avoir lu, compris la fiche d'information et j'accepte de participer à l'étude : *« Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo »*. J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions et j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions.

➞Je comprends que ma participation est volontaire et que je suis libre de me retirer de l'étude à tout moment sans donner de raison et sans pénalité. Je comprends que toutes les données recueillies jusqu'au moment de mon retrait seront détruites. Cet accord a été donné volontairement et sans coercition.

➞Je comprends que les données identifiables fournies seront stockées en toute sécurité et accessibles uniquement aux membres de l'équipe de recherche directement impliqués dans l'étude, et que la confidentialité sera maintenue.

➞Je comprends que les données collectées dans le cadre de ce projet peuvent être partagées selon les besoins et pour la publication des résultats, auquel cas les données resteront totalement anonymes. J'ai lu et compris les informations fournies ci-dessus.

➞J'autorise le dépôt des informations ou données anonymisées que je fournis dans un référentiel de données de recherche afin qu'elles soient disponibles pour de futures activités de recherche et d'apprentissage par d'autres personnes.

➞J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions, j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions et j'accepte donc de participer à l'étude.

Merci de votre participation à cette étude. Nous vous rappelons qu'en soumettant une version dûment remplie de ce formulaire, vous acceptez de participer à cette recherche. Si vous avez des questions, ou si vous avez besoin de me contacter à l'avenir, ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter (moi-même ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs) Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou le professeur Han Dorussen (superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou le Dr Prabin B Khadka (superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Numéro de référence du participant : Date : Signature du participant :

Nom du chercheur : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) Date : Signature du chercheur :

E4. Consent Form - kadogos

Dear participant,

This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will start with you completing a survey then followed with a group meeting (focus group with other fellow former child soldiers). For example, the study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. The survey questionnaire you complete will ask you to reflect on (A) the level of community acceptance. Meaning, whether you believe your reintegration in your community is subject to individuals in the community accepting it or whether the acceptance is subject to other factors. If so, what are those factors that influence communities to accept your reintegration? (B) the level of economic exploitation. Meaning that the better economically the individuals in the community are, the more willing they will accept your reintegration among them. Or that the lack of resources or economic opportunities makes it difficult for the community to allow your reintegration; as they may assume you will more likely bring further competition to an already limited opportunities than individuals, in the communities, are already having to fight for. (C) issues with prejudice and protection. Meaning that the less prejudice, the more reintegration; and the better protected former child soldiers feel within the communities, the more likely reintegration to succeed. Or (D) whether reintegration is strictly subject to locations where programs had been taking place. In other words, reintegration is not dependent on whether the community accepts it or whether the economy would exploit it but rather depends on where authorities have decided to implement it. The extent of the problematic will be determined by measuring your level of social isolation, economic deprivation, health, rate of re-joining rebel groups and links to criminal activities.

You will not be asked to provide your name, but you may be asked to provide some demographic information for analysis purposes, such as your age range, your gender and your province where reintegration or contact with Kadogos have been taking place. The data collected through this questionnaire will be aggregated and you will not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications from this research.

Statement of Consent

By submitting a completed version of the questionnaire, you are consenting to the following:

➞ I confirm that I have read, understood the information sheet and I agree to participate in the study: *"What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo".* I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

➞ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I understand that any data collected up to the point of my withdrawal will be destroyed. This agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion.

➞ I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the study, and that confidentiality will be maintained.

➞ I understand that data collected in this project might be shared as appropriate and for publication of findings, in which case data will remain completely anonymous. I have read and understood the information provided above.

➞ I give permission for the anonymised information or data that I provide to be deposited in a research data repository so that they will be available for future research and learning activities by other individuals.

➞ I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, have had these questions answered satisfactorily and I, therefore, agree to take part in the study.

Thank you for your participation in this study. You are reminded that by submitting a completed version of this form you are agreeing to participate in this research. If you have any queries, or ir if you need to contact me in future, or alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors, please contact (myself or alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors) Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Participant Reference number: Date: Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD Candidate) Date: Researcher Signature:

E5. Formulaire de consentement - les dirigeants

Cher participant,

Cette étude de recherche fait partie d'un projet portant sur la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés suite à l'accès à des programmes de réintégration. Il évalue l'impact, s'il y en a un, de l'acceptation communautaire, de l'exploitation économique et des problèmes de préjugés et de protection sur la réintégration ou le rejet des Kadogos. Elle devrait durer environ une (1) heure et se déroulera sous la forme d'une entrevue ; où je vous poserai une série de questions pour évaluer ce qui a été fait ou ce qui est fait ou même ce qu'il est prévu de faire par rapport à la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés. Par exemple, l'étude est sur le point d'établir des cas de réussite ou d'échec pour informer les programmes futurs sur la force possible lors de la prise en considération de la mise en place de programmes de réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats. Voici une liste de sujets dont nous discuterons lors de la réunion : 1. Enfants soldats. 2. Législation et institutions. 3. Confiance. 4. Menace et criminalité perçues. 5. Acceptation par la communauté. 6. Exploitation économique. 7. Problèmes de préjugés et de protection des Kadogos. 8. Lieux des programmes de réintégration. 9. Expérience

du personnel interagissant avec Kadogos. 10. Économie et financement des programmes de réinsertion. 11. Coutumes et croyances locales. 12. Partage des ressources. 13. Influence régionale et pays voisins. 14. Gouvernance et démocratie. 15. Liberté personnelle et égalité.

On ne vous demandera pas de fournir votre nom, mais on vous demandera peut-être de fournir des informations démographiques à des fins d'analyse, telles que votre tranche d'âge, votre sexe et votre province où la réintégration ou le contact avec Kadogos a eu lieu. Les données recueillies par le biais de ce questionnaire seront agrégées et vous ne serez identifié individuellement dans aucun rapport ou publication de cette recherche.

Déclaration de consentement

En soumettant une version remplie du questionnaire, vous consentez à ce qui suit :

➞Je confirme avoir lu, compris la fiche d'information et j'accepte de participer à l'étude : « Que deviennent-ils ? Kadogos, entre préjugés et protection. Une étude de cas sur la réinsertion des ex-enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo ». J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions et j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions.

➞Je comprends que ma participation est volontaire et que je suis libre de me retirer de l'étude à tout moment sans donner de motif et sans pénalité. Je comprends que toutes les données recueillies jusqu'au moment de mon retrait seront détruites. Cet accord a été donné volontairement et sans coercition.

➞Je comprends que les données identifiables fournies seront stockées en toute sécurité et accessibles uniquement aux membres de l'équipe de recherche directement impliqués dans l'étude, et que la confidentialité sera maintenue.

➞Je comprends que les données collectées dans le cadre de ce projet peuvent être partagées le cas échéant et pour la publication des résultats, auquel cas les données resteront totalement anonymes. J'ai lu et compris les informations fournies ci-dessus.

➞J'autorise le dépôt des informations ou données anonymisées que je fournis dans un référentiel de données de recherche afin qu'elles soient disponibles pour de futures activités de recherche et d'apprentissage par d'autres personnes.

➞J'ai eu l'occasion d'examiner les informations, de poser des questions, j'ai obtenu des réponses satisfaisantes à ces questions et j'accepte donc de participer à l'étude.

Merci de votre participation à cette étude. Nous vous rappelons qu'en soumettant une version dûment remplie de ce formulaire, vous acceptez de participer à cette recherche. Si vous avez des questions, ou si vous avez besoin de me contacter à l'avenir, ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs, veuillez contacter (moi-même ou alternativement, vous pouvez également contacter mes superviseurs) Herve Ali Mwanyo : hamwan@essex.ac.uk, ou le professeur Han Dorussen (superviseur) : hdorus@essex.ac.uk, ou le Dr Prabin B Khadka (superviseur) : prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. Vous pouvez également nous contacter par écrit à : The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Numéro de référence du participant : Date : Signature du participant :

Nom du chercheur : Herve Ali Mwanyo (doctorant) Date : Signature du chercheur :

E6. Consent Form - Leaders

Dear participant,

This research study is part of a project investigating the reintegration of former child soldiers into communities following access to reintegration programs. It evaluates the impact, if there are any, of community acceptance, economic exploitation and the issues around prejudice and protection on the reintegration or rejection of Kadogos. It is expected to last approximately one (1) hour and will be in the format of interview; where I will ask you a series of questions to gauge what has been done or what is being done or even what is planned to be done in relation to reintegrating former child soldiers back into communities. For instance, the study is set about to establish success or failing cases to inform future programs on possible strength when taking into consideration setting up programs to reintegrate former child soldiers. The following is a list of topics that we will discuss during the meeting: 1. Child soldiers. 2. Legislation and institutions. 3. Trust. 4. Perceived threat and criminality. 5. Community acceptance. 6. Economic exploitation. 7. Issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos. 8. Locations of reintegration programs. 9. Personnel experience interacting with Kadogos. 10. Economy and financing reintegration programs. 11. Local customs and beliefs. 12. Sharing resources. 13. Regional influence and neighbouring countries. 14. Governance and Democracy. 15. Personal freedom and equality.

You will not be asked to provide your name, but you may be asked to provide some demographic information for analysis purposes, such as your age range, your gender and your province where reintegration or contact with Kadogos have been taking place. The data collected through this questionnaire will be aggregated and you will not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications from this research.

Statement of Consent

By submitting a completed version of the questionnaire, you are consenting to the following:

➞I confirm that I have read, understood the information sheet and I agree to participate in the study: *"What becomes of them? Kadogos, between prejudice and protection. A case study of reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo".* I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

➞I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I understand that any data collected up to the point of my withdrawal will be destroyed. This agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion.

➞I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the study, and that confidentiality will be maintained.

➞I understand that data collected in this project might be shared as appropriate and for publication of findings, in which case data will remain completely anonymous. I have read and understood the information provided above.

➞I give permission for the anonymised information or data that I provide to be deposited in a research data repository so that they will be available for future research and learning activities by other individuals.

➞ I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, have had these questions answered satisfactorily and I, therefore, agree to take part in the study.

Thank you for your participation in this study. You are reminded that by submitting a completed version of this form you are agreeing to participate in this research. If you have any queries, or if you need to contact me in future, or alternatively,

you could also contact my supervisors, please contact (myself or alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors) Herve Ali Mwanyo: hamwan@essex.ac.uk, or Prof. Han Dorussen (Supervisor): hdorus@essex.ac.uk, or Dr. Prabin B Khadka (Supervisor): prabin.khadka@essex.ac.uk. You can also contact any of us in writing at: The Department of Government, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom.

Participant Reference number: Date: Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: Herve Ali Mwanyo (PhD Candidate) Date: Researcher Signature:

Section F - Questionnaires: Communities and Kadogos - French and English:

F.1.A - Enquête sur la réinsertion des anciens enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo - Communautés

1. Sexe : ☐Masculin ☐Féminin
2. Age : ☐18-2 ☐21-30 ☐31-40 ☐41-50 ☐51-60 ☐61-70
3. Contact régulier avec les Kadogos : ☐Yes ☐No
4. Location : ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami
5. Statut avant les conflits : ☐ Étudiant(e) ☐ Employé(e) ☐ Travailleur indépendant(e) ☐ Travail volontaire ☐ Sans emploi ☐ Parent au foyer ☐ Aucun ☐ Autre (vous pouvez cocher plusieurs cases).
6. Niveau d'études : ☐ Primaire ☐ Secondaire ☐ Universitaire ☐ Professionnel
7. Statut actuel : ☐ Étudiant(e) ☐ Employé(e) ☐ Travailleur indépendant ☐ Travail volontaire ☐ Sans emploi ☐ Parent au foyer ☐ Aucun ☐ Autre (vous pouvez cocher plusieurs cases).
8. Si vous êtes employé, travaillez-vous ou avez-vous travaillé avec Kadogos ? Oui☐ Non☐
9. Si tu travaillais avec Kadogos dans le passé, retravaillerais-tu avec eux à l'avenir ? Oui☐ Non☐ - Si non, pourquoi pas ? (Liste des raisons : ……)
10. Avez-vous personnellement combattu Kadogos dans un conflit ? Oui☐ Non☐
11. Si oui ; le conflit était-il terminé : ☐ Terre/Territoire ☐Ressources ☐ Opportunité professionnelle ☐ Menaces physiques/verbales de Kadogos ☐ Kadogos vous attaque sans raison apparente ☐ Instruit de s'engager dans un conflit par quelqu'un d'autre ☐ J'ai suivi d'autres membres de la communauté ☐ Menace perçue de Kadogos (vous pouvez cocher plusieurs cases).
12. Si l'instruction a été donnée par quelqu'un d'autre, l'instruction a-t-elle été donnée par les autorités ? Oui☐ Non☐
13. Si oui, les autorités locales étaient-elles Oui☐ Non☐ ; or national Oui☐ Non☐ ; ou ni l'un ni l'autre ☐
14. Si ni l'un ni l'autre, pouvez-vous indiquer quelle autorité vous a donné des instructions ? Oui☐ Non☐- If yes (nommez : ……)
15. Avez-vous dû déménager dans de nouvelles communautés pour vous éloigner du conflit ? Oui☐ Non☐
16. Si oui, votre emplacement actuel est-il le seul endroit où vous avez déménagé après avoir volé dans votre communauté d'origine ? Oui☐ Non☐
17. Si non, avez-vous dû déménager plus de : ☐Une fois ☐ Deux fois ☐ Trois fois ou plus
18. Êtes-vous membre d'une église ? Oui☐ Non☐ - Si oui, lequel ? (Nommez : ……)
19. Avez-vous des responsabilités dans la communauté ? ☐ Oui☐ Non☐
20. Si oui, quelles sont vos responsabilités ? (Indiquez vos titres ……)
21. Participez-vous aux processus de décision de la communauté ? Oui☐ Non☐
22. Possédez-vous : ☐ Un vélo à pousser ☐ Une voiture ☐ Votre maison ☐ Une entreprise ☐ Une terre/des terres ☐ Une ferme/des fermes

23. Si vous possédiez une entreprise, emploieriez-vous Kadogos ? Oui☐ Non☐- Si non, pourquoi pas ? ……

24. État matrimonial actuel : ☐Yes ☐No ☐ Divorcé(e) ☐ Veuf(ve)

25. Avez-vous des enfants ou des personnes sous votre charge : Oui☐ Non☐

26. Si oui, vos enfants sont-ils régulièrement en contact avec Kadogos ou leurs enfants ? Oui☐ Non☐

27. Si oui, êtes-vous concerné par ce contact ? Oui☐ Non☐

28. Êtes-vous éligible pour voter ? Oui☐ Non☐

29. Avez-vous voté aux dernières élections législatives : Oui☐ Non☐

30. Voterez-vous aux prochaines élections législatives ? Oui☐ Non☐

31. Avez-vous un téléphone mobile avec accès à Internet : Oui☐ Non☐

32. Utilisez-vous Internet pour vous tenir quotidiennement au courant de l'actualité : Oui☐ Non☐

33. Si vous n'utilisez pas Internet quotidiennement, à quelle fréquence ? ☐ Tous les autres jours ☐ Une fois par semaine ☐ Une fois par mois ☐ Rarement

**** Pour chaque énoncé de l'enquête, veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord ou en désaccord avec l'énoncé en mettant une marque à l'intérieur ou en cochant la case de chaque énoncé. Il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses. Votre réponse restera strictement confidentielle et vous ne serez pas identifié.*

**** Échelle :* *1 - Tout à fait d'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste toujours)*

2 - D'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste souvent)

3 - Pas d'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste rarement)

4 - Fortement en désaccord (indique que la caractéristique ne se manifeste jamais)

Topic 1 - Qui sont les anciens enfants soldats ?	1	2	3	4
1 Des étrangers pour nous et n'appartiennent pas ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je ne les considère plus comme des enfants	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Dangereux et criminels	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Ce sont des immoraux, des tueurs et des violeurs	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 On ne peut pas leur faire confiance	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 2 - Expérience de la réintégration d'anciens enfants soldats	1	2	3	4
1 La réinsertion des anciens enfants soldats a été globalement bonne	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'ai l'habitude de m'entendre avec d'anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je me sens menacé chaque fois que j'entre en contact avec d'anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je sais qui ils sont et ils savent qui je suis ; et je suis d'accord avec ça	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je crois que les anciens enfants soldats fournissent des efforts pour se réinsérer	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 3 - Acceptation de la réintégration de Kadogos	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis maintenant heureux d'accepter d'anciens enfants soldats à réintégrer	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'ai toujours été heureux que d'anciens enfants soldats réintègrent	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les crimes qu'ils ont commis dans le passé rendent difficile leur réinsertion	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis toujours en colère contre les anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les anciens enfants soldats devraient être renvoyés dans leurs propres communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 4 - Exploitation économique	1	2	3	4
1 Les anciens enfants soldats peuvent se réinsérer tant qu'ils contribuent à l'économie locale	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 L'économie locale peut soutenir la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 L'économie locale se débat avec l'ajout d'anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 L'économie locale n'est pas incitée à répondre aux besoins des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Former child soldiers' reintegration is putting pressure or the local economy	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 5 - Opportunités économiques	1	2	3	4
1 Plus nous avons d'opportunités, plus nous pouvons accepter la réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 L'arrivée d'anciens enfants soldats amplifie la concurrence sur les opportunités	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les anciens enfants soldats nous privent des quelques opportunités que nous avons	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 L'État offre suffisamment d'opportunités pour nous et les anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 La réintégration des anciens enfants soldats met la pression sur l'économie locale	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 6 - Conditions économiques	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, je n'ai pas eu à faire face à un manque de revenu en espèces.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Avec le recul, j'estime que les conditions économiques de la RDC sont meilleures qu'il y a 12 mois.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai dû, ou un membre de ma famille a dû faire face à un manque de nourriture à manger.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Pour l'avenir, je m'attends à ce que les conditions économiques en RDC soient meilleures sur une période de 12 mois.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, moi-même et ma famille ne sommes pas sentis en sécurité dans le quartier.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 7 - Menace perçue	1	2	3	4
1 Tueur un jour, tueur toujours	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les anciens enfants soldats menacent notre communauté et notre mode de vie	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les anciens enfants soldats n'ont pas leur place ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La police et l'armée en font assez pour me protéger des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je ne peux pas vivre côte à côte et en harmonie avec d'anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 8 - Confiance	1	2	3	4
1 Je fais confiance aux anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance à l'autorité	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'espère que les anciens enfants soldats travailleront pour améliorer notre économie	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 J'espère que les anciens enfants soldats voudront partager les opportunités	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je fais confiance à l'autorité pour prendre des décisions pour le bien de nous tous dans la communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 9 - Croyances ou législations	1	2	3	4
1 La législation clarifie la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les dirigeants politiques en font assez pour promouvoir la réintégration des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 La réintégration des ex-enfants soldats est suffisamment débattue au parlement	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Ma foi et mes croyances et non le gouvernement déterminent comment je traite Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Nos coutumes locales sont conformes à la législation nationale sur la façon de traiter Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 10 - Préjugés/stigmatisation/traumatisme	1	2	3	4
1 les Kadogos ont besoin d'aide et je souhaiterais que davantage d'investissements soient consacrés à leur réintégration.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les Kadogos sont de mauvaises personnes qui ne devraient pas être ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je comprends pourquoi les Kadogos ont du mal à se réinsérer	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les Kadogos sont immoraux et devraient être tenus à l'écart de nous	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Kadogos menacent notre mode de vie, nos coutumes et nos lois	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 11 - Criminalité	1	2	3	4
1 Les anciens enfants soldats amplifient la criminalité dans notre communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je ne peux pas accepter que des criminels réintègrent notre communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les anciens enfants soldats ne font aucune différence dans le niveau de criminalité dans notre communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je ne fais pas confiance à l'autorité pour s'occuper de la criminalité des anciens enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je crois que les anciens enfants soldats sont intrinsèquement des criminels	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 12 - Protection/perception des menaces	1	2	3	4
1 Je me sens menacé par Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les Kadogos provoquent l'insécurité dans notre communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les autorités font tout pour nous protéger contre Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je me sens suffisamment protégé vivant à côté de Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je ne menace pas mais je réagirais aux menaces de Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 13 - Contact avec Kadogos	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis régulièrement en contact avec Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'évite à tout prix le contact avec Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis heureux de vivre aux côtés de Kadogos dans notre communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Mon/mes enfant(s) est(sont) ami(e)s avec Kadgos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 J'apprécie l'amitié avec Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 14 - Partage des ressources	1	2	3	4

1 Je crois que Kadogos mérite d'être ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je suis heureux de partager les ressources de la communauté avec Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Il n'y a pas assez de ressources à partager avec Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les Kadogos menacent notre accès aux ressources	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Kadogos ont contribué au bien-être de la communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 15 - Vivre aux côtés de Kadogos	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis content d'avoir Kadogos comme voisins	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'encourage ma famille et mes amis à accepter la réintégration de Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'espère que Kadogos viendrait à mon aide si nécessaire	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je comprends l'importance de la réintégration de Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Kadogos ne menacent pas mon gagne-pain	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 16 – Communauté	1	2	3	4
1 Pour nous, la communauté signifie un groupe de personnes qui partagent la même expérience	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 La communauté signifie ceux qui nous acceptent indépendamment de notre origine	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Même si nous ne parlons pas les mêmes langues, nous faisons partie d'une même communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Ma religion ou ma culture me permettent de faire partie d'une communauté différente	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 La communauté doit toujours être d'accord avec tout le monde au sein	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 17 - Politique	1	2	3	4
1 Je fais confiance à nos institutions politiques	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je crois que les dernières élections générales ont été libres et justes	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Mes opinions politiques comptent	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Mes représentants politiques m'écoutent	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je voterai aux prochaines élections générales	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 18 - Institutions	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai contacté mes dirigeants locaux ou nationaux pour discuter de mes idées.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance aux FARDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis satisfait de nos tribunaux et de nos systèmes de justice.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La présence d'ONG internationales aide à la réintégration de Kadogos.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Casques bleus de l'ONU aident à gérer les conflits.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 19 - Influences régionales	1	2	3	4
1 Je fais confiance aux forces de la CAE (la Communauté de l'Afrique de l'Est)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance aux forces de la SADC (Communauté de développement de l'Afrique australe)	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je fais confiance à l'UA (l'Union Africaine)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je fais confiance à la MONUSCO et à l'ONU	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les forces armées étrangères ne doivent jamais s'immiscer dans les affaires politiques de notre pays	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 20 - Pays voisins	1	2	3	4
1 Le Rwanda est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Le Burundi est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 L'Ouganda est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 L'Angola est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Nos voisins sont les raisons de l'instabilité de notre pays	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 21 - Démocratie	1	2	3	4
1 Je pense que le dernier cycle d'élections a été libre, juste et transparent	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les partis politiques créent la confusion et la division parmi nous	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'aimerais voir des changements réguliers du pouvoir politique d'une élection à l'autre	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Le vainqueur des élections devrait être libre de gouverner, quel que soit son parti politique	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Le président devrait faire des lois indépendamment de l'avis de l'Assemblée nationale	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 22 - Gouvernance	1	2	3	4
1 Les autorités locales se soucient de mon bien-être	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 Je fais confiance au parlement national pour travailler pour le meilleur de tous les Congolais	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Le président devrait se concentrer sur le développement du pays au lieu de perdre du temps à justifier ses actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Il est légitime que les forces armées prennent contrôle du gouvernement si les dirigeants élus abusent de leur pouvoir	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait du fonctionnement de la démocratie en RDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 23 - Education	1	2	3	4
1 Moi-même ou ma famille ou mes amis ont accès à l'enseignement public	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Lors de mes interactions avec les enseignants ou les chefs d'établissement, je pense qu'ils me traitent avec respect	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai souvent offert des cadeaux ou des faveurs aux enseignants pour obtenir ce dont j'avais besoin de l'école	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Il est facile d'obtenir les services dont j'ai besoin auprès des enseignants ou des chefs d'établissement	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les frais de scolarité sont abordables pour moi et ma famille	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 24 - Bien-être	1	2	3	4
1 Depuis 12 mois, j'ai eu recours à l'assistance de la police	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'ai dû offrir des cadeaux ou des faveurs à un agent de police pour obtenir l'aide dont j'avais besoin	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis satisfait de toutes les infrastructures publiques (routes, hôpitaux, communication, transport)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis satisfait de la manière dont les autorités gèrent les conflits dans le pays	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je suis satisfait de tous les services publics (éducation, santé, eau, électricité)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 25 - Soins de santé	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai fait affaire avec une clinique ou un hôpital public	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Il est facile d'obtenir les soins médicaux ou les services dont j'ai besoin	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai dû payer un prestataire de soins de santé ou à un employé de l'hôpital pour obtenir les soins médicaux.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Lors de ma dernière visite à la clinique/à l'hôpital, j'ai vu suffisamment de médicaments pour traiter tout les malades	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Lors de ma dernière visite à la clinique/à l'hôpital, il y avait suffisamment de médecins ou d'infirmières	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 26 - Participation	1	2	3	4
1 Lors de la dernière campagne électorale nationale, j'ai été victime d'intimidation ou de violence politique	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les médias devraient être libres de publier des opinions ou des idées sans le contrôle du gouvernement	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Pour quelqu'un comme moi, peu importe le type de gouvernement que nous avons.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 En RDC aujourd'hui, les femmes et les hommes ont aujourd'hui les mêmes chances d'obtenir un emploi rémunérateur	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Mon opinion et ma voix comptent	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 27 - Liberté individuelle	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis libre d'exprimer mon opinion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je suis invité à participer aux réunions communautaires	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis libre avec mes amis ou ma famille de discuter publiquement des questions politiques.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis libre d'adhérer à une organisation politique de mon choix.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les citoyens peuvent signaler sans crainte des actes de corruption ou d'autres conséquences négatives lorsqu'ils parlent	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 28 - Égalité	1	2	3	4
1 Un homme peut appliquer une discipline physique à sa femme si elle a fait quelque chose qu'il pense être mal	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Il est courant que les hommes utilisent la violence contre les femmes et les filles à la maison ou dans la communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Si une femme signale une violence, par exemple un viol ou une violence domestique, elle sera prise au sérieux	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les adultes utilisent la force physique pour discipliner les enfants	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Il vaut mieux que les filles engagées dans des conflits armés soient mariées plutôt que de rester avec leur famille	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 29 - Kadogos vs Kulunas	1	2	3	4
1 Je préfère vivre aux côtés de Kadogos qu'aux côtés de Kuluna	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je tolère les Kadogos originaires de nos propres communautés que ceux relocalisés ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les filles Kadogos font honte à nos familles ou à nos communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis content des Kadogos qui partagent la même foi religieuse que moi	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Kadogos sont plus dangereux que les Kulunas	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 30 - Sécurité (quels des acteurs suivants sont responsables de l'insécurité à laquelle notre pays est confronté)	1	2	3	4
1 FDLR (Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Mai-Mai	☐	☐	☐	☐

3 M23	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 ADF (Forces démocratiques alliées de l'Ouganda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 CODECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 AFRC	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Nyatura	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Mazembe-APASIKO	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 PARECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 Amka Jeshi	☐	☐	☐	☐

General feedback (Option)

Merci d'avoir participé à l'étude.

Numéro de participant:

F.1.B - Survey on the reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo - Communities

1. Sex: ☐Male ☐Female

2. Age: ☐18-2 ☐21-30 ☐31-40 ☐41-50 ☐51-60 ☐61-70

3. Regular contact with Kadogos: ☐Yes ☐No

4. Location: ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami

5. Status before conflict: ☐Student ☐Employed ☐Self-employed ☐Voluntary work ☐Unemployed ☐Stay at home parent ☐None ☐Other (you can tick multiple boxes).

6. Current status: ☐Student ☐Employed ☐Self-employed ☐Voluntary work ☐Unemployed ☐Stay at home parent ☐None ☐Other (you can tick multiple boxes).

7. If employed, do you work or have you worked with Kadogos? ☐Yes ☐No

8. If you worked with Kadogos in the past, would you work with them again in the future? ☐Yes ☐No - If no, why not? (List reasons: ……)

9. Have you personally fought against Kadogos in a conflict? ☐Yes ☐No

10. If yes; was the conflict over: ☐Land/Territory ☐Resources ☐Job opportunity ☐Physical/verbal Threats from Kadogos ☐Kadogos attack you for no apparent reason ☐Instructed to engage in conflict by somebody else ☐Followed others in the community ☐Perceived threat from Kadogos (you can tick multiple boxes).

11. If instructed by somebody else, was the instruction by the authorities? ☐Yes ☐No

12. If yes, was the authorities local ☐Yes ☐No; or national ☐Yes ☐No; or neither ☐Yes ☐No

13. If neither, can you state which authority instructed you? ☐Yes ☐No - If yes (name: ……..)

14. Did you have to relocate to new communities to get away from conflict? ☐Yes ☐No

15. If yes, is your current location the only location you moved to from flying your original community? ☐Yes ☐No

16. If no, have you had to move more than: ☐1time ☐twice ☐Three times or more

17. Are you a member of a church? ☐Yes ☐No - If yes, which one? (Name: ……)

18. Do you have responsibilities in community? ☐Yes ☐No

19. If yes, what are your responsibilities? (List your titles: ……)

20. Do you take part in decision processes of the community? ☐Yes ☐No

21. Do you own: ☐A push-bike ☐A car ☐Your home ☐A business ☐A land/lands ☐A farm/farms

22. If you own a business, would you employ Kadogos? ☐Yes ☐No - If no, why not? ……

23. Current marital status: ☐Yes ☐No ☐Divorced ☐Widowed

24. Children or dependants: ☐Yes ☐No

25. If yes, do your children come into regular contact with Kadogos or their children? ☐Yes ☐No

26. If yes, are you concerned over this contact? ☐Yes ☐No

27. Are you eligible to vote? ☐Yes ☐No

28. Did you vote in the last general elections: ☐Yes ☐No

29. Will you vote in the next general elections? ☐Yes ☐No

30. Do you have a mobile phone with access to internet: ☐Yes ☐No

31. Do you use the internet to update yourself on current affairs daily: ☐Yes ☐No

32. If you do not use the internet daily, how often? ☐Every other day ☐Once a week ☐Once a month ☐Rarely

- For each statement in the survey, please state how much you agree or disagree with the statement by putting a mark inside or crossing the box of each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answer will be kept strictly confidential, and you will not be identified.

- Scale: 1 - Strongly Agree (indicates that the characteristic is always manifested)
2 - Agree (indicates that the characteristic is often manifested)
3 - Disagree (indicates that the characteristic is seldom manifested)
4 - Strongly Disagree (indicates that the characteristic is never manifested)

Topic 1 - Who are former child soldiers?	1	2	3	4
1 Strangers to us and don't belong here	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I don't consider them as children anymore	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Dangerous and criminals	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 They are immoral, killers and rapists	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 They can't be trusted	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 2 - Experience with former child soldiers' reintegration	1	2	3	4
1 Former child soldiers' reintegration has overall been good	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I do usually get along with former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I feel threatened whenever I come into contact with former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I know who they are and they know who I am; and I'm fine with that	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I believe former child soldiers do make efforts to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 3 - Acceptance of Kadogos' reintegration	1	2	3	4
1 I am now happy to accept former child soldiers to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I have always been happy for former child soldiers to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Crimes they committed in the past make it difficult for them to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I still am angry with former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Former child soldiers should be sent back to their own communities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 4 - Economic Exploitation	1	2	3	4
1 Former child soldiers can reintegrate so long as they contribute to the local economy	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The local economy can sustain former child soldiers' reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 The local economy struggles with the addition of former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The local economy does not have incentives to cater for former child soldiers' needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Former child soldiers' reintegration is putting pressure or the local economy	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 5 - Economic opportunities	1	2	3	4
1 The more opportunities we have, the more we can accept reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The arrival of former child soldiers amplifies competition over opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Former child soldiers take away the few opportunities that we have	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The state provides enough opportunity for us and former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The economy prioritises former child soldiers over us on opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 6 - Economic conditions	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have not had to deal with a lack of Cash Income.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Looking back, I assess DRC's economic conditions to be better compared to 12 months ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 In the past 12 months I had, or a family member had, to deal with a lack of enough food to eat.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Looking ahead, I expect economic conditions in DRC in a 12-month period will be better.	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 In the past 12 months, I or a family member felt unsafe in neighbourhood.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 7 - Perceived Threat	1	2	3	4
1 Once a killer, always a killer	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Former child soldiers do not belong here	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The police and the army do enough to protect me from former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I cannot live side by side and in harmony with former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 8 - Trust	1	2	3	4
1 I do trust former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I do trust the authority	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I trust that former child soldiers would work to better our economy	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I trust that Former child soldiers would want to share opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I trust the authority to make decisions for the betterment all of us in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 9 - Beliefs or Legislations	1	2	3	4
1 Legislation provides clarity for reintegration of former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Political leaders do enough to promote reintegration of former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Reintegration of former child soldiers is debated enough in parliament	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I trust that the state does enough to reintegrate former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I would like to see more investment towards reintegrating former child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 10 - Prejudice/Stigma/Trauma	1	2	3	4
1 I believe Kadogos need help when reintegrating our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Kadogos are bad people who shouldn't be here	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I understand why Kadogos are struggling to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Kadogos are immoral and should be kept away from us	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Kadogos threaten our way of life, customs and laws	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 11 - Criminality	1	2	3	4
1 Former child soldiers amplify criminality in our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I cannot accept criminals to reintegrate our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Former child soldiers make no difference in the level criminality in our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I don't trust the authority to deal with former child soldiers' criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I believe former child soldiers are inherently criminals	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 12 - Protection/Threat Perception	1	2	3	4
1 I feel threatened by Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Kadogos cause insecurity in our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Authorities do everything they can to protect us against Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I feel protected by Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I do not threaten but would react to threats from Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 13 - Contact with Kadogos	1	2	3	4
1 I come into regular contact with Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I avoid contact with Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy living alongside Kadogos in our community	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My child/children are friends with Kadgos	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I value friendship with Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
Topic 14 - Sharing resources	1	2	3	4
1 I believe Kadogos deserve to be here	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I am happy to share community's resources with Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 There is not enough resources to share with Kadogos	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Kadogos threaten our access to resources	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Kadogos have been contributing to community wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 15 - Living alongside Kadogos	1	2	3	4
1 I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I encourage my family and friends to accept Kadogos' reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I trust Kadogos would come to my aid if needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I understand the importance of Kadogos' reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Kadogos do not threaten my livelihood	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 16 – Community	1	2	3	4
1 For us community means a group of people who share the same experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Community means those who accept us regardless of our background	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Even though we don't speak the same languages or eat the same food, we are part of one community	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My religion or culture allow me to be part of a different community	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Community should always agree with everyone within	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 17 - Politics	1	2	3	4
1 I trust our political institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I believe the last general elections were free and fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 My political opinions matter	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My political representatives listen to my me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I will vote in the next general elections	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 18 - Institutions	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have contacted my local or national leaders to discuss my ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust the FARDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy with our courts and justice systems.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Presence of international NGOs helps with Kadogos' reintegration.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 UN Peacekeepers help managing the conflicts.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 19 - Regional Influences	1	2	3	4
1 I trust EAC (the East African Community) Forces	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust SADC (the Southern African Development Community) Forces	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I trust the AU (the African Union)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I trust MONUSCO and the UN	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Foreign armed forces should never interfere in the political affairs of our country	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 20 - Neighbouring countries	1	2	3	4
1 Rwanda is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Burundi is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Uganda is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Angola is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Our neighbours are the reasons for instability in our country	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 21 - Democracy	1	2	3	4
1 I believe the last cycle of elections were free, fair and transparent	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Political parties create confusion and division among us	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I would like to see regular changes in political power from one election to another	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Winner of election should be free to rule, regardless of their political party	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The President should make laws regardless of the opinion of the National Assembly	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 22 - Governance	1	2	3	4
1 The local authorities care about my wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust the national parliament to work for the best of all Congolese people	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 The president should focus entirely on the development of the country instead waste time justifying their actions	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 It is legitimate for the armed forces to take government control when elected leaders abuse of their power	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Overall, I am satisfied with the way democracy works in the DRC.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 23 - Education	1	2	3	4
1 Myself or my family or friends have access to public education	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 During my interaction with teachers or school leaders, I think that they treat me with respect	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I have often had to pay bribes, give a gift or a favour to a teacher or school leader to get what I needed from the school	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 It is easy to get the services I need from teachers or school leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 School fees are affordable for myself and my family	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 24 - Welfare	1	2	3	4
1 For the past 12 months, I have had recourse to the assistance of the police	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I had to pay a bribe, give a gift or a favour to an agent police to get the assistance I needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy with all public infrastructures (roads, hospitals, communication, transport)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am happy with how the authority deal with conflicts in the country	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I am happy with all public services (education, healthcare, water, electricity)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 25 - Healthcare	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have dealt with a public clinic or hospital	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 It's easy to get the medical care or services I need	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I had to pay a bribe to a health care provider or hospital employee in order to obtain the medical care that I needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 In my last visit to clinic/hospital I saw enough medicines to treat all that needed treatment	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 In my last visit to clinic/hospital there was enough doctors or nurses to treat patients	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 26 - Participation	1	2	3	4
1 During the last national election campaign, I was a victim political intimidation or violence	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The media should be free to publish any opinions or ideas without the control of the government	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 In DRC today, women and men today have the same chances of getting a job that pays income	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 My opinion and my voice matter	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 27 - Personal freedom	1	2	3	4
1 I am free to express my opinion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I am welcomed to participate in community meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I with friends or family are free to discuss issues policies publicly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am free to join a political organization of my choice.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Ordinary citizens can report acts of corruption without fear, or other negative consequences when they speak.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 28 - Equality	1	2	3	4
1 A man can use physical discipline on his wife if she did something he doesn't like, or thinks is evil	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 In this locality, I think it is common for men to use violence against women and girls at home or in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 If a woman reports a gender-based violence, for example, rape or domestic violence, she will be taken seriously	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Adults use physical force to discipline children	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Girls previously engaged in armed conflicts are better of being married off than staying with their family	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 29 - Kadogos vs Kulunas	1	2	3	4
1 I would rather live alongside Kadogos than alongside Kuluna	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I tolerate Kadogos who originally came from our own communities than those relocated here	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Girl Kadogos bring shame to our families or communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I'm happy with Kadogos who share the same religious faith as me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Kadogos are more dangerous than Kulunas	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 30 - Security (which of the actors following are responsible for the security crisis facing our country)	1	2	3	4
1 FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Mai-Mai	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 M23	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 ADF (Allied Democratic Forces of Uganda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 CODECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 AFRC	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Nyatura	☐	☐	☐	☐

8 Mazembe-APASIKO	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 PARECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 Amka Jeshi	☐	☐	☐	☐

General feedback (Option)

Thank you for taking part in the study.

Participant Number:

F.2.A - Enquête sur la réinsertion des anciens enfants soldats en République Démocratique du Congo – Kadogos

1. Sexe : ☐Masculin ☐Féminin

2. Quel age etes-vous?:☐18-21 ☐21-30 ☐31-40 ☐41-50

3. Âge approximatif auquel vous avez commencé à vous battre : ☐ Plus jeune que 5 ☐5-10 ☐11-17 ☐18-ou plus

4. Durée approximative des combats : ☐1 to 5 ☐5 to 10 ☐plus de 10

5. Âge approximatif auquel vous avez décidé de vous réintégrer : ☐5-10 ☐11-17 ☐18-30 ☐30-40 ☐40-50

6. Province d'origine : ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

7. Province où vous avez été recruté pour le programme de réintégration : ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

8. Qui a parrainé/fourni le programme de réintégration ? ☐L'ONU ☐ Gouvernement de la RDC ☐L'UE ☐ONGs

9. Avez-vous été relocalisé sous le progamme de la réintégration? ☐Yes ☐No

10. En cas de déménagement où : ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

11. Statut avant les conflits : ☐ Étudiant(e) ☐ Employé(e) ☐ Travailleur indépendant(e) ☐ Travail volontaire ☐ Sans emploi ☐ Parent au foyer ☐ Aucun ☐ Autre (vous pouvez cocher plusieurs cases).

12. Nature du premier recrutement dans les combats : ☐ Volontaire ☐ Forcé

13. Si volontaire, avez-vous été recruté à nouveau depuis que vous avez cessé de combattre : Oui☐ Non☐

14. Si oui combien de fois : ☐Une fois ☐Deux fois ☐Trois fois ☐Plus

15. Si oui, par le même groupe armé ? Oui☐ Non☐

16. Nature de la première sélection dans le programme de réintégration : ☐ Volontaire ☐ Forcé

17. Si volontaire, avez-vous été resélectionné : Oui☐ Non☐

18. Si oui combien de fois : ☐Une fois ☐Deux fois ☐Trois fois ☐Plus

19. Itinéraire de sortie vers la réintégration : ☐ Via le programme de réhabilitation ☐ Sans soutien à la réadaptation

20. Statut actuel : ☐ Étudiant(e) ☐ Employé(e) ☐ Travailleur indépendant ☐ Travail volontaire ☐ Sans emploi ☐ Parent au foyer ☐ Aucun ☐ Autre (vous pouvez cocher plusieurs cases).

21. Niveau d'études : ☐ Primaire ☐ Secondaire ☐ Universitaire ☐ Professionnel

22. Avez-vous dû déménager dans de nouvelles communautés pour vous éloigner du conflit ? Oui☐ Non☐

23. Si oui, votre emplacement actuel est-il le seul endroit où vous avez déménagé après avoir volé dans votre communauté d'origine ? Oui☐ Non☐

24. Contact régulier avec les membres de la communauté : Oui☐ Non☐

25. Avez-vous des responsabilités dans la communauté ? Oui☐ Non☐

26. Si oui, quelles sont vos responsabilités ? (Indiquez vos titres ……...……)

27. Êtes-vous membre d'une église ? Oui☐ Non☐ - Si oui, lequel ? (Nommez : ……)

28. Possédez-vous : ☐ Un vélo à pousser ☐ Une voiture ☐ Votre maison ☐ Une entreprise ☐ Une terre/des terres ☐ Une ferme/des fermes

29. Participez-vous aux processus de décision de la communauté ? Oui☐ Non☐

30. État matrimonial actuel : Oui☐ Non☐ ☐ Divorcé(e) ☐ Veuf(ve)

31. Avez-vous des enfants ou des personnes sous votre charge : ☐Yes ☐No

32. Si oui, avez-vous des inquiétudes quant à l'interaction de vos enfants avec d'autres enfants de la communauté ? Oui☐ Non☐

33. Êtes-vous éligible pour voter ? Oui☐ Non☐

34. Avez-vous voté aux dernières élections législatives : Oui☐ Non☐

35. Voterez-vous aux prochaines élections législatives ? Oui☐ Non☐

36. Avez-vous un téléphone mobile avec accès à Internet : Oui☐ Non☐

37. Utilisez-vous Internet pour vous tenir quotidiennement au courant de l'actualité : Oui☐ Non☐

38. Si vous n'utilisez pas Internet quotidiennement, à quelle fréquence ? ☐ Tous les autres jours ☐ Une fois par semaine ☐ Une fois par mois ☐ Rarement

**** Pour chaque énoncé de l'enquête, veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord ou en désaccord avec l'énoncé en mettant une marque à l'intérieur ou en cochant la case de chaque énoncé. Il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses. Votre réponse restera strictement confidentielle et vous ne serez pas identifié.*

**** Échelle :* *1 - Tout à fait d'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste toujours)*

2 - D'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste souvent)

3 - Pas d'accord (indique que la caractéristique se manifeste rarement)

4 - Fortement en désaccord (indique que la caractéristique ne se manifeste jamais)

Topic 1 - Sélection dans les programmes de réintégration	1	2	3	4
1 Les programmes de réinsertion ont parfois fait parler d'eux parmi les enfants soldats	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'étais au courant des processus de réintégration avant la démobilisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je savais que je remplirais les critères de réintégration avant la démobilisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Le programme m'a sensibilisé aux attentes des communautés lors de la sélection	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Le programme semblait bien conçu pour répondre à mes besoins de réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 2 - Emplacement des programmes de réintégration	1	2	3	4
1 Je savais où se déroulaient les processus de réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Le lieu de réintégration était trop éloigné de ma famille et de ma communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Être relocalisé, loin de la zone de conflit actif, a été bon pour ma réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La réinstallation dans des communautés complètement inconnues a rendu la réintégration difficile	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les communautés locales m'ont fait sentir le bienvenu	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 3 - Expérience de réintégration	1	2	3	4
1 Mon expérience de réintégration a été globalement positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je me suis senti pleinement soutenu pendant le programme	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai senti que les programmes étaient bien conçus pour mes besoins	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 J'ai eu du mal à me réintégrer	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je recommanderais les programmes, tels quels, à tout le monde	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 4 - Expérience suite à des programmes de réintégration	1	2	3	4
1 Mon expérience de réintégration suite au programme DDR a été positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je sentais que les programmes faisaient assez pour m'aider à réintégrer	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai du mal à me réintégrer depuis que j'ai quitté le programme	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Le manque de suivi a rendu ma réintégration difficile	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Ma vie était meilleure avant d'entrer dans les programmes de réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 5 - Acceptation communautaire	1	2	3	4
1 Le retour dans ma famille a été positif	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Le retour dans ma communauté a été positif	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je ressens un rejet en essayant de revenir	☐	☐	☐	☐

4 D'autres communautés ont été plus accueillantes que la mienne	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je fais confiance aux communautés pour me traiter correctement et équitablement	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 6 - Conditions économiques	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, je n'ai pas eu à faire face à un manque de revenu en espèces.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Avec le recul, j'estime que les conditions économiques de la RDC sont meilleures qu'il y a 12 mois.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai dû, ou un membre de ma famille a dû faire face à un manque de nourriture à manger.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Pour l'avenir, je m'attends à ce que les conditions économiques en RDC soient meilleures sur une période de 12 mois.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, moi ou un membre de ma famille ne nous sommes pas sentis en sécurité dans le quartier.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 7 - Exploitation économique	1	2	3	4
1 J'ai des opportunités et je me sens en sécurité ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'entre souvent en conflit avec les communautés au sujet des opportunités	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je me sens mal traité à cause de ce que j'ai été dans le passé	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La vie est meilleure maintenant qu'elle ne l'était dans la rébellion	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I would return to my own family and communities, if I could	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 8 - Opportunités économiques	1	2	3	4
1 Les compétitions entre nous et les communautés sont une préoccupation pour notre bien-être	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Plus il y a d'opportunités dans les communautés, plus elles accepteront notre réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je crois qu'il y a suffisamment d'opportunités pour tout le monde, seulement si les communautés sont ouvertes au partage	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 L'économie donne la priorité aux communautés par rapport à nous sur les opportunités	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 L'État offre suffisamment d'opportunités pour nous et les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 9 - Confiance	1	2	3	4
1 je fais confiance aux autorités	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les autorités me font confiance	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je fais confiance à la communauté locale	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La communauté locale me fait confiance	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je préfère compter sur moi pour ma réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 10 - Préjugés/stigmatisation/traumatisme	1	2	3	4
1 Les préjugés affectent ma capacité à réintégrer	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Mon traumatisme vécu affecte ma capacité à me réinsérer	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je comprends pourquoi les communautés luttent pour nous réintégrer	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La stigmatisation que je porte affecte ma capacité à me réinsérer	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les communautés m'acceptent et me traitent bien	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 11 - Criminalité	1	2	3	4
1 Les Kadogos évitent souvent la criminalité	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Une fois la réintégration échouée, les Kadogos n'ont souvent d'autre choix que de se lancer dans la criminalité	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Le rejet communautaire conduit Kadogos à la criminalité	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Le manque d'opportunités légales conduit Kadogos à la criminalité	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Le manque de confiance de la part des autorités et de la communauté conduit les kadogos à la criminalité	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 12 - Protection/perception des menaces	1	2	3	4
1 Les Kadogos se sentent souvent menacés par les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les Kadogos se sentent protégés par les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Les Kadogos se sentent menacés par les autorités	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les Kaodogs se sentent protégés par les autorités	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Kadogos ne menacent pas souvent mais réagiraient aux menaces	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 13 - Vivre avec les communautés	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis en contact régulier et je suis heureux d'avoir des communautés comme voisins	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'espère que les communautés viendront à mon aide si nécessaire	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis heureux et j'encourage ma famille et mes amis à se lier d'amitié avec les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Mon enfant/mes enfants sont amis avec les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 J'apprécie l'amitié avec les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 14 - Partage des ressources	1	2	3	4
1 Je crois que je mérite d'être ici, et les communautés ne menacent pas mes moyens de subsistance	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je suis heureux de partager des ressources avec les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Le partage des ressources n'est jamais un problème avec les communautés	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les communautés menacent mon accès aux ressources	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les communautés contribuent à mon bien-être et comprennent l'importance de ma réintégration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 15 - Bien-être	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours de la dernière année, j'avais vu un professionnel de la santé mentale	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'ai établi de bonnes relations avec la communauté et je me sens en sécurité ici	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'avais été diagnostiqué et je souffrais d'un trouble de stress post-traumatique	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Ma communauté me donne la liberté d'inclure d'anciens enfants soldats dans mon cercle d'amis	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je suis encouragé à demander de l'aide à la communauté si/quand j'en ai besoin	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 16 – Communauté	1	2	3	4
1 Pour nous, la communauté signifie un groupe de personnes qui partagent la même expérience	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 La communauté signifie ceux qui nous acceptent indépendamment de notre origine	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Même si nous ne parlons pas les mêmes langues, nous faisons partie d'une même communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Ma religion ou ma culture me permettent de faire partie d'une communauté différente	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 La communauté doit toujours être d'accord avec tout le monde au sein	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 17 - Politique	1	2	3	4
1 Je fais confiance à nos institutions politiques	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je crois que les dernières élections générales ont été libres et justes	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Mes opinions politiques comptent	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Mes représentants politiques m'écoutent	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je voterai aux prochaines élections générales	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 18 - Institutions	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai contacté mes dirigeants locaux ou nationaux pour discuter de mes idées.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance aux FARDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis satisfait de nos tribunaux et de nos systèmes de justice.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 La présence d'ONG internationales aide à la réintégration de Kadogos.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les Casques bleus de l'ONU aident à gérer les conflits.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 19 - Influences régionales	1	2	3	4
1 Je fais confiance aux forces de la CAE (la Communauté de l'Afrique de l'Est)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance aux forces de la SADC (Communauté de développement de l'Afrique australe)	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je fais confiance à l'UA (l'Union Africaine)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je fais confiance à la MONUSCO et à l'ONU	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les forces armées étrangères ne doivent jamais s'immiscer dans les affaires politiques de notre pays	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 20 - Pays voisins	1	2	3	4
1 Le Rwanda est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Le Burundi est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 L'Ouganda est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 L'Angola est un pays ami	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Nos voisins sont les raisons de l'instabilité de notre pays	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 21 - Démocratie	1	2	3	4
1 Je pense que le dernier cycle d'élections a été libre, juste et transparent	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les partis politiques créent la confusion et la division parmi nous	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'aimerais voir des changements réguliers du pouvoir politique d'une élection à l'autre	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Le vainqueur des élections devrait être libre de gouverner, quel que soit son parti politique	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Le président devrait faire des lois indépendamment de l'avis de l'Assemblée nationale	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 22 - Gouvernance	1	2	3	4
1 Les autorités locales se soucient de mon bien-être	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je fais confiance au parlement national pour travailler pour le meilleur de tous les Congolais	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Le président devrait se concentrer sur le développement du pays au lieu de perdre du temps à justifier ses actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Il est légitime que les forces armées prennent contrôle du gouvernement si les dirigeants élus abusent de leur pouvoir	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait du fonctionnement de la démocratie en RDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 23 - Education	1	2	3	4
1 Moi-même ou ma famille ou mes amis ont accès à l'enseignement public	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Lors de mes interactions avec les enseignants ou les chefs d'établissement, je pense qu'ils me traitent avec respect	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai souvent offert des cadeaux ou des faveurs aux enseignants pour obtenir ce dont j'avais besoin de l'école	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Il est facile d'obtenir les services dont j'ai besoin auprès des enseignants ou des chefs d'établissement	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les frais de scolarité sont abordables pour moi et ma famille	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 24 - Bien-être	1	2	3	4
1 Depuis 12 mois, j'ai eu recours à l'assistance de la police	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 J'ai dû offrir des cadeaux ou des faveurs à un agent de police pour obtenir l'aide dont j'avais besoin	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis satisfait de toutes les infrastructures publiques (routes, hôpitaux, communication, transport)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis satisfait de la manière dont les autorités gèrent les conflits dans le pays	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Je suis satisfait de tous les services publics (éducation, santé, eau, électricité)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 25 - Soins de santé	1	2	3	4
1 Au cours des 12 derniers mois, j'ai fait affaire avec une clinique ou un hôpital public	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Il est facile d'obtenir les soins médicaux ou les services dont j'ai besoin	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 J'ai dû payer un prestataire de soins de santé ou à un employé de l'hôpital pour obtenir les soins médicaux.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Lors de ma dernière visite à la clinique/à l'hôpital, j'ai vu suffisamment de médicaments pour traiter tous les malades	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Lors de ma dernière visite à la clinique/à l'hôpital, il y avait suffisamment de médecins ou d'infirmières	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 26 - Participation	1	2	3	4
1 Lors de la dernière campagne électorale nationale, j'ai été victime d'intimidation ou de violence politique	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Les médias devraient être libres de publier des opinions ou des idées sans le contrôle du gouvernement	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Pour quelqu'un comme moi, peu importe le type de gouvernement que nous avons.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 En RDC aujourd'hui, les femmes et les hommes ont aujourd'hui les mêmes chances d'obtenir un emploi rémunérateur	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Mon opinion et ma voix comptent	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 27 - Liberté individuelle	1	2	3	4
1 Je suis libre d'exprimer mon opinion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Je suis invité à participer aux réunions communautaires	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Je suis libre avec mes amis ou ma famille de discuter publiquement des questions politiques.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Je suis libre d'adhérer à une organisation politique de mon choix.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Les citoyens peuvent signaler sans crainte des actes de corruption ou d'autres conséquences négatives lorsqu'ils parlent	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 28 - Égalité	1	2	3	4
1 Un homme peut appliquer une discipline physique à sa femme si elle a fait quelque chose qu'il pense être mal	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Il est courant que les hommes utilisent la violence contre les femmes et les filles à la maison ou dans la communauté	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Si une femme signale une violence, par exemple un viol ou une violence domestique, elle sera prise au sérieux	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Les adultes utilisent la force physique pour discipliner les enfants	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Il vaut mieux que les filles engagées dans des conflits armés soient mariées plutôt que de rester avec leur famille	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 29 - With others	1	2	3	4
1 I feel safe living alongside Kulunas	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Communities tolerate me because I am originally from here	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Girl Kadogos are treated worse than boys	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am friend with Kulunas and I know them personally	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Communities treat me worse than Kuluna, even though I'm not involved in criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 30 - Sécurité (quels des acteurs suivants sont responsables de l'insécurité à laquelle notre pays est confronté)	1	2	3	4
1 FDLR (Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Mai-Mai	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 M23	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 ADF (Forces démocratiques alliées de l'Ouganda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 CODECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 AFRC	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Nyatura	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Mazembe-APASIKO	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 PARECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 Amka Jeshi	☐	☐	☐	☐

General feedback (Option)

Merci d'avoir participé à l'étude.

Numéro de participant:

F.2.B - Survey on the reintegration of former child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo

1. Sex: ☐Male ☐Female

2. What is your age: ☐18-21 ☐21-30 ☐31-40 ☐41-50

3. Approximate age when you got into fighting: ☐Younger than 5 ☐5-10 ☐11-17 ☐18-over

4. Approximate time in fighting: ☐1to5Years ☐5to 10 Years ☐More than 10 Years

5. Approximate age when you decided to reintegrate: ☐5-10 ☐11-17 ☐18-30 ☐30-40 ☐40-50

6. Province of origin: ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

7. Province where you were recruited for Reintegration program: ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

8. Who sponsored/provided the Reintegration program? ☐The UN ☐DRC government ☐The EU ☐NGOs

9. Relocated under DDR program? ☐Yes ☐No

10. If relocated where to: ☐Ituri ☐Nord-Kivu ☐Sud-Kivu ☐Maniema ☐Tanganyika ☐Kasai ☐Kasai Central ☐Kasai Oriental ☐Haut-Uele ☐Lomami ☐Haut-Lomami ☐Other

11. Status before conflict or joining armed group: ☐ Student ☐Employed ☐Self-employed ☐Voluntary work ☐Unemployed ☐Stay at home parent ☐Under the care of NGOs ☐None ☐Other (you can tick multiple boxes).

12. Nature of first recruitment into fighting: ☐Voluntary ☐Forced

13. If voluntary, have you been re-recruited since stopped fighting: Yes☐ No☐

14. If yes, how many times: ☐Once ☐Twice ☐Three times ☐More

15. If yes, by the same armed group? ☐Yes ☐No

16. Nature of first selection into Reintegration program: ☐Voluntary ☐Forced

17. If voluntary, have you been re-selected: Yes☐ No☐

18. If yes, how many times: ☐Once ☐Twice ☐Three times ☐More

19. Itinerary of exit to reintegration: ☐Via rehabilitation program ☐Without rehabilitation support

20. Current status: ☐Student ☐Employed ☐Self-employed ☐Voluntary work ☐Unemployed ☐Stay at home parent ☐Under the care of NGOs ☐None ☐Other (you can tick multiple boxes).

21. Level of education: ☐Primary ☐Secondary ☐University ☐Professional

22. Regular contact with members of the community: ☐Yes ☐No

23. Responsibilities in community? ☐Yes ☐No

☐

24. Are you a member of a church? ☐Yes ☐No - If yes, which one?

25. Do you own: ☐A push-bike ☐A car ☐Your home ☐A business ☐A land/lands ☐A farm/farms

26. Do you take part in decision processes of the community? ☐Yes ☐No

27. Current marital status: ☐Yes ☐No ☐Divorced ☐Widowed

28. Children or dependants: ☐Yes ☐No

29. If yes, do you have concerns over your children interacting with other children in the community? ☐Yes ☐No

30. Are you eligible to vote? ☐Yes ☐No

31. Did you vote in the last general elections: ☐Yes ☐No

32. Will you vote in the next general elections? ☐Yes ☐No

33. Do you have a mobile phone with access to internet: ☐Yes ☐No

34. Do you use the internet to update yourself on current affairs daily: ☐Yes ☐No

35. If you do not use the internet daily, how often? ☐Every other day ☐Once a week ☐Once a month ☐Rarely

- For each statement in the survey, please state how much you agree or disagree with the statement by putting a mark inside or crossing the box of each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answer will be kept strictly confidential, and you will not be identified.

- Scale: 1 - Strongly Agree (indicates that the characteristic is always manifested)
2 - Agree (indicates that the characteristic is often manifested)
3 - Disagree (indicates that the characteristic is seldom manifested)
4 - Strongly Disagree (indicates that the characteristic is never manifested)

Topic 1 - Selection into reintegration programs	1	2	3	4
1 Reintegration programs were sometimes talked about among child soldiers	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I was aware of the reintegration processes before demobilising	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I knew I would meet the criteria for reintegration before demobilising	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The program made me aware of communities' expectations during selection	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The program appeared adequately designed to fit my needs for reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 2 - Location of reintegration programs	1	2	3	4
1 I was aware of where reintegration processes were taking place	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Location of reintegration was too far away from my family and community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Being relocated, away from active conflict zone, was right for my reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Relocation to completely unfamiliar communities made reintegration difficult	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Local communities made me feel welcome	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 3 - Experience with reintegration	1	2	3	4
1 My experience with reintegration was overall positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I felt fully supported during the program	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I felt that programs were suitably designed for my needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I struggled reintegrating	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 I would recommend the programs, as they were, to anyone	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 4 - Experience following reintegration programs	1	2	3	4
1 My experience of reintegration following DDR program has been positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I felt that programs did enough to help me reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I struggle to reintegrate since I left the program	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The lack of follow up made reintegration difficult for me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 My life was better before entering reintegration programs	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 5 - Community Acceptance	1	2	3	4
1 Returning to my family has been positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Returning to my community has been positive	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I experience rejection whilst trying to return	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Other communities have been more welcoming than my own	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I trust the communities to treat me right and fairly	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 6 - Economic conditions	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have not had to deal with a lack of Cash Income.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Looking back, I assess DRC's economic conditions to be better compared to 12 months ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 In the past 12 months I had, or a family member had, to deal with a lack of enough food to eat.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Looking ahead, I expect economic conditions in DRC in a 12-month period will be better.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 In the past 12 months, I or a family member felt unsafe in neighbourhood.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 7 - Economic Exploitation	1	2	3	4
1 I have opportunities and feel safe here	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I often come into conflicts with communities over opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I feel badly treated because of what I was in the past	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Life is better now than it was in the rebellion	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I would return to my own family and communities, if I could	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 8 - Economic opportunities	1	2	3	4
1 Competitions between us and the communities are a concern for our wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The more opportunities in the communities, the more they will accept our reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I believe there is enough opportunities for everyone, only if the communities is open to share	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The economy prioritises communities over us on opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The state provides enough opportunity for us and the communities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 9 - Trust	1	2	3	4
1 I trust the authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The authorities trust me	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I trust the local community	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The local community trusts me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I'd rather rely on myself for my reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 10 - Prejudice/Stigma/Trauma	1	2	3	4
1 Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 My experienced trauma affects my ability to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I understand why communities struggle to reintegrate us	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Stigma that I carry affects my ability to reintegrate	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Communities accept and treat me well	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 11 - Criminality	1	2	3	4
1 Kadogos often avoid criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Once reintegration fails Kadogos often have no other choice but to get into criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Community rejection leads Kadogos to criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Lack of legal opportunities leads Kadogos to criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Lack of trust from both the authority and community lead kadogos to criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 12 - Protection/Threat Perception	1	2	3	4
1 Kadogos often feel threatened by communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Kadogos feel protected by communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Kadogos feel threatened by authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Kaodogs feel protected by authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Kadogos do not often threaten but would react to threats	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 13 - Living with communities	1	2	3	4
1 I come into regular contact, and I am happy to have communities as neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust communities would come to my aid if needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy and encourage my family and friends to make friends with communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My child/children are friends with communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I value friendship with communities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 14 - Sharing resources	1	2	3	4
1 I believe I deserve to be here, and communities do not threaten my livelihood	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I am happy to share resources with communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Sharing resources is never an issue with communities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Communities threaten my access to resources	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Communities contribute to my wellbeing and understand the importance of my reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 15 - Well Being	1	2	3	4
1 I am happy being part of the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I have established good relationship with the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I see a better and secure future being here	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My community allows me the freedom to include former child soldiers in my circle of friends	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I am encouraged to seek help from the community if/when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 16 - Community	1	2	3	4
1 For us community means a group of people who share the same experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Community means those who accept us regardless of our background	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Even though we don't speak the same languages or eat the same food, we are part of one community	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My religion or culture allow me to be part of a different community	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Community should always agree with everyone within	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 17 - Politics	1	2	3	4
1 I trust our political institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I believe the last general elections were free and fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 My political opinions matter	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My political representatives listen to my me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I will vote in the next general elections	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 18 - Institutions	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have contacted my local or national leaders to discuss my ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust the FARDC.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy with our courts and justice systems.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Presence of international NGOs helps with my reintegration	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 UN Peacekeepers help managing the conflicts	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 19 - Regional Influences	1	2	3	4
1 I trust EAC (the East African Community) Forces	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust SADC (the Southern African Development Community) Forces	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I trust the AU (the African Union)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I trust MONUSCO and the UN	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Foreign armed forces should never interfere in the political affairs of our country	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 20 - Neighbouring countries	1	2	3	4
1 Rwanda is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Burundi is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Uganda is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Angola is a friendly country	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Our neighbours are the reasons for instability in our country	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 21 - Democracy	1	2	3	4
1 I believe the last cycle of elections were free, fair and transparent	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Political parties create confusion and division among us	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I would like to see regular changes in political power from one election to another	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Winner of election should be free to rule, regardless of their political party	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The President should make laws regardless of the opinion of the National Assembly	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 22 - Governance	1	2	3	4
1 The local authorities care about my wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I trust the national parliament to work for the best of all Congolese people	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 The president should focus entirely on the development of the country instead waste time justifying their actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 It is legitimate for the armed forces to take government control when elected leaders abuse of their power	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Overall, I am satisfied with the way democracy works in the DRC.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 23 - Education	1	2	3	4
1 Myself or my family or friends have access to public education	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 During my interaction with teachers or school leaders, I think that they treat me with respect	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I have often had to pay bribes, give a gift or a favour to a teacher or school leader to get what I needed from the school	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 It is easy to get the services I need from teachers or school leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 School fees are affordable for myself and my family	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 24 - Welfare	1	2	3	4
1 For the past 12 months, I have had recourse to the assistance of the police	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I had to pay a bribe, give a gift or a favour to an agent police to get the assistance I needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am happy with all public infrastructures (roads, hospitals, communication, transport)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am happy with how the authority deal with conflicts in the country	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I am happy with all public services (education, healthcare, water, electricity)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 25 - Healthcare	1	2	3	4
1 In the past 12 months, I have dealt with a public clinic or hospital	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 It's easy to get the medical care or services I need	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I had to pay a bribe to a health care provider or hospital employee in order to obtain the medical care that I needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 In my last visit to clinic/hospital I saw enough medicines to treat all that needed treatment	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 In my last visit to clinic/hospital there was enough doctors or nurses to treat patients	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 26 - Participation	1	2	3	4
1 During the last national election campaign, I was a victim political intimidation or violence	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The media should be free to publish any opinions or ideas without the control of the government	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 In DRC today, women and men today have the same chances of getting a job that pays income	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 My opinion and my voice matter	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 27 - Personal freedom	1	2	3	4
1 I am free to express my opinion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I am welcomed to participate in community meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I with friends or family are free to discuss issues policies publicly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am free to join a political organization of my choice.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Ordinary citizens can report acts of corruption without fear, or other negative consequences when they speak.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 28 - Equality	1	2	3	4

1 A man can use physical discipline on his wife if she did something he doesn't like, or thinks is evil	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 In this locality, I think it is common for men to use violence against women and girls at home or in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 If a woman reports a gender-based violence, for example, rape or domestic violence, she will be taken seriously	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Adults use physical force to discipline children	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Girls previously engaged in armed conflicts are better of being married off than staying with their family	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 29 - With others	1	2	3	4
1 I feel safe living alongside Kulunas	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Communities tolerate me because I am originally from here	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Girl Kadogos are treated worse than boys	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am friend with Kulunas and I know them personally	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Communities treat me worse than Kuluna, even though I'm not involved in criminality	☐	☐	☐	☐

Topic 30 - Security (which of the following actors are responsible for the security crisis facing our country)	1	2	3	4
1 FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Mai-Mai	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 M23	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 ADF (Allied Democratic Forces of Uganda)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 CODECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 AFRC	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Nyatura	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Mazembe-APASIKO	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 PARECO	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 Amka Jeshi	☐	☐	☐	☐

General feedback (Option)

Thank you for taking part in the study

Participant Number:

Section G - Interview guides (qualitative instruments: semi-structured interview guides prompts): Leaders – French and English.

G1. Entretien avec les dirigeants

Les entrevues se dérouleront individuellement et devraient durer au moins une (1) heure. L'étude se concentrera à la fois sur les législations nationales et locales sur la réintégration des Kadogos, sur ce qui a été fait pour faciliter l'acceptation communautaire des Kadogos dans les communautés et sur ce qui conduit à l'exploitation économique des Kadogos et des communautés et sur ce qui devrait être fait pour remédier au problème. Évaluer le rôle des dirigeants locaux (à la fois religieux/spirituels et politiques) dans l'acceptation ou le rejet de la réintégration de Kadogos.

La réunion sera enregistrée avec un appareil d'enregistrement, transcrite dans un format écrit par moi-même et les versions enregistrées seront détruites une fois les données téléchargées en toute sécurité sur iClouds et analysées. Vous recevrez un numéro de référence spécifique qui sera une combinaison de lettres et de chiffres. Par exemple, les chefs militaires seront enregistrés sous ML001 ou ML002 ou ML003. Les membres du parlement national seront enregistrés sous MPN001 ou MPN002 et ceux du parlement provincial sous MPP001 ou MPP002 ou MPP003. D'autres autorités telles que les gouverneurs seront enregistrées en tant que G1 et G2, les chefs religieux / spirituels en tant que R / S001 ou R / S002… Je téléchargerai toutes les informations collectées sur le compte iClouds de l'Université d'Essex et fournirai à mes superviseurs uniquement un accès par mot de passe aux données. Ainsi, il ne devrait y avoir que 3 personnes pouvant accéder aux informations que vous me fournissez. Voici les 15 sujets choisis pour discuter :

Thème 1 - Enfants soldats - Je trouve que la définition d'enfant soldat est présentée quelque peu différemment de la compréhension universelle de ce qu'est un enfant soldat et de qui il s'agit. Pourriez-vous clarifier ce qui suit ou nous fournir votre définition personnelle ou celle de l'État d'un enfant soldat, s'il vous plaît ?

1. Comment la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) définit-elle les « enfants soldats » dans le contexte des conflits armés et de la violence dans le pays ?
2. À quels cadres juridiques ou conventions internationales la RDC adhère-t-elle lors de l'examen de la définition des enfants soldats ?
3. Comment la RDC fait-elle la distinction entre le recrutement volontaire et involontaire d'enfants dans des groupes ou forces armés ?
4. Existe-t-il des seuils d'âge ou des critères spécifiques utilisés pour déterminer le statut des enfants soldats en RDC ?
5. Comment la RDC relève-t-elle les défis de l'identification et de la vérification du statut des enfants soldats pendant et après les conflits armés ?

Thème 2 - Législation et institutions

1. Quelles mesures législatives ou politiques sont en place pour soutenir la réintégration des enfants soldats dans leurs communautés et la société après leur démobilisation ?
2. Comment les responsabilités en matière de réintégration des enfants soldats sont-elles réparties entre les différentes institutions et agences gouvernementales en RDC ?
3. Quel rôle les organisations de la société civile et les partenaires internationaux jouent-ils dans le soutien aux efforts de réintégration des enfants soldats, et comment collaborent-ils avec les institutions gouvernementales ?
4. Comment la RDC assure-t-elle la protection et la sécurité des enfants soldats au cours de leur processus de réintégration, compte tenu des risques et défis potentiels auxquels ils peuvent être confrontés ?
5. Quels efforts sont déployés pour fournir des services complets, tels que l'éducation, le soutien psychosocial, la formation professionnelle et les opportunités de subsistance, afin de faciliter un processus de réintégration réussi et durable pour les enfants soldats ?

Thème 3 - Confiance - J'ai noté que la confiance était très importante pour que la réintégration de Kadogos soit efficace dans les communautés :

A. Kadogos

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC s'assure-t-il que le processus de réintégration favorise la confiance entre Kadogos et les communautés locales pour promouvoir une transition réussie dans la société ?
2. Quelles mesures sont en place pour répondre à la méfiance et à la peur que les Kadogos peuvent avoir envers le gouvernement et les autorités, compte tenu de leurs expériences passées pendant le conflit ?
3. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC engage-t-il les Kadogos et les représentants des communautés locales dans les processus décisionnels liés aux politiques et programmes de réintégration pour instaurer la confiance et s'assurer que leurs voix sont entendues ?
4. Quelles mesures sont prises pour répondre aux griefs historiques et aux violations des droits humains qui ont pu contribuer à la rupture de confiance entre Kadogos et le gouvernement ?
5. Comment le gouvernement encourage-t-il la transparence, la responsabilité et une communication efficace pour instaurer la confiance entre les Kadogos, les communautés locales et les autorités gouvernementales tout au long du processus de réintégration ?

B. Communautés

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC répond-il aux préoccupations et aux craintes des communautés locales concernant la réintégration des Kadogos pour promouvoir la confiance et l'acceptation ?
2. Quelles mesures sont prises pour sensibiliser les communautés locales aux expériences et aux défis auxquels sont confrontés les Kadogos, et comment ces efforts visent-ils à favoriser l'empathie et la compréhension ?
3. Comment le gouvernement implique-t-il les dirigeants et les représentants des communautés locales dans la planification et la mise en œuvre des programmes de réintégration pour instaurer la confiance et s'assurer que les perspectives de la communauté sont prises en compte ?
4. Des mécanismes communautaires de réconciliation et de résolution des conflits sont-ils utilisés pour traiter les griefs et promouvoir le renforcement de la confiance entre les communautés locales, Kadogos et le gouvernement ?
5. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC s'assure-t-il que le processus de réintégration donne la priorité au développement et aux avantages communautaires, pour démontrer l'engagement du gouvernement envers le bien-être et la prospérité des communautés où les Kadogos sont réintégrés ?

Thème 4 - Menace et criminalité perçues - J'ai noté que c'était l'une des raisons pour lesquelles les habitants avaient du mal à accepter que les Kadogos soient réintégrés dans leurs communautés.

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC répond-il aux préoccupations des communautés locales concernant la menace perçue ou la criminalité liée à la réintégration de Kadogos, et quelles mesures sont en place pour assurer la sûreté et la sécurité de ces communautés ?
2. Quelles stratégies sont mises en œuvre pour lutter contre la stigmatisation et les perceptions négatives que les communautés locales peuvent avoir envers Kadogos pendant le processus de réintégration ?
3. Existe-t-il des campagnes de sensibilisation du public ou des programmes de sensibilisation communautaire visant à dissiper les idées fausses sur la réintégration des Kadogos et à promouvoir la compréhension entre les communautés et les anciens enfants soldats ?
4. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC collabore-t-il avec les forces de l'ordre locales pour s'assurer que tout risque de sécurité potentiel lié à la réintégration de Kadogos est correctement géré et atténué ?

5. Quels efforts sont déployés pour impliquer les communautés locales dans le suivi et l'évaluation du processus de réintégration, leur permettant de donner leur avis et de faire part de leurs éventuelles préoccupations concernant l'impact du programme sur leur sécurité et leur bien-être ?

Thème 5 - Acceptation par la communauté - Je suppose que cela est crucial pour que la réintégration soit considérée comme réussie.

1. Partagez-vous également la même hypothèse ? Si non, pourquoi pas ?
2. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC évalue-t-il le niveau d'acceptation par la communauté de la réintégration de Kadogos, et quels indicateurs sont utilisés pour mesurer le succès de cette acceptation ?
3. Quelles stratégies ou initiatives sont en place pour promouvoir l'acceptation communautaire des Kadogos pendant le processus de réintégration, et comment ces efforts sont-ils adaptés pour répondre aux contextes culturels et sociaux spécifiques au sein des différentes communautés ?
4. Y a-t-il des défis ou des obstacles qui ont été identifiés pour parvenir à l'acceptation de Kadogos par la communauté, et quelles mesures sont prises pour résoudre ces problèmes ?
5. Comment le gouvernement collabore-t-il avec les dirigeants communautaires locaux et les parties prenantes pour instaurer la confiance et favoriser un environnement favorable à la réintégration réussie de Kadogos ?
6. Quel rôle les membres de la communauté locale jouent-ils dans la conception et la mise en œuvre des programmes de réintégration, et comment leur participation active contribue-t-elle à l'acceptation générale des Kadogos dans leurs communautés ?

Thème 6 - Exploitation économique

1. Quelles mesures sont en place pour protéger les Kadogos de l'exploitation économique pendant leur processus de réintégration, et comment le gouvernement surveille-t-il et traite-t-il tout cas potentiel d'exploitation ?
2. Des programmes spécifiques de formation professionnelle et de soutien aux moyens de subsistance sont-ils en place pour donner aux Kadogos des opportunités économiques durables et les empêcher d'être victimes d'exploitation ?
3. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC collabore-t-il avec les agences et organisations concernées pour sensibiliser aux risques d'exploitation économique auxquels sont confrontés les Kadogos, et quelles initiatives éducatives sont mises en œuvre pour leur donner les moyens de prendre des décisions éclairées ?
4. Comment le gouvernement s'assure-t-il que toutes les activités génératrices de revenus impliquant des Kadogos sont menées de manière équitable et transparente, et qu'ils ont accès à des connaissances financières et à un soutien juridique pour protéger leurs droits économiques ?
5. Existe-t-il des lois ou des réglementations spécifiques pour lutter contre l'exploitation économique des Kadogos, et quelles mesures sont prises contre les individus ou entités qui exploitent d'anciens enfants soldats au cours de leur processus de réintégration ?

Thème 7 - Problèmes de préjugés et de protection des Kadogos

1. Avez-vous noté des préjugés envers les Kadogos de la part des communautés locales, lorsqu'il s'agit de les réintégrer ?
2. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC aborde-t-il les problèmes de préjugés contre les Kadogos lors de leur processus de réintégration, et quelles mesures sont en place pour promouvoir leur acceptation sociale au sein des communautés locales ?
3. Existe-t-il des programmes de soutien psychosocial spécifiques pour faire face au traumatisme et à la stigmatisation vécus par les Kadogos, et comment ces programmes sont-ils adaptés à leurs besoins uniques ?

4. Quels efforts sont déployés pour sensibiliser les communautés locales à l'importance de protéger les droits des Kadogos et d'assurer leur sécurité pendant le processus de réintégration ?
5. Comment le gouvernement collabore-t-il avec les parties prenantes concernées, y compris les organisations de la société civile et les partenaires internationaux, pour assurer la protection des droits et du bien-être des Kadogos pendant leur parcours de réintégration ?
6. Existe-t-il des cadres juridiques ou des politiques en place pour protéger les Kadogos de la discrimination et garantir leur accès à l'éducation, aux soins de santé et à d'autres services essentiels pendant le processus de réintégration ?

Thème 8 - Lieux des programmes de réintégration

1. Quelles sont les raisons de la relocalisation des Kadogos de l'ouest vers l'est de la RDC pour la réintégration, et comment ce processus de relocalisation est-il géré pour assurer leur sécurité et leur bien-être pendant la transition ?
2. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC évalue-t-il l'efficacité de la relocalisation des Kadogos dans l'est de la RDC pour la réintégration par rapport à la réintégration au sein de leurs communautés d'origine ? Existe-t-il des indicateurs ou des critères spécifiques utilisés pour mesurer le succès de cette approche ?
3. Quels sont les principaux défis et avantages associés à la relocalisation de Kadogos pour la réintégration, et comment ces facteurs sont-ils pris en compte dans les processus de prise de décision ?
4. Comment le gouvernement collabore-t-il avec les communautés locales dans l'ouest et l'est de la RDC pour assurer l'acceptation et le soutien de la communauté à la réintégration des Kadogos déplacés ?
5. Existe-t-il des mesures de suivi spécifiques ou des mécanismes de soutien en place pour les Kadogos relocalisés après leur processus de réintégration, et comment le gouvernement surveille-t-il et évalue-t-il le succès à long terme de leur réintégration dans leurs nouvelles communautés ?

Thème 9 - Expérience du personnel interagissant avec Kadogos

1. Quelles ont été vos observations et expériences personnelles lors de vos interactions avec Kadogos au cours de leur processus de réintégration ? Y a-t-il des défis communs ou des résultats positifs qui se démarquent pour vous ?
2. Comment répondez-vous aux besoins psychosociaux des Kadogos lors de leur réintégration, et comment cet aspect a-t-il influencé leur réussite globale dans le processus de réintégration ?
3. Pouvez-vous partager des histoires ou des expériences spécifiques de Kadogos qui ont subi une réintégration réussie, et quels facteurs pensez-vous avoir contribué à leurs résultats positifs ?
4. Comment vous engagez-vous avec les communautés locales et les dirigeants communautaires pour assurer la réussite de l'acceptation et de l'intégration sociale des Kadogos pendant leur parcours de réintégration ?
5. Quelles idées personnelles avez-vous acquises grâce à votre travail avec Kadogos qui ont façonné votre point de vue sur l'importance des approches globales et centrées sur la communauté dans leur processus de réintégration ?

Thème 10 - Économie et financement des programmes de réinsertion

1. Comment la situation économique globale en RDC a-t-elle évolué de 2014 à ce jour, et quel impact a-t-elle eu sur le financement et l'allocation des ressources pour les programmes de réintégration des anciens enfants soldats (Kadogos) ?
2. Quel pourcentage du budget national a été alloué aux programmes de réintégration pour Kadogos, et cette allocation a-t-elle augmenté ou diminué au cours des dernières années ?
3. Quelles sources de financement ont été utilisées pour soutenir les programmes de réintégration des Kadogos ? Y a-t-il eu des partenariats internationaux ou des contributions de donateurs à cet égard ?

4. Comment les défis économiques, tels que l'inflation et les contraintes budgétaires, ont-ils affecté la durabilité et l'efficacité des programmes de réintégration de Kadogos ?
5. Existe-t-il des initiatives ou des programmes de développement économique spécifiques en RDC visant à générer des ressources pour soutenir la réintégration des Kadogos dans la société ? Comment ces initiatives ont-elles contribué au financement global des programmes de réintégration ?

Thème 11 - Coutumes et croyances locales

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC considère-t-il les coutumes et les croyances religieuses des communautés locales lors de la conception et de la mise en œuvre des programmes de réintégration pour les anciens enfants soldats ?
2. Quels efforts sont déployés pour impliquer les dirigeants communautaires locaux et les autorités religieuses dans le processus de réintégration, et comment leurs points de vue et leurs contributions sont-ils intégrés dans les programmes ?
3. Existe-t-il des pratiques culturelles ou religieuses spécifiques susceptibles d'avoir un impact sur l'acceptation ou la stigmatisation des anciens enfants soldats dans les communautés locales, et comment le gouvernement relève-t-il ces défis ?
4. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC promeut-il la sensibilisation et la compréhension des expériences des anciens enfants soldats au sein des communautés locales pour favoriser l'empathie et le soutien pendant le processus de réintégration ?
5. Comment les mécanismes traditionnels et communautaires de résolution des conflits sont-ils utilisés pour faciliter la réconciliation et l'acceptation des anciens enfants soldats dans leurs communautés ?

Thème 12 - Partage des ressources

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC s'assure-t-il que les communautés locales comprennent l'importance du partage des ressources avec les Kadogos réintégrés et quelles mesures sont en place pour faire face à toute résistance ou réticence potentielle des membres de la communauté ?
2. Quelles stratégies le gouvernement met-il en œuvre pour promouvoir les opportunités économiques pour les communautés locales et les Kadogos, en assurant une distribution équitable des ressources et en minimisant les conflits liés aux ressources limitées ?
3. Comment le gouvernement collabore-t-il avec les dirigeants communautaires et les autorités locales pour faciliter le dialogue et la médiation entre les membres de la communauté et les Kadogos, favorisant la compréhension et la coopération dans le partage des ressources ?
4. Existe-t-il des politiques ou des programmes spécifiques en place pour encourager les initiatives communautaires qui favorisent la propriété partagée des ressources et le soutien mutuel entre les Kadogos et les communautés locales ?
5. Quels mécanismes le gouvernement a-t-il mis en place pour surveiller et évaluer l'efficacité des initiatives de partage des ressources et répondre aux défis ou griefs potentiels qui pourraient survenir au cours du processus ?

Thème 13 - Influence régionale et pays voisins

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC aborde-t-il l'influence régionale et l'implication des pays voisins dans le conflit et la réintégration de Kadogos, et quelles mesures sont en place pour s'assurer que ces pays voisins soutiennent le processus de réintégration ?
2. Quel est l'impact de la dynamique régionale sur la sécurité et la stabilité dans les zones où les Kadogos sont réintégrés, et comment le gouvernement collabore-t-il avec les pays voisins pour relever les défis de sécurité transfrontaliers ?
3. Quels efforts sont déployés pour se coordonner avec les pays voisins sur la question des enfants soldats, y compris le partage d'informations, les stratégies de prévention et les initiatives conjointes pour la réintégration réussie des Kadogos ?

4. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC collabore-t-il avec les organisations et partenaires internationaux pour faire face aux implications régionales du conflit et à la réintégration de Kadogos ?
5. Existe-t-il des accords ou des mécanismes régionaux spécifiques en place pour garantir que les pays voisins contribuent positivement au processus de réintégration de Kadogos et travaillent ensemble pour résoudre le problème plus large des enfants soldats dans la région ?

Thème 14 - Gouvernance et démocratie

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC promeut-il la transparence et la responsabilité dans ses pratiques de gouvernance pour garantir la confiance du public dans les processus décisionnels ?
2. Quels efforts sont déployés pour renforcer les institutions démocratiques et assurer la participation significative des citoyens à l'élaboration des politiques et des lois qui ont un impact sur leur vie ?
3. Comment le gouvernement s'attaque-t-il à la corruption et aux autres problèmes de gouvernance pour assurer une prestation de services efficace et une répartition équitable des ressources à travers le pays ?
4 Quelle est l'approche du gouvernement pour répondre aux préoccupations relatives aux droits de l'homme et promouvoir l'état de droit en RDC ?
5. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC collabore-t-il avec les partenaires régionaux et internationaux pour résoudre les problèmes transfrontaliers et promouvoir la stabilité et la coopération régionales ?

Thème 15 - Liberté personnelle et égalité

1. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC s'assure-t-il que la liberté personnelle et les droits humains des Kadogos sont protégés et respectés pendant leur processus de réintégration ?
2. Des mesures spécifiques sont-elles en place pour promouvoir l'égalité et la non-discrimination des Kadogos dans l'accès à l'éducation, aux soins de santé et à d'autres services essentiels pendant leur parcours de réintégration ?
3. Comment le gouvernement s'attaque-t-il aux obstacles ou défis existants qui pourraient empêcher les Kadogos de bénéficier de l'égalité des chances en matière d'éducation, d'emploi et de participation à la société ?
4. Quelles mesures sont prises pour responsabiliser les Kadogos avec la connaissance de leurs droits et pour s'assurer qu'ils ont une voix dans les processus de prise de décision qui affectent leur réintégration et leur bien-être futur ?
5. Comment le gouvernement de la RDC collabore-t-il avec les organisations de la société civile et les partenaires internationaux pour renforcer les protections de la liberté personnelle et de l'égalité des Kadogos dans les programmes de réintégration et au-delà ?

Merci d'avoir participé à l'étude.
Numéro de participant:

G2. Interview with the leaders

The interviews will be held individually and should last a minimum of one (1) hour. The study will focus both the national and local legislations on reintegration of Kadogos, on what had been done to facilitate community acceptance of Kadogos in communities and what leads to the economic exploitation of both Kadogos and communities and what should be

done to remedy the issue. Gauging the role of local leaders (both religious/spiritual and political) in either accepting or rejecting Kadogos' reintegration.

The meeting will be registered with a recording device, transcribed into a written format by myself and the recorded versions will be destroyed once the data is safely uploaded to iClouds and analysed. You will be given a specific reference number which will be a combination of letters and numbers. For instance, military leaders will be recorded as ML001 or ML002 or ML003. Members of the national parliament will be recorded as MPN001 or MPN002 and of the provincial parliament as MPP001 or MPP002 or MPP003. Other authorities such as governors will be recorded as G1 and G2, religious/spiritual leaders as R/S001 or R/S002…I will upload all collected information into the University of Essex iClouds account and will provide my supervisors only with password access to the data. So, there should only be 3 people able to access the information you provide me with. The following are the 15 topics chosen to discuss:

Topic 1 - Child soldiers - I find the definition of child soldier to be presented somewhat different to the universal understanding of what and who is a child child soldier. Would you be able to clarify the following or provide us with your personal or the state's definition of child soldier, please?

1. How does the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) define "child soldiers" within the context of armed conflicts and violence in the country?
2. What legal frameworks or international conventions does the DRC adhere to when considering the definition of child soldiers?
3. How does the DRC distinguish between voluntary and involuntary recruitment of children into armed groups or forces?
4. Are there specific age thresholds or criteria used to determine the status of child soldiers in the DRC?
5. How does the DRC address the challenges of identifying and verifying the status of child soldiers during and after armed conflicts?

Topic 2 - Legislation and institutions

1. What legislative measures or policies are in place to support the reintegration of child soldiers into their communities and society after their demobilisation?
2. How are the responsibilities for child soldiers' reintegration distributed among different government institutions and agencies in the DRC?
3. What role do civil society organisations and international partners play in supporting child soldiers' reintegration efforts, and how do they collaborate with government institutions?
4. How does the DRC ensure the protection and safety of child soldiers during their reintegration process, considering the potential risks and challenges they may face?
5. What efforts are being made to provide comprehensive services, such as education, psychosocial support, vocational training, and livelihood opportunities, to facilitate a successful and sustainable reintegration process for child soldiers?

Topic 3 - Trust - I noted trust to be very important for Kadogos' reintegration to be effective in communities:

A. Kadogos

1. How does the DRC government ensure that the reintegration process fosters trust between Kadogos and local communities to promote a successful transition back into society?
2. What measures are in place to address the distrust and fear that Kadogos may have towards the government and authorities, given their past experiences during conflict?

3. How does the DRC government engage Kadogos and local community representatives in decision-making processes related to reintegration policies and programs to build trust and ensure their voices are heard?
4. What steps are being taken to address the historical grievances and human rights violations that may have contributed to the breakdown of trust between Kadogos and the government?
5. How does the government encourage transparency, accountability, and effective communication to build trust between Kadogos, local communities, and government authorities throughout the reintegration process?

B. Communities
1. How does the DRC government address the concerns and fears of local communities regarding the reintegration of Kadogos to promote trust and acceptance?
2. What measures are being taken to sensitise local communities about the experiences and challenges faced by Kadogos, and how are these efforts aimed at fostering empathy and understanding?
3. How does the government involve local community leaders and representatives in the planning and implementation of reintegration programs to build trust and ensure that community perspectives are considered?
4. Are there any community-based reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanisms being utilised to address grievances and promote trust-building between local communities, Kadogos, and the government?
5. How does the DRC government ensure that the reintegration process prioritises community development and benefits, to demonstrate the government's commitment to the well-being and prosperity of the communities where Kadogos are reintegrated?

Topic 4 - Perceived threat and criminality - I noted this to be one of the reasons for why the locals struggle with accepting Kadogos being reintegrated in their communities.

1. How does the DRC government address the concerns of local communities regarding the perceived threat or criminality from the reintegration of Kadogos, and what measures are in place to ensure the safety and security of these communities?
2. What strategies are being implemented to combat the stigmatisation and negative perceptions that local communities may have towards Kadogos during the reintegration process?
3. Are there any public awareness campaigns or community sensitization programs aimed at dispelling misconceptions about Kadogos' reintegration and promoting understanding between the communities and former child soldiers?
4. How does the DRC government collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to ensure that any potential security risks related to the reintegration of Kadogos are appropriately managed and mitigated?
5. What efforts are being made to involve local communities in the monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration process, allowing them to provide feedback and raise any concerns they may have about the program's impact on their security and well-being?

Topic 5 - Community acceptance - I assume this to be crucial for reintegration to be deemed successful.

1. Would you share the same assumption too? If not, why not?
2. How does the DRC government assess the level of community acceptance of Kadogos' reintegration, and what indicators are used to measure the success of this acceptance?
3. What strategies or initiatives are in place to promote community acceptance of Kadogos during the reintegration process, and how are these efforts tailored to address specific cultural and social contexts within different communities?
4. Are there any challenges or obstacles that have been identified in achieving community acceptance of Kadogos, and what steps are being taken to address these issues?

5. How does the government collaborate with local community leaders and stakeholders to build trust and foster a supportive environment for the successful reintegration of Kadogos?
6. What role do local community members play in the design and implementation of reintegration programs, and how does their active involvement contribute to the overall acceptance of Kadogos back into their communities?

Topic 6 - Economic exploitation

1. What measures are in place to protect Kadogos from economic exploitation during their reintegration process, and how does the government monitor and address any potential instances of exploitation?
2. Are there specific vocational training and livelihood support programs in place to empower Kadogos with sustainable economic opportunities and prevent them from falling victim to exploitation?
3. How does the DRC government collaborate with relevant agencies and organizations to raise awareness about the risks of economic exploitation faced by Kadogos, and what educational initiatives are being implemented to empower them to make informed decisions?
4. How does the government ensure that any income-generating activities involving Kadogos are conducted in a fair and transparent manner, and that they are provided with access to financial literacy and legal support to protect their economic rights?
5. Are there any specific laws or regulations in place to address economic exploitation of Kadogos, and what actions are taken against individuals or entities found to be exploiting former child soldiers during their reintegration process?

Topic 7 - Issues with prejudice and protection of Kadogos

1. Have you noted any prejudice towards Kadogos from the local communities, when it comes to reintegrating them?
2. How does the DRC government address issues of prejudice against Kadogos during their reintegration process, and what measures are in place to promote their social acceptance within local communities?
3. Are there any specific psychosocial support programs in place to address the trauma and stigmatisation experienced by Kadogos, and how are these programs tailored to their unique needs?
4. What efforts are being made to sensitise local communities about the importance of protecting Kadogos' rights and ensuring their safety during the reintegration process?
5. How does the government collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and international partners, to ensure the protection of Kadogos' rights and well-being during their reintegration journey?
6. Are there any legal frameworks or policies in place to safeguard Kadogos from discrimination and ensure their access to education, healthcare, and other essential services during the reintegration process?

Topic 8 - Locations of reintegration programs

1. What are the reasons behind relocating Kadogos from western to eastern DRC for reintegration, and how is this relocation process managed to ensure their safety and well-being during the transition?
2. How does the DRC government assess the effectiveness of relocating Kadogos to eastern DRC for reintegration compared to reintegration within their original communities? Are there any specific indicators or criteria used to measure the success of this approach?
3. What are the main challenges and benefits associated with relocating Kadogos for reintegration, and how are these factors taken into consideration in decision-making processes?
4. How does the government collaborate with local communities in both western and eastern DRC to ensure community acceptance and support for the reintegration of relocated Kadogos?

5. Are there any specific follow-up measures or support mechanisms in place for relocated Kadogos after their reintegration process, and how does the government monitor and evaluate the long-term success of their reintegration in their new communities?

Topic 9 - Personnel experience interacting with Kadogos

1. What have been your personal observations and experiences while interacting with Kadogos during their reintegration process? Are there any common challenges or positive outcomes that stand out to you?
2. How do you address the psychosocial needs of Kadogos during their reintegration, and how has this aspect influenced their overall success in the reintegration process?
3. Can you share any specific stories or experiences of Kadogos who have undergone a successful reintegration, and what factors do you believe contributed to their positive outcomes?
4. How do you engage with local communities and community leaders to ensure the successful acceptance and social integration of Kadogos during their reintegration journey?
5.What personal insights have you gained through your work with Kadogos that have shaped your perspective on the importance of comprehensive and community-centred approaches in their reintegration process?

Topic 10 - Economy and financing reintegration programs

1. How has the overall economic situation in the DRC evolved from 2014 to date, and how has it impacted the financing and allocation of resources for reintegration programs for former child soldiers (Kadogos)?
2. What percentage of the national budget has been allocated to reintegration programs for Kadogos, and has this allocation increased or decreased over the past few years?
3. What sources of funding have been used to support reintegration programs for Kadogos? Have there been any international partnerships or donor contributions in this regard?
4. How have economic challenges, such as inflation and fiscal constraints, affected the sustainability and effectiveness of Kadogos' reintegration programs?
5. Are there any specific economic development initiatives or programs in the DRC aimed at generating resources to support the reintegration of Kadogos into society? How have these initiatives contributed to the overall funding of reintegration programs?

Topic 11 - Local customs and beliefs

1. How does the DRC government consider local communities' customs and religious beliefs when designing and implementing reintegration programs for former child soldiers?
2. What efforts are being made to engage local community leaders and religious authorities in the reintegration process, and how are their perspectives and input being incorporated into the programs?
3. Are there any specific cultural or religious practices that may impact the acceptance or stigmatisation of former child soldiers in local communities, and how is the government addressing these challenges?
4. How does the DRC government promote awareness and understanding of the experiences of former child soldiers among local communities to foster empathy and support during the reintegration process?
5. How are traditional and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms utilised to facilitate reconciliation and acceptance of former child soldiers back into their communities?

Topic 12 – Sharing resources.

1. How does the DRC government ensure that local communities understand the importance of resource-sharing with reintegrated Kadogos and what measures are in place to address any potential resistance or reluctance from community members?
2. What strategies does the government implement to promote economic opportunities for both local communities and Kadogos, ensuring equitable resource distribution and minimizing conflicts over limited resources?
3. How does the government collaborate with community leaders and local authorities to facilitate dialogue and mediation between community members and Kadogos, fostering understanding and cooperation in resource-sharing?
4. Are there any specific policies or programs in place to encourage community-based initiatives that promote shared ownership of resources and mutual support between Kadogos and local communities?
5. What mechanisms does the government have in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of resource-sharing initiatives and address any potential challenges or grievances that may arise in the process?

Topic 13 - Regional influence and neighbouring countries

1. How does the DRC government address the regional influence and involvement of neighbouring countries in the conflict and the reintegration of Kadogos, and what measures are in place to ensure that these neighbouring countries support the reintegration process?
2. How do regional dynamics impact the security and stability in areas where Kadogos are reintegrated, and how is the government collaborating with neighbouring countries to address any cross-border security challenges?
3. What efforts are being made to coordinate with neighbouring countries on the issue of child soldiers, including information sharing, prevention strategies, and joint initiatives for the successful reintegration of Kadogos?
4. How does the DRC government collaborate with international organisations and partners to address the regional implications of the conflict and the reintegration of Kadogos?
5. Are there any specific regional agreements or mechanisms in place to ensure that neighbouring countries contribute positively to the reintegration process of Kadogos and work together to address the broader issue of child soldiers in the region?

Topic 14 – Governance and Democracy

1. How does the DRC government promote transparency and accountability in its governance practices to ensure public trust and confidence in the decision-making processes?
2. What efforts are being made to strengthen democratic institutions and ensure the meaningful participation of citizens in shaping policies and laws that impact their lives?
3. How does the government address corruption and other governance challenges to ensure efficient service delivery and equitable distribution of resources across the country?
4 What is the government's approach to addressing human rights concerns and promoting the rule of law in the DRC?
5. How does the DRC government collaborate with regional and international partners to address cross-border issues and promote regional stability and cooperation?

Topic 15 - Personal freedom and equality

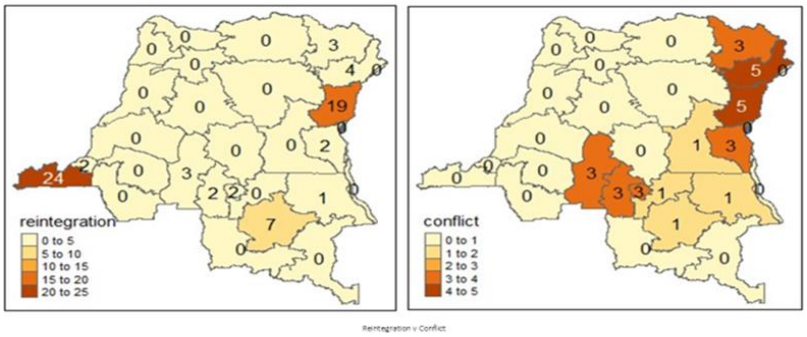
1. How does the DRC government ensure that the personal freedom and human rights of Kadogos are protected and upheld during their reintegration process?
2. Are there specific measures in place to promote equality and non-discrimination for Kadogos in accessing education, healthcare, and other essential services during their reintegration journey?

3. How does the government address any existing barriers or challenges that may impede Kadogos from enjoying equal opportunities in education, employment, and participation in society?
4. What steps are being taken to empower Kadogos with the knowledge of their rights and to ensure they have a voice in decision-making processes that affect their reintegration and future well-being?
5. How does the DRC government collaborate with civil society organisations and international partners to strengthen protections for Kadogos' personal freedom and equality in reintegration programs and beyond?

Thank you for taking part in the study.
Participant Number:

Appendix B - Geospatial distribution of reintegration initiatives vs. conflict intensity in the DRC.

Geospatial Distribution of Reintegration Initiatives vs. Conflict Intensity in the DRC



Based on data from the merged ACLED/UN-JMAC (2014-2019) this dual-panel map visualisation presents a comparative geospatial analysis of reintegration program density (left panel) and conflict intensity (right panel) across the provinces of the DRC, as recorded in 2024. It visually captures the core contradiction at the heart of DDR efforts: the mismatch between where reintegration is most needed (conflict zones) and where it is most actively implemented.

Left Panel – Reintegration Initiatives:
This map illustrates the distribution of reintegration programs targeting former child soldiers (Kadogos) across the DRC. Provinces are shaded by the number of programs recorded, with darker shades indicating higher activity:
- Kinshasa (24 programs) and North Kivu (19 programs) emerge as reintegration hubs. While Kinshasa is more politically stable, its concentration may reflect the urban-centralised nature of DDR policy planning and NGO access.
- Ituri (4) and Kasaï (7) show moderate engagement.
- Vast central and northern regions, including Equateur, Haut-Uélé, and Mongala, record zero to minimal reintegration interventions, despite the presence of former conflict-affected populations.
The data suggest a spatial imbalance in program delivery, with a heavy concentration in urban or more administratively accessible zones. This raises concerns about the exclusion of remote and highly vulnerable areas where child soldier recruitment has occurred but where reintegration support is absent.

Right Panel – Conflict Intensity:
This map illustrates ongoing conflict incidents or intensity, with darker shades indicating more frequent or severe conflict:

- North Kivu (5), Ituri (5), and South Kivu (5) are identified as the most conflict-ridden provinces in 2024, aligning with current reports of M23 resurgence and inter-communal violence.
- Tanganyika, Maniema, and Kasai-Central register medium conflict levels.
- Western and northern provinces show minimal to no recorded conflict.

The eastern provinces bear the brunt of armed violence, which makes the sustainability of reintegration programs there extremely fragile. The simultaneous presence of conflict and reintegration in the same zones raises questions about program security, community trust, and risks of re-recruitment.

A striking spatial disjuncture is evident when comparing both maps:
- High reintegration and high conflict zones (e.g., North Kivu and Ituri) reflect programs operating under duress, facing major challenges including security threats, fear among returnees, and community resistance.
- High reintegration but low conflict zones (e.g., Kinshasa) suggest politically strategic or donor-driven programming, potentially disconnected from ground-level needs.
- High conflict but low reintegration zones (e.g., South Kivu) reveal critical gaps in service delivery, placing former child soldiers at high risk of marginalisation and re-mobilisation.

This misalignment underscores what Chapter I refers to as a "geography of neglect", where remote and conflict heavy areas remain underserved despite the clear presence of vulnerable youth populations. The figure reinforces two of the thesis's key foundational concerns: 1) Geographic Disparities in reintegration efforts perpetuate vulnerability and threaten the credibility of DDR strategies. 2) The effectiveness of reintegration is inherently tied to regional security conditions, which, if overlooked, results in fragile or failed reintegration. It offers a compelling visual demonstration of the spatial and structural disconnect between needs and services. It affirms the thesis's argument for context-sensitive, regionally differentiated reintegration approaches grounded in both conflict realities and community capacities.

Appendix C - Quantitative (Supplementary data tables and analysis): Descriptive, robustness and hypotheses Tests. This appendix adds transparency to the quantitative analysis, addressing concerns about representativeness, transparency, and robustness.

1) Descriptive Communities and Kadogos

1.1) Communities

	0	1	M	F	2	3	Invalid
Satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration	100	33	0	0	0	0	0
Kadogos are bad people who shouldn't be here	52	81	0	0	0	0	0
Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos	45	88	0	0	0	0	0
Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos	36	97	0	0	0	0	0
I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours	87	46	0	0	0	0	0
Sex	0	0	104	29	0	0	0
Age	0	9	0	0	89	35	0

Current Employment Status	55	78	0	0	0	0	0
Relocated to Flee Conflict	87	46	0	0	0	0	0
Fought Against Kadogos	97	36	0	0	0	0	0
My political representatives listen to my me	108	25	0	0	0	0	0
Authorities protect us against Kadogos	64	69	0	0	0	0	0
Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life	69	64	0	0	0	0	0
Kadogos are immoral and should be kept away from us	83	50	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5.1 summarises the overall performance of a binary logistic regression model. Here's an interpretation of the given:

Total Number of Cases (133), the number of observations or instances that the model was tested on. In this context, it's the number of individuals or items for which the model attempted to predict the outcome (1 or 0, for instance). Correct Assignments (100): out of the 133 cases, the model correctly predicted the outcome for 100 of them. These correct predictions include both true positives (correctly identifying cases with '1') and true negatives (correctly identifying cases without '1'). In Percent (75.19%): this is the accuracy of the model, calculated as the number of correct assignments (100) divided by the total number of cases (133), then multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. It tells you how often the model makes the right prediction, whether it's predicting the presence or absence of '1'.

Chi2	df	p
26.08	16	.053

Table 5.1 shows the results of a binary logistic regression analysis, which looks at how your predictors influence the likelihood of a particular outcome. Here's how to interpret each part of the table: Coefficient B represents the effect size of each predictor. A positive coefficient increases the log-odds of the outcome per unit increase in the predictor, while a negative coefficient decreases it. Standard error measures the standard deviation of the estimated coefficient, reflecting how precisely the model estimates the coefficient's value. The p-value indicates the probability of observing the data (or something more extreme) if the null hypothesis is true. A lower p-value suggests that the null hypothesis (of no effect) is less likely. 95% Confidence Interval captures the coefficient's true value with 95% certainty. If it doesn't include 1 for odds ratios, the effect is considered statistically significant at the 5% level. The model predicts the log-odds of the baseline outcome to be -1.83 when all predictors are 0. The odds ratio is 0.16, suggesting lower odds of the outcome when all predictors are at their reference level. The p-value of .107 indicates that the constant is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 level.

Sex F, for every one unit increase in Sex F, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -0.47. An odds ratio of 0.63 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.63 times as likely when the variable Sex F is F, compared to when Sex F is not F. So if the variable Sex F is F the odds ratio of 0.63 suggests a 37.26% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .487 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Sex F is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Age, for every one unit increase in Age 3, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.4. An odds ratio of 1.49 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.49 times as likely when the variable Age 3 is 3, compared to when Age 3 is not 3. So if the

variable Age 3 is 3 the odds ratio of 1.49 suggests a 49.45% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .489 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Age 3 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

For every one unit increase in Age 1, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.83. An odds ratio of 2.3 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 2.3 times as likely when the variable Age 1 is 1, compared to when Age 1 is not 1. So if the variable Age 1 is 1 the odds ratio of 2.3 suggests a 130.36% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .467 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Age 1 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Relocated to Flee Conflict, for every one unit increase in Relocated to Flee Conflict 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -0.99. An odds ratio of 0.37 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.37 times as likely when the variable Relocated to Flee Conflict 0 is 0, compared to when Relocated to Flee Conflict 0 is not 0. So if the variable Relocated to Flee Conflict 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.37 suggests a 62.92% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .05 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Relocated to Flee Conflict 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Fought Against Kadogos, for every one unit increase in Fought Against Kadogos, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.22. An odds ratio of 1.25 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.25 times as likely when the variable Fought Against Kadogos is 1, compared to when Fought Against Kadogos is not 1. So if the variable Fought Against Kadogos is 1 the odds ratio of 1.25 suggests a 24.54% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .667 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Fought Against Kadogos is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Current Employment Status, for every one unit increase in Current Employment Status 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.41. An odds ratio of 1.5 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.5 times as likely when the variable Current Employment Status 0 is 0, compared to when Current Employment Status 0 is not 0. So if the variable Current Employment Status 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 1.5 suggests a 50.43% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .443 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Current Employment Status 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Authorities protect us against Kadogos, for every one unit increase in Authorities protect us against Kadogos 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1.52. An odds ratio of 0.22 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.22 times as likely when the variable Authorities protect us against Kadogos 0 is 0, compared to when Authorities protect us against Kadogos 0 is not 0. So if the variable Authorities protect us against Kadogos 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.22 suggests a 78.2% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .077 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Authorities protect us against Kadogos 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

My political representatives listen to my me, for every one unit increase in My political representatives listen to me 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.82. An odds ratio of 2.27 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 2.27 times as likely when the variable My political representatives listen to my me 0 is 0, compared to when My political representatives listen to my me 0 is not 0. So if the variable My political representatives listen to me 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 2.27 suggests a 126.99% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .286 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that My political representatives listen to me 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours, for every one unit increase in I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.8. An odds ratio of 2.22 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 2.22 times as likely when the variable I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours 0 is 0, compared to when I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours 0 is not 0. So if the variable I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 2.22 suggests a

122% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .207 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I am happy to have Kadogos as neighbours 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos, for every one unit increase in Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.16. An odds ratio of 1.17 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.17 times as likely when the variable Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos 0 is 0, compared to when Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos 0 is not 0. So if the variable Concerns Children Contact with Kadogos 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 1.17 suggests a 17.11% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .784 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Concerns Children Contact with
Kadogos 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos, for every one unit increase in Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.26. An odds ratio of 1.29 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.29 times as likely when the variable Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos is 1, compared to when Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos is not 1. So if the variable Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos is 1 the odds ratio of 1.29 suggests a 29.11% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .616 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Local economy struggle with addition of Kadogos is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here, for every one unit increase in Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1.41. An odds ratio of 0.24 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.24 times as likely when the variable Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here is 1, compared to when Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here is not 1. So if the variable Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here is 1 the odds ratio of 0.24 suggests a 75.5% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .022 is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Kadogos are bad people who shouldn’t be here is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Kadogos can't be trusted, for every one unit increase in Kadogos can't be trusted, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -0.89. An odds ratio of 0.41 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.41 times as likely when the variable Kadogos can't be trusted is 1, compared to when Kadogos can't be trusted is not 1. So if the variable Kadogos can't be trusted is 1 the odds ratio of 0.41 suggests a 58.91% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .184 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Kadogos can't be trusted is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

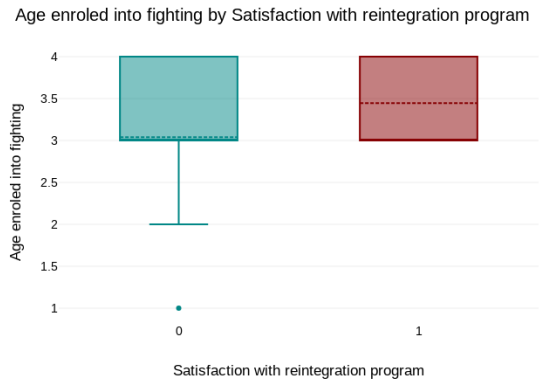
I do trust the authority, for every one unit increase in I do trust the authority 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 1.74. An odds ratio of 5.69 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 5.69 times as likely when the variable I do trust the authority 0 is 0, compared to when I do trust the authority 0 is not 0. So if the variable I do trust the authority 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 5.69 suggests a 469.28% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .059 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I do trust the authority 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

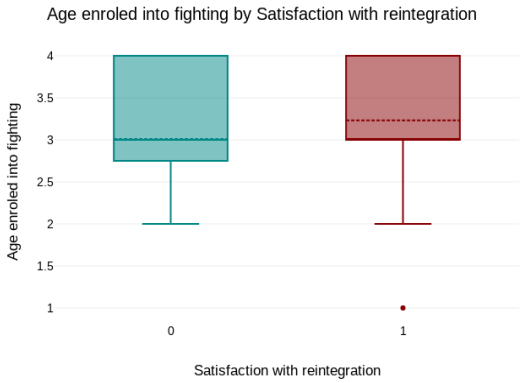
Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life, for every one unit increase in Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.77. An odds ratio of 2.15 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 2.15 times as likely when the variable Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life is 1, compared to when Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life is not 1. So if the variable Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life is 1 the odds ratio of 2.15 suggests a 115.07% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .323 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Former child soldiers threaten our community and way of life is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Kadogos are immoral and should be kept away from us, for every one unit increase in Kadogos are immoral and should be kept away from us, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 1.66. The p-value of .02 is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Kadogos are immoral and should be kept away from us is statistically significant at the 5% level.

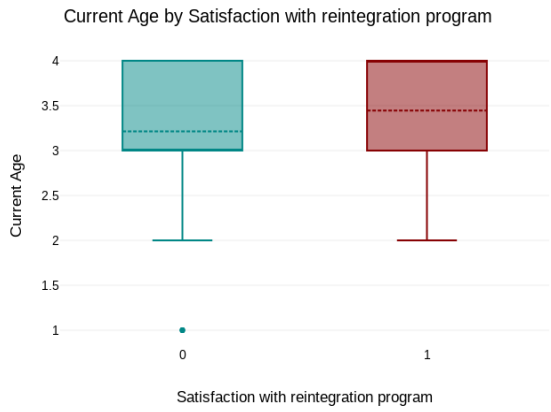
1.2) Kadogos

Correlation tests were run, first, to determine the relationship between Age enrolled into fighting and Satisfaction with reintegration. There was a positive correlation between Age enrolled into fighting and Satisfaction with reintegration, which was not statistically significant (rpb = 0.15, n = 144, p = .078). Then to determine the relationship between Age enrolled into fighting and Satisfaction with reintegration program. There was a positive correlation between Age enrolled into fighting and Satisfaction with reintegration
program, which was statistically significant (rpb = 0.19, n = 144, p = .025).





Correlations were run, first, to determine the relationship between Current Age and Satisfaction with reintegration program. There was a positive correlation between Current Age and Satisfaction with reintegration program, which was not statistically significant (rpb = 0.09, n = 144, p = .258). Then, to determine the relationship between Current Age and Satisfaction with reintegration. There was a positive correlation between Current Age and Satisfaction with reintegration, which was not statistically significant (rpb = 0.11, n = 144, p = .171).



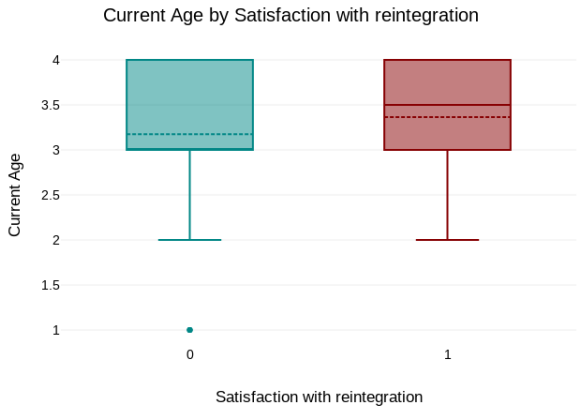


Table 5.2 summarises the overall performance of a binary logistic regression model. Here's an interpretation of the given:

Total Number of Cases (144), the number of observations or instances that the model was tested on. In this context, it's the number of individuals or items for which the model attempted to predict the outcome (1 or 0, for instance). Correct Assignments (109): Out of the 144 cases, the model correctly predicted the outcome for 109 of them. These correct predictions include both true positives (correctly identifying cases with '1') and true negatives (correctly identifying cases without '1'). In Percent (75.69%): This is the accuracy of the model, calculated as the number of correct assignments (109) divided by the total number of cases (144), then multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. It tells you how often the model makes the right prediction, whether it's predicting the presence or absence of '1'.

Chi2	df	p
110.98	15	<.001

Table 5.2 shows the results of a binary logistic regression analysis, which looks at how predictors influence the likelihood of a particular outcome. Here's how to interpret each part of the table: Coefficient B represents the effect size of each predictor. A positive coefficient increases the log-odds of the outcome per unit increase in the predictor, while a negative coefficient decreases it. Standard error measures the standard deviation of the

estimated coefficient, reflecting how precisely the model estimates the coefficient's value. The p-value indicates the probability of observing the data (or something more extreme) if the null hypothesis is true. A lower p-value suggests that the null hypothesis (of no effect) is less likely. 95% Confidence Interval captures the coefficient's true value with 95% certainty. If it doesn't include 1 for odds ratios, the effect is considered statistically significant at the 5% level. The model predicts the log-odds of the baseline outcome to be 0.56 when all predictors are 0. The odds ratio is 1.75, suggesting higher odds of the outcome when all predictors are at their reference level. The p-value of .836 indicates that the constant is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 level.

Age enrolled into fighting - for every one unit increase in Age enrolled into fighting, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.32. The odds Ratio of 1.38 indicates that one unit increase of the variable Age enrolled into fighting will increase the odds that the dependent variable is 1 by 1.38 times. So the odds ratio of 1.38 suggests a 38.26% increase in the odds of the outcome 1 for each additional unit of Age enrolled into fighting. The p-value of .527 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Age enrolled into fighting is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Current Age - for every one unit increase in Current Age, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.59. The odds Ratio of 1.8 indicates that one unit increase of the variable Current Age will increase the odds that the dependent variable is 1 by 1.8 times. So the odds ratio of 1.8 suggests a 80.23% increase in the odds of the outcome 1 for each additional unit of Current Age. The p-value of .213 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Current Age is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Relocated - for every one unit increase in Relocated 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1.2. An odds ratio of 0.3 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.3 times as likely when the variable Relocated 0 is 0, compared to when Relocated 0 is not 0. So if the variable Relocated 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.3 suggests a 69.85% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .169 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Relocated 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Re-recruited - for every one unit increase in Re-recruited, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.46. An odds ratio of 1.59 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.59 times as likely when the variable Re-recruited is 1, compared to when Re-recruited is not 1. So if the variable Re-recruited is 1 the odds ratio of 1.59 suggests a 59.03% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .566 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Re-recruited is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Current Employment Status - for every one unit increase in Current Employment Status, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1.48. An odds ratio of 0.23 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.23 times as likely when the variable Current Employment Status is 1, compared to when Current Employment Status is not 1. So if the variable Current Employment Status is 1 the odds ratio of 0.23 suggests a 77.31% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .188 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Current Employment Status is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Satisfaction with reintegration program - for every one unit increase in Satisfaction with reintegration program 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1. An odds ratio of 0.37 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.37 times as likely when the variable Satisfaction with reintegration program 0 is 0, compared to when Satisfaction with reintegration program 0 is not 0. So if the variable Satisfaction with reintegration program 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.37 suggests a 63.39% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .379 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Satisfaction with reintegration program 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Happy being part of the community - for every one unit increase in Happy being part of the community 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -3.46. An odds ratio of 0.03 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.03 times as likely when the variable Happy being part of the community 0 is 0, compared to when Happy being part of the community 0 is not 0. So if the variable Happy being part of the community 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.03 suggests a 96.86% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of <.001 is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Happy being part of the community 0 is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Local communities welcomed me - for every one unit increase in Local communities welcomed me 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -1.81. An odds ratio of 0.16 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.16 times as likely when the variable Local communities welcomed me 0 is 0, compared to when Local communities welcomed me 0 is not 0. So if the variable Local communities welcomed me 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.16 suggests a 83.67% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .082 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Local communities welcomed me 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

I have opportunities and feel safe here - for every one unit increase in I have opportunities and feel safe here 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -2.19. An odds ratio of 0.11 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.11 times as likely when the variable I have opportunities and feel safe here 0 is 0, compared to when I have opportunities and feel safe here 0 is not 0. So if the variable I have opportunities and feel safe here 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.11 suggests a 88.85% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .003 is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I have opportunities and feel safe here 0 is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate - for every one unit increase in Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -0.37. An odds ratio of 0.69 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.69 times as likely when the variable Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is 0, compared to when Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is not 0. So if the variable Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.69 suggests a 30.94% decrease

in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .746 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Prejudice affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

I feel protected by communities - for every one unit increase in I feel protected by communities 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 1.43. An odds ratio of 4.17 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 4.17 times as likely when the variable I feel protected by communities 0 is 0, compared to when I feel protected by communities 0 is not 0. So if the variable I feel protected by communities 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 4.17 suggests a 316.68% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .238 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I feel protected by communities 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

I trust the authorities - for every one unit increase in I trust the authorities 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.44. An odds ratio of 1.55 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.55 times as likely when the variable I trust the authorities 0 is 0, compared to when I trust the authorities 0 is not 0. So if the variable I trust the authorities 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 1.55 suggests a 54.78% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .682 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I trust the authorities 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

I trust the local community - for every one unit increase in I trust the local community 0, the log-odds of the outcome decrease by -0.07. An odds ratio of 0.93 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 0.93 times as likely when the variable I trust the local community 0 is 0, compared to when I trust the local community 0 is not 0. So if the variable I trust the local community 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 0.93 suggests a 6.79% decrease in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .959 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that I trust the local community 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Authorities deal with conflicts effectively - for every one unit increase in Authorities deal with conflicts effectively, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.07. An odds ratio of 1.07 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.07 times as likely when the variable Authorities deal with conflicts effectively is 1, compared to when Authorities deal with conflicts effectively is not 1. So if the variable Authorities deal with conflicts effectively is 1 the odds ratio of 1.07 suggests a 7.44% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .949 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Authorities deal with conflicts effectively is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate - for every one unit increase in Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate 0, the log-odds of the outcome increase by 0.5. An odds ratio of 1.65 means that the odds of an outcome of 1 are 1.65 times as likely when the variable Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is 0, compared to when Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is not 0. So if the variable Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is 0 the odds ratio of 1.65 suggests a 65.45% increase in the odds that the outcome is 1. The p-value of .52 is above the conventional 0.05 threshold, suggesting that Stigma affects my ability to reintegrate 0 is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

2) Robustness Test

The study carried out 3 separate tests; first it analysed the relationship between Satisfaction with Reintegration Programs and Perceived Threats among Kadogos and Communities, as shown on the figures below, Kadogos generally expressed higher dissatisfaction compared to satisfaction across both reintegration efforts and programs. Whilst Communities also express more dissatisfaction than satisfaction, although the gap between satisfaction and dissatisfaction is narrower compared to Kadogos. There's a notable disparity in satisfaction levels between Kadogos and Communities regarding reintegration and programs. Communities tend to express more satisfaction than Kadogos. Furthermore, both Kadogos and Communities express significantly higher dissatisfaction with follow-up programs compared to satisfaction, and the disparity between Kadogos and

Communities is stark, with Communities expressing notably higher satisfaction with follow-up programs compared to Kadogos. On Perceived Threats, a higher number of Kadogos do not feel threatened by the Communities compared to those who do; whilst more community members feel threatened by Kadogos compared to those who do not. This reveals a discrepancy in perceived threats between Kadogos and Communities, with each group feeling more threatened by the other.

On the overall satisfaction, whether it be with reintegration or with the programs, Kadogos generally express higher dissatisfaction levels compared to Communities across all aspects of reintegration and programs; whilst Communities tend to express more satisfaction than Kadogos, particularly in follow-up programs. On Perceived Threats, Kadogos are more likely to feel threatened by Communities than vice versa; whilst Communities are more likely to feel threatened by Kadogos than vice versa. The data suggests a significant gap between Kadogos' perceptions and experiences compared to those of Communities regarding reintegration efforts and programs. Kadogos generally express higher dissatisfaction levels, indicating potential challenges or inadequacies in the reintegration process from their perspective. Additionally, there's a notable disparity in perceptions of threat, with both groups feeling more threatened by each other. This suggests a lack of trust or understanding between Kadogos and Communities, which could hinder successful reintegration efforts. Furthermore, the dissatisfaction with follow-up programs highlights potential gaps in post-reintegration support, which could further exacerbate tensions and challenges in the reintegration process. Addressing these disparities and perceptions of threat is crucial for fostering successful reintegration and community acceptance of former child soldiers.

The regression table below summarises the overall performance of a binary logistic regression model; where out of the 277 cases, the model correctly predicted the outcome for 193 of them. These correct predictions include both true positives (correctly identifying cases with 'Yes') and true negatives (correctly identifying cases with 'No'). It summarises the goodness of fit measures from a logistic regression analysis. Here's an interpretation of each term: 1. Confusion Matrix: True Negatives (TN): 184 cases were correctly predicted as No. False Positives (FP): 8 cases were incorrectly predicted as Yes (Type I error). False Negatives (FN): 76 cases were incorrectly predicted as No (Type II error). True Positives (TP): 9 cases were correctly predicted as Yes. 2. Correctness of Predictions: Correct Predictions for 'No' (Specificity): 95.83% of the total No cases were correctly identified. Correct Predictions for 'Yes' (Sensitivity or Recall): 10.59% of the actual Yes cases were correctly identified. Total Accuracy: 69.68% of all predictions (Yes and No) were correct.

The table shows the results of a Chi-square (χ^2) test associated with a binary logistic regression model. This test is often used to assess the overall significance of the model (Chi-square statistic: 9.97 in this case). It measured the difference between the observed and expected frequencies of the outcomes predicted by the model; with a higher Chi-square value indicates a greater discrepancy between the expected and observed values, suggesting that the model's predictors have a significant relationship with the outcome. The degrees of freedom, 3 in this case, represent the number of predictors in the model for a simple logistic regression. A p-value of .019 suggests that there's a 1.88% probability of observing a Chi-square statistic as extreme as 9.97 if the null hypothesis were true. The p-value of .019 is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship at the 5% level.

Reintegration - combined Kadogos and Communities' perspectives

	Coefficient B	*Standard error*	*p*	*95% interval*	*conf.*

Satisfaction with reintegration program	*-0.82*	*0.32*	*.01*	*0.24 - 0.82*
Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult	*-0.64*	*0.34*	*.059*	*0.27 - 1.02*
Perceived Threat	*-0.36*	*0.28*	*.207*	*0.4 - 1.22*
Constant	*0.08*	*0.32*	*.792*	*0.58 - 2.03*

The regression analysis examined the influence of Satisfaction with reintegration program (imputed as Yes/No for kadogos, and coded as 0/1 from the statement: Kadogos have been contributing to community well-being, for the communities), Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult (coded as 0/1 for Kadogos, and 0/1 for Communities, based on the statement: I would like to see more investment towards reintegrating former child soldiers) and Perceived Threat (coded as 1/0 for both Kadogos and Communities, based on statements: I often feel threatened by communities and Former child soldiers threaten our way of life and customs, respectively) on Reintegration to predict the value "Yes". The analysis showed that the model as a whole was significant (Chi2(3) = 9.97, p .019, n = 277).

The result shows the coefficient of Satisfaction with reintegration program as -0.82, which is negative; meaning that if the value of Satisfaction with reintegration program is No, the probability of Reintegration being "Yes" decreases. The p-value of .01 indicates that this influence is statistically significant; meaning that if Satisfaction with reintegration program is No, the probability that Reintegration is "Yes" increases by 0.44 times. The coefficient of Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult as -0.64, which is also negative; meaning that if the value of Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult is 0, the probability of Reintegration being "Yes" decreases. However, the p-value of .059 indicates that this influence is not statistically significant; meaning that if Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult is 0, the probability that Reintegration is "Yes" increases by 0.53 times. Finally, the coefficient of Perceived Threat as -0.36, which is negative too; meaning that if the value of Perceived Threat is 0, the probability of Reintegration being "Yes" decreases. However, the p-value of .207 indicates that this influence is not statistically significant; meaning that if Perceived Threat is 0, the probability that Reintegration is "Yes" increases by 0.7 times, as per odd ratio.

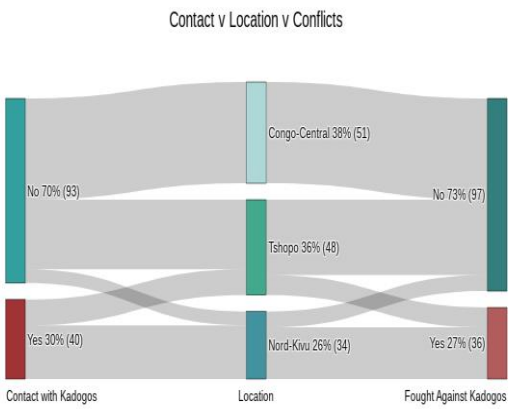
An inter-rater reliability analysis was also performed between Reintegration, Satisfaction with reintegration program, Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult and Perceived Threat. For this purpose, the Fleiss Kappa was calculated and showed that there was no agreement between Reintegration, Satisfaction with reintegration program, Lack of follow up made reintegration difficult and Perceived Threat with $\kappa = -0.13$. With a p-value of 1, greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the observed level of agreement is not statistically significantly different from zero. In other words, there's a high probability that the observed agreement is due to random chance.

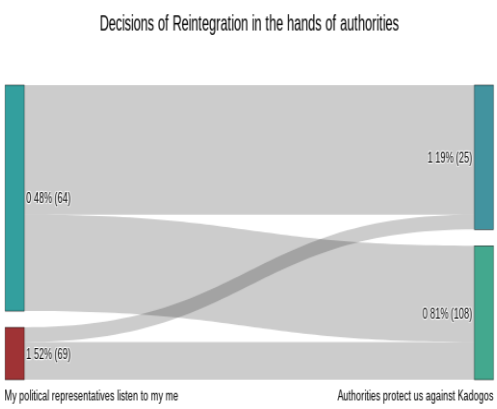
Then the analysis sought to examine whether variables such as contact with Kadogos, the location of reintegration, or past engagement in direct combat against Kadogos by individuals within communities would influence the level of satisfaction, if any, regarding the reintegration of Kadogos. Chi-square tests were conducted between the aforementioned variables to ascertain any correlations with the reintegration process. A Chi-square test was executed to explore the relationship between contact with Kadogos and the reintegration location. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between these

variables ($\chi^2(2) = 61.49$, $p < .001$). The obtained p-value of less than .001 was lower than the predetermined significance level of 5%, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Another Chi-square test was conducted to investigate the association between contact with Kadogos and past engagement in combat against Kadogos. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship between these variables ($\chi^2(1) = 31.43$, $p < .001$). With a p-value below .001, falling below the designated significance level, the null hypothesis was also rejected. Furthermore, a Chi-square test was employed to assess the relationship between the reintegration location and past engagement in combat against Kadogos. The analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between these variables ($\chi^2(2) = 61.91$, $p < .001$). The calculated p-value of less than .001 surpassed the predetermined significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The study also examined whether communities perceived the process of reintegrating Kadogos to be solely under the purview of authorities, independent of community input. Specifically, the investigation aimed to determine if communities believed that their authorities considered their opinions and concerns, and whether they felt assured of protection against Kadogos in the event of conflicts. A Chi-square test was conducted between the variables "Authorities protect us against Kadogos" and "My political representatives listen to me," to assess whether communities perceived the reintegration decision-making process to be beyond their influence, with authorities having the ultimate authority in determining the specifics of Kadogos' reintegration into communities, regardless of community input. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between the belief in authorities' protection against Kadogos and the perception of political representatives' responsiveness ($\chi^2(1) = 7.03$, $p = .008$). The obtained p-value of .008 fell below the predetermined significance level of 5%, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that communities perceived a connection between their belief in authorities' protection against Kadogos and their perception of political representatives' receptiveness, indicating a potential perception that the decision-making process regarding Kadogos' reintegration may indeed be perceived as independent of community input.

The underlying assumption posited herein was that the governing authority would unilaterally determine the relocation and establishment of reintegration programs without necessarily considering the sentiments of the local community. This assumption is predicated on the observation that satisfaction levels with the reintegration process, as depicted in the ensuing graphs, appear to be contingent upon variables such as contact with Kadogos, geographical location, and direct engagements with Kadogos. Furthermore, it is apparent that local communities place their trust in the authority to address the complexities of Kadogos' reintegration. They harbour the belief that their input holds significance in decision-making processes and maintain the expectation that the governing authority would undertake requisite measures to safeguard their interests in the event of conflicts arising between local residents and Kadogos.

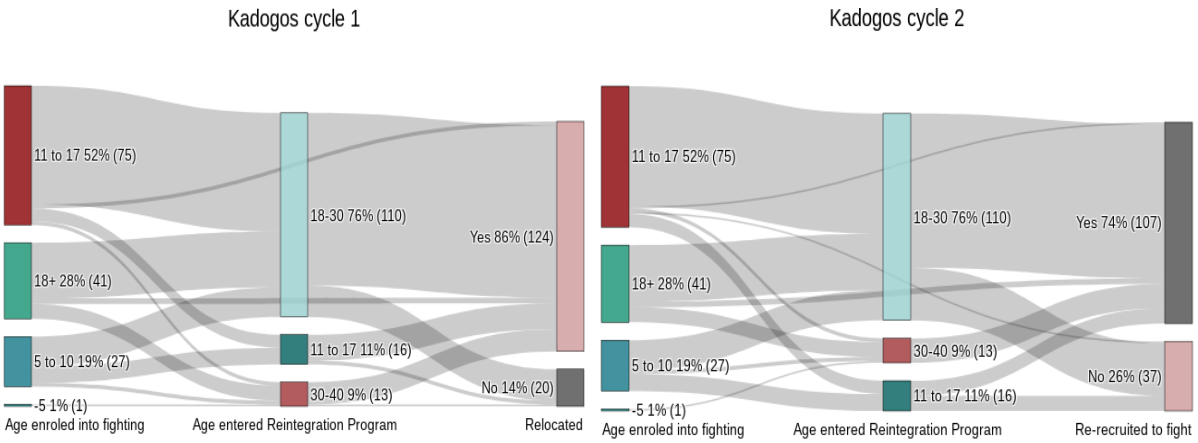




The third analysis delved into the examination of the three discerned cycles often experienced by Kadogos during their reintegration endeavours. These cycles include the relocation of Kadogos to different provinces for the purpose of reintegrating, the re-recruitment of Kadogos into combat roles subsequent to failed attempts at reintegration within their native communities or provinces, and the re-recruitment of Kadogos into combat roles following unsuccessful integration into newly relocated communities. Subsequently, an exploration of the relationship between relocation, re-recruitment, and satisfaction with the reintegration process was conducted. In alignment with the first two cycles elucidated above, a Chi-square test was conducted between the variables of "Age enrolled into fighting" and "Age entered Reintegration Program" to ascertain any potential correlation with the reintegration process. The analysis unveiled a statistically significant relationship between these variables ($\chi^2(6) = 36.58$, $p < .001$). With a calculated p-value lower than the predetermined significance level of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The underlying assumption here posits that the age at which Kadogos were recruited into fighting and the duration of their involvement in combat may hold significance in determining their aptitude for reintegration. Specifically, it is postulated that a protracted duration spent in combat may necessitate intensified efforts to facilitate their transition from military engagement to civilian life, underscoring the potential influence of temporal factors on the reintegration process.

In the context of the first cycle, a Chi-square test was conducted to explore the potential correlation between the age at which Kadogos entered the Reintegration Program and the decision to relocate them. This examination aimed to discern whether Kadogos' age influenced the authorities' determination to relocate them from their province of origin or from the vicinity where they had previously engaged in combat to a distant province. The analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between the age at which Kadogos entered the Reintegration Program and their relocation status ($\chi^2(2) = 0.62$, $p = .733$). With a calculated p-value exceeding 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed non-significant, thereby leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. Consequently, it can be inferred that the age at which Kadogos were enlisted into combat did not influence the decision to relocate them away from familiar conflict zones. This suggests that factors other than the perceived protection of vulnerable children or young adults through geographic relocation may have guided the decision-making process regarding Kadogos' relocation.

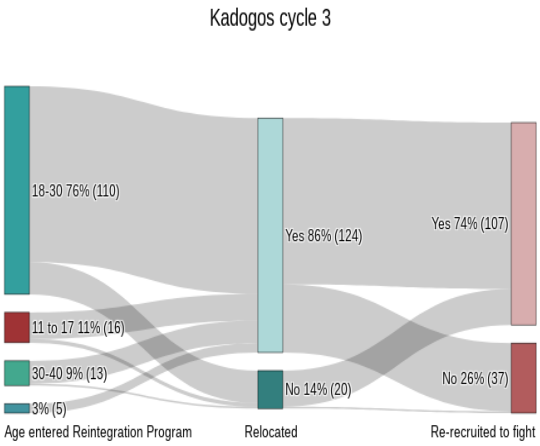
In the second cycle, a Chi-square test was performed to explore the potential correlation between the age at which Kadogos entered the Reintegration Program and the likelihood of being re-recruited into combat roles. This analysis sought to investigate whether the age at which Kadogos engaged in the Reintegration Program influenced their susceptibility to being re-recruited into combat roles. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the age at which Kadogos entered the Reintegration Program and the incidence of re-recruitment into combat roles ($\chi^2(2) = 9.4$, $p = .009$). With a calculated p-value lower than 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding suggests an underlying assumption that higher levels of re-recruitment are associated with decreased likelihoods of Kadogos opting for reintegration, implying that heightened levels of re-recruitment may hinder Kadogos' willingness to engage in the reintegration process.

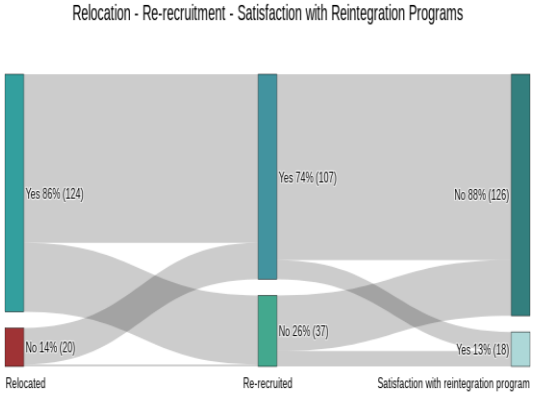


In the context of the third cycle, a Chi-square test was conducted to examine the potential influence of relocation on the likelihood of being re-recruited into combat roles. This analysis sought to ascertain whether the act of relocating Kadogos far from active conflict zones within provinces had any discernible effect on reducing their re-recruitment into combat roles. The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between relocation and re-recruitment into combat roles ($\chi^2(1) = 5.21$, $p = .022$). With a calculated p-value below the predetermined threshold of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that relocation measures aimed at diminishing the incidence of re-recruitment are ineffective. As evidenced, Kadogos who were relocated to western regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to participate in reintegration programs were observed to subsequently engage in combat activities in the Kasai provinces, as documented elsewhere (Nduwimana, 2017).

Regarding the potential impact of relocating Kadogos from their original provinces in the east to new provinces in the west on the level of satisfaction with reintegration programs, a Chi-square test was conducted between the variables of relocation status and satisfaction with reintegration programs. The analysis yielded no statistically significant relationship between relocation status and satisfaction with reintegration programs ($\chi^2(1) = 0.13$, $p = .716$). With a calculated p-value of .716 exceeding the predefined threshold of 5%, the Chi-square test was considered non-significant, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. This suggests that relocation alone did not emerge as the predominant determinant influencing the success of Kadogos' reintegration efforts. Notably, the majority of Kadogos who were not relocated expressed dissatisfaction with reintegration programs, even within their familiar provinces. Therefore, factors beyond mere relocation appeared to exert greater influence on the level of satisfaction with reintegration programs among Kadogos.

To investigate the potential linkage between the re-recruitment of Kadogos into combat roles and their dissatisfaction with reintegration programs, a Chi-square test was conducted between the variables of re-recruitment to fight and satisfaction with reintegration programs. All expected cell frequencies exceeded 5, satisfying the assumptions for the Chi-square test. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between re-recruitment to fight and satisfaction with reintegration programs ($\chi^2(1) = 5.33$, $p = .021$). With the calculated p-value falling below the predefined significance level of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding indicates that dissatisfaction with reintegration programs often serves as a motivating factor prompting Kadogos to rejoin fighting, thereby highlighting the potential influence of dissatisfaction on their decision to return to combat roles.





Linking all results from both Communities and Kadogos to the established hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 - Negative factor: Prejudice v Reintegration.

Communities

		Prejudice		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*No*	*34*	*66*	*100*
	Yes	*18*	*15*	*33*
	Total	*52*	*81*	*133*

Kadogos

		Prejudice		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*Yes*	*9*	*43*	*52*
	No	*17*	*75*	*92*
	Total	*26*	*118*	*144*

In the examination involving communities, a Chi-square test was conducted to explore the potential relationship between satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration and the perception that Kadogos are undesirable individuals who should not be present within the community. The assumptions necessary for the Chi-square test were met. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration and the perception of Kadogos as undesirable individuals ($\chi^2(1) = 4.4$, $p = .036$). With a calculated p-value of .036 falling below the predetermined threshold of 5%, the Chi-square test was considered significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, when examining Kadogos themselves, no statistically significant relationship was found between their satisfaction with reintegration and the prejudice affecting their ability to reintegrate ($\chi^2(1) = 0.03$, $p = .861$). With a calculated p-value of .861 exceeding 5%, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2 - Negative factor: Economic Exploitation v Reintegration.

Communities

	Economic Exploitation		
	0	*1*	*Total*

Kadogos

Reintegration	*No*	*35*	*65*	*100*
	Yes	*10*	*23*	*33*
	Total	*45*	*88*	*133*

		Economic Exploitation		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*Yes*	*15*	*37*	*52*
	No	*85*	*7*	*92*
	Total	*100*	*44*	*144*

In the context of community analysis, a Chi-square test was conducted to explore the potential relationship between satisfaction with the reintegration of Kadogos and the local economy's struggle with the addition of Kadogos. The assumptions requisite for the Chi-square test were satisfied. However, the analysis unveiled no statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration and the local economy's struggle with their addition ($\chi^2(1) = 0.24$, $p = .621$). With a calculated p-value of .621 exceeding the predefined significance level of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed non-significant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, among Kadogos, the assumptions were also met, and a Chi-square test was conducted to examine the potential relationship between satisfaction with reintegration and the perception of having opportunities and feeling safe within their new environment. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with reintegration and feeling of opportunities and safety ($\chi^2(1) = 20.65$, $p < .001$). With a calculated p-value of less than .001 falling below the 5% threshold, the Chi-square test was deemed significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 - Positive factor: Protection v Reintegration.

Communities

		Protection		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*No*	*35*	*65*	*100*
	Yes	*11*	*22*	*33*
	Total	*46*	*87*	*133*

Kadogos

		Protection		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*Yes*	*24*	*28*	*52*
	No	*81*	*11*	*92*
	Total	*105*	*39*	*144*

In the analysis involving communities, a Chi-square test was conducted to investigate the potential relationship between concerns about children's contact with Kadogos and satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration. The necessary assumptions for the Chi-square test were met. However, the analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between concerns about children's contact with Kadogos and satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration ($\chi^2(1) = 0.07$, $p = .795$). With a calculated p-value of .795 exceeding the predefined significance level of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed nonsignificant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, among Kadogos, the assumptions for the Chi-square test were also met. A statistically significant relationship was observed between Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration and their perception of protection within the community ($\chi^2(1) = 28.42$, $p < .001$). With a calculated p-value of less than .001 falling below the 5% threshold, the Chi-square test was considered significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 - Positive factor: Community Acceptance v Reintegration.

Communities

Kadogos

		Community Acceptance		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*No*	*65*	*35*	*100*
	Yes	*22*	*11*	*33*
	Total	*87*	*46*	*133*

		Community Acceptance		
		0	*1*	*Total*
Reintegration	*Yes*	*17*	*35*	*52*
	No	*84*	*8*	*92*
	Total	*101*	*43*	*144*

In the analysis involving communities, a Chi-square test was conducted to explore the potential relationship between satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration and the sentiment of being happy to have Kadogos as neighbours. The necessary assumptions for the Chi-square test were met. However, the analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with Kadogos' reintegration and the sentiment of being happy to have Kadogos as neighbours ($\chi^2(1) = 0.03$, $p = .861$). With a calculated p-value of .861 exceeding the predefined significance level of 5%, the Chi-square test was deemed non-significant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, among Kadogos, the assumptions for the Chi-square test were not met. Nonetheless, a statistically significant relationship was observed between Kadogos' satisfaction with reintegration and their perception of community acceptance ($\chi^2(1) = 9.16$, $p = .002$). With a calculated p-value of .002 falling below the 5% threshold, the Chi-square test was considered significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Appendix D - Qualitative (supplementary statistical and qualitative data to support the findings discussed in Chapters V-VII. The tables presented intend to enhance transparency, illustrate key distributions, and demonstrate the robustness of the study's mixed-methods approach): Stakeholders East and West.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Kadogo Reintegration Across Eastern and Western DRC: A Comparative Analysis of Strengths, Challenges, and Regional Variations

Aspect	Military Leaders	Community Leaders	Political Leaders	Religious Leaders	NGO Leaders
Pros (East)	- Emphasize security concerns for communities affected by Kadogos' past actions.	- Grounded understanding of community needs and fears.	- Awareness of reintegration failures due to ongoing conflict.	- Advocate for emotional and moral support.	- Long-standing engagement in reintegration efforts.
	- Strong stance on proactive measures to prevent harm.	- Direct interaction with local populations enables nuanced perspectives.	- Recognize need for external financial and institutional support.	- Highlight faith-based challenges in reintegration.	- Highlight importance of psychological and material support.

					- Track trends of reintegration failures.
Cons (East)	- Approach can foster stigma by viewing Kadogos as perpetual threats.	- Struggle with resource shortages.	- Overemphasis on costs and local population priorities risks sidelining Kadogos' needs.	- Interfaith tensions undermine cooperation.	- Resource dependency hampers long-term sustainability.
	- Prioritizes separation over community inclusion.	- Limited ability to overcome mistrust rooted in traumatic past events.	- Perception of Kadogos as active threats hinders reintegration.	- Power dynamics within faith communities can reinforce stigma against Kadogos.	- Limited capacity to monitor reintegration outcomes.
Pros (West)	- Suggest containment for safety and gradual integration.	- Recognize the financial constraints of Kadogos.	- Awareness of societal distrust in Kadogos due to past actions.	- Advocacy for inclusion and moral support, despite societal and faith-based resistance.	- Flexible, adaptive approaches to reintegration.
	- Highlights proactive safety measures to protect all stakeholders.	- Practical understanding of socio-economic challenges faced by reintegrated individuals.	- Acknowledges the need for prioritization in national budgeting.	- Promote dialogue to mitigate stigma.	- Seek to address immediate and long-term needs through collaboration and innovation.
Cons (West)	- Separation policies risk reinforcing exclusionary dynamics.	- Local resistance to Kadogos can amplify exclusion and marginalization.	- Politicization of reintegration risks overshadowing humanitarian considerations.	- Politicization of religious influence can exacerbate divisions.	- Focus on short-term interventions (e.g., relocating Kadogos) lacks sustainability.
	- Label Kadogos as burdensome outsiders.	- Mistrust due to lack of direct interaction with Kadogos.	- Limited regional strategies for holistic inclusion.	- Lack of financial capacity hinders large-scale reintegration efforts.	- Difficulty in ensuring long-term safety and community support.
Comparative (East vs West)	- East: Emphasis on historical grievances and local safety.	- East: Strong memories of atrocities limit community trust.	- East: Conflict-driven context limits resources and trust.	- East: Challenges tied to interfaith relations and trauma.	- East: Greater emphasis on long-term failures due to recurring conflicts.

	- West: Focus on containment and control to avoid new tensions.	- West: Greater emphasis on economic strain and practical barriers to reintegration.	- West: Greater scepticism and limited buy-in to reintegration programs.	- West: Religious leaders' politicization impacts local attitudes toward Kadogos.	- West: Adaptations focus on immediate safety and sustainability.

This table presents a comparative stakeholder analysis, military, community, political, religious, and NGO leaders, capturing both the benefits and limitations of their roles in reintegrating Kadogos in eastern and western DRC. It highlights how regional conflict dynamics, cultural memory, and resource disparities shape reintegration strategies and their effectiveness.

The table reveals two core dimensions:

1. Divergence in stakeholder roles and perceptions.
2. Significant regional asymmetries between the conflict-ravaged East and relatively stable West.

Key Takeaways by Stakeholder Group:

1. Military Leaders

- East: Focus on security-first approaches, advocating for containment and proactive measures to prevent instability. However, this often reinforces stigma by portraying Kadogos as ongoing threats.
- West: Support containment as a transitional step toward integration. Though better resourced, their continued emphasis on safety over inclusion risks deepening marginalization.

Comparative Insight: Military actors in the East are shaped by traumatic histories and active conflict, while in the West, they lean toward control strategies to avoid re-igniting tensions.

2. Community Leaders

- East: Exhibit grounded knowledge of local fears but are constrained by resource shortages and unresolved trauma. Mistrust from past violence remains a significant barrier.
- West: Tend to echo societal distrust, labelling Kadogos as outsiders. Limited interaction with former combatants amplifies fear and exclusion.

Comparative Insight: While East-based leaders operate amid trauma, their experiences offer deeper empathy. Western leaders display more economic than emotional resistance, rooted in resource competition and lack of exposure.

3. Political Leaders

- East: Recognize the failure of reintegration in conflict zones, but tend to politicize reintegration, emphasizing resource constraints over humanitarian imperatives.
- West: Display scepticism and budget-consciousness, often framing reintegration as a secondary priority within national development agendas.

Comparative Insight: Across both regions, political leaders often delay or dilute reintegration policies due to competing priorities, lack of coordination, and public pressure.

4. Religious Leaders

- East: Play both a healing and polarizing role. While they advocate for emotional support, interfaith tensions and internal power struggles can reinforce stigma.

- West: Lean toward politicized religious narratives, shaping attitudes through moral messaging that may stigmatize rather than support former combatants.
Comparative Insight: In both regions, religion is deeply influential, but its impact is double-edged—offering avenues for reconciliation or deepening divisions, depending on how faith leaders engage.

5. NGO Leaders
- East: Have long-standing involvement, track reintegration outcomes, and highlight systemic failures. However, they struggle with donor dependency and limited sustainability.
- West: More adaptive and innovative, leveraging short-term solutions like arts, sports, or relocation. Yet these remain fragmented and impermanent.
Comparative Insight: NGOs are often the most consistent reintegration actors, but both East and West NGOs are constrained by funding cycles, limited coverage, and inability to ensure long-term follow-up.

Cross-Cutting Themes & Regional Contrasts

Dimension	Eastern DRC	Western DRC
Conflict Exposure	Direct, ongoing violence. Reintegration often interrupted by instability.	Post-conflict, more stable, but less urgency and political will.
Community Sentiment	Trauma-driven mistrust, but some leaders show empathy.	Fear rooted in unfamiliarity, economic concerns, and political narratives.
Religious Influence	Complex and tense; sometimes supportive, often fractured by faith divisions.	Highly moralized; faith sometimes used to justify exclusion.
NGO Role	Embedded, aware of long-term challenges but overburdened.	Flexible and locally responsive, but prone to short-termism.
Policy Focus	Security and survival override reintegration goals.	Reintegration seen as non-essential amid competing development priorities.

This stakeholder analysis reveals that no single actor or region can address reintegration alone. Effective programming requires:

- Contextual sensitivity: Recognizing the lived experiences and cultural dynamics of both East and West.
- Multi-actor collaboration: Bridging military, community, religious, and NGO efforts with coordinated policy frameworks.
- Long-term sustainability: Moving beyond short-term containment and relief to durable social reintegration.
The table ultimately reflects how divergent worldviews, historical memory, and institutional capacity shape the reintegration journey of Kadogos, often leading to inconsistent, fragmented, and regionally imbalanced outcomes.

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