

ONE MAN, ONE GUN, NO MORE: EXPLORING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN
DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION

by

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DEDICATION

To continuing to improve our field and bringing about a more just and peaceful world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR SYMBOLS

Agency for Co-Operation and Research in Development	ACORD
Armed Forces Ruling Council	AFRC
All People’s Congress.....	APC
Children associated with fighting forces.....	CAFF
Children associated with the war	CAW
Civil Defense Forces.....	CDF
Comprehensive Peace Agreement	CPA
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women ..	CEDAW
Department for International Development	DFID
Disarmament and Demobilization	DD
Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration.....	DDR
Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration	DDRR
Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group	ECOMOG
Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS
Eritrean People’s Liberation Front.....	EPLF
Females Associated with Armed Forces and Groups	FAAFG
Forces Armada de El Salvador (Military Force of El Salvador)	FAES
Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia	FARC
Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front	FMLN
Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity	URNG
Interim Care Center.....	ICC
Interim Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program	IDDRP
Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards.....	IDDRS
International Humanitarian Law	IHL
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program	MDRP
National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration	NCDDR
National Patriotic Force of Liberia	NPFL
Non-Governmental Organization.....	NGO
Office of the Gender Advisor	OGA
Sexually Transmitted Disease.....	STD
Sierra Leone Army.....	SLA
Sierra Leone Peoples Party	SLPP
Small arms and light weapons	SALW
Revolutionary United Front	RUF
United Nations	UN
United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Development Fund for Women	UNIFEM
United Nations Development Program.....	UNDP
United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.....	UNODA

United Nations Mission in Liberia.....	UNMIL
United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.....	UNAMSIL
United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone	UNOMSIL
United Nations Security Council Resolution.....	UNSCR
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
Women associated with fighting forces.....	WAFF
Women Associated with Fighting Forces and Groups	WAFFG

ABSTRACT

ONE MAN, ONE GUN, NO MORE: EXPLORING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION

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This thesis explores factors that aid in creating positive experiences for female ex-combatants in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) campaigns.

Utilizing Sierra Leone as a focused case study, it explores how DDR design and implementation impacts women's transition from combatant to civilian. Through critical analysis I identify three main factors that lead towards the betterment of women's experiences in DDR programs. This qualitative research project has implications for DDR programs around the world and throughout the practice's history.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs have historically aimed their focus on the needs of male ex-combatants and neglected to engage female ex-combatants and those associated with the fighting forces. The planning and implementation of successful DDR programs need to take into consideration a number of background factors about the conflict and the fighters such as; how they were recruited or entered the forces, if they were ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ in the conflict, what skills they acquired during the war, if they entered as children, if they were sexually abused and if any children resulted in this abuse, and if fighters committed social taboos or atrocities in their communities, to name a few (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 206). All of these questions factor heavily into the ability to adequately address the needs of former combatants during the disarmament and demobilization stages.

The first phase of DDR is disarmament, which aims to decrease the likelihood of resurgence in violence by removing weapons. It is defined as the “collection, control and disposal of all weapons including small arms, explosives, light and heavy weapons of both combatants and civilians” (Report of the Secretary General 2000, 15). Weapons collection is a difficult part of the process, as many former-combatants are reluctant to hand over their weapons. In response to this, some DDR programs exchange material goods or cash incentives for each weapon turned in (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 199).

Some programs also use a group disarmament policy, where a group of combatants can disarm through turning in one shared weapon. This policy can assist combatants that do not have personal access to a weapon or only possess unconventional weapons such as a machete.

Demobilization is the second phase of DDR and involves “either downsizing or completely disbanding, as part of a broader transformation from war to peace” the government-led military and/or opposition forces and groups (UNDPKO 1999). During this time, the ex-combatants live at cantonment sites for anywhere between a month and several years. While in cantonment ex-combatants will receive health screenings and basic care, civilian identification, and will typically decide on the type of reintegration activities they would like to participate in.

The most difficult phase of DDR is the reintegration phase, which seeks to “try and increase the likelihood that former combatants will become socially and economically active in the communities they return to, and that they resist taking up arms again” (UNDPKO 1999). Successful reintegration programs utilize the assistance of community elders, religious leaders, local NGOs, and public officials. This assistance is necessary to establish trust in ex-combatants’ decisions to demobilize (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 201). During the reintegration period, special attention needs to be paid to so-called vulnerable groups to help them assimilate back into civilian life. Some DDR programs additionally include a number of other “Rs” including rehabilitation, repatriation, reinsertion, resettlement, and reunification.

Since men are typically linked with masculinity and militarization, and DDR looks to transition societies and civilians into a period of demilitarization, men become the primary focus of DDR and women and women's needs become secondary and under-represented. Women have always been involved in the business of war though, and as such, are an integral part of any society's transition to peace. While many practitioners and academics have recognized the demand for higher female participation in and completion of DDR programs, most DDR programs remain largely incapable of capturing an adequate representation of females involved in conflict and subsequently do not sufficiently address their needs. When women are left behind and post-conflict reconstruction efforts are focused only on the needs of men, the society as a whole is also left behind. Although practitioners of DDR have made efforts to better capture women's needs in the DDR process, if scholars and practitioners were better able to understand what was successful for women in DDR, we would better understand how to radically redesign DDR programs to better serve women. This research seeks to identify what leads towards women's successful participation in and completion of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts. To better understand the circumstances under which women in DDR can have their needs addressed, this research identified and isolated three factors that contribute to successful experiences for women. The factors were discovered through a careful and thorough examination of DDR programs across the practice's history with focused attention to both positive and negative experiences for women.

The three factors identified in this thesis are 1) inclusion and eligibility; 2) women's needs during cantonment; and 3) reintegration support. First, success requires inclusion and recognition of the multiple roles women play in war and the subsequent inclusion of women in all of these roles in the design and implementation of the DDR program. Second, during the disarmament and demobilization phases while ex-combatants are in cantonment, there needs to be special attention paid to safety, security, health, and childcare provisions. Safety and security are especially important for women and girls whose involvement in the conflict began through forced abduction or who have suffered sex slavery and forced marriage. Additionally, women have additional medical needs from men and are more likely to succeed if they have access to obstetric, gynecological, and infant care. Women with children have difficulty participating in DDR without access to proper childcare provisions, including, but not limited to: food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, and someone to watch over their dependents while they are participating in DDR activities. Third, reintegration needs to provide women with a support network, economic security through skill building and legal means of employment, and viable ways for female ex-combatants to contribute to their communities.

Summary of Chapters

In the literature review (chapter 2), I provide the background literature for the study. First, I examine common women's roles in war and explore how women are perceived during conflict. Second, the chapter focuses on conceptions of gender, international policies on gender, and how these policies specifically relate to women in

DDR. I then discuss the importance of DDR, what each component entails, and delve briefly into its history and evolution. Finally, the last chapter explores DDR and gender through discussing “Integrated DDR Standards” and introduces the challenges specific to women in DDR. These challenges and hindrances have directly led me to isolate the three factors mentioned above and discussed in chapters five through seven, which may ensure women have a greater chance at successful completion in DDR programs.

In the methodology chapter (chapter 3), I give an explanation of the research and analysis methods used in this qualitative study. Additionally, I present my research question and briefly introduce my findings.

In chapter four on Sierra Leone, I provide background information and the context for my main case study. This includes a discussion of traditional gender roles in Sierra Leone before the war as well as a general overview of the civil war. Lastly, I discuss the terms of the various cease fires and peace accords and the provisions that established Sierra Leone’s DDR program.

In chapters five through seven, I present and discuss the findings of this study. Each chapter focuses on one of three isolated factors that I identify as integral to women’s successful participation in DDR. Factor number one focuses on inclusion, eligibility, and how shame and stigma hindered women’s participation in the Sierra Leone DDR program. Factor number two focuses on needs specific to the cantonment period, namely: safety and security, women’s health, and childcare provisions. Factor number three discusses creating support networks and economic security to help women better reintegrate into society.

In chapter eight, I outline the conclusions of this research. I examine how these findings can contribute to the existing dialogue of addressing women's needs in DDR; how including women in post-conflict mechanisms can impact peaceful transitions; and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Women in War

Whether fighting on the forefront, working in support functions, or managing the households of male soldiers, women have always played an integral role in times of conflict. Bouta, Frerks, and Bannon found that “females are active participants in fighting forces in 55 different countries” (Bouta, Frerks, Bannon 2005, 11). In addition, they point out that women “tend to represent between 10 percent and one third” of both regular armies and non-state military actors (Bouta et al. 2005, 9). In Latin America, “many armed groups contained a significant proportion of women and girls, up to 30% in some cases, and females within these armed groups primarily had joined voluntarily and were more visible” (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 204).

Gendered concepts of femininity imagine women as incapable of possessing the qualities associated with soldiers, fighting, and wartime. The idea of women not being suited to war stems from the relationship between militarization and masculinity; Cynthia Enloe states, “militarization, as we will see, whether it occurs in the corridors of a government or on the streets during a protest, requires *both* women’s and men’s acquiescence but it *privileges* masculinity” (Enloe 2013, 4 emphasis original). Even today, men and women are associated with gender stereotypes “where women are considered peaceful and men aggressive, women passive and men active” (Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008, 7). In Jessica Goodell’s book *Shade it Black*, she describes how the privileging of masculinity manifests itself in the United States Marine Corps:

If the female doesn't perform in the same way the men had, the audience's view of the world and the assumptions upon which it's based are reinforced. The Corps is a masculine world, defined by toughness and courage, and it admits females only at its peril. And at the nation's peril. Thus, the honor of the Corps and its effectiveness to protect the country are threatened by small, weak, and fearful women (Goodell 2011, 87).

Women all over the world are hindered by perceptions that presume war is a man's job and the home a woman's. When women do enter the war-realm, it has historically been viewed as only a temporary change in the natural order of things, easily restored to equilibrium once the men return home. John Keegan, one of the most prominent military historians stated the following about women's roles in war:

Warfare is...the one human activity from which women, with the most insignificant expectations, have always and everywhere stood apart...Women...do not fight...and they never, in any military sense, fight men. If warfare is as old as history and as universal as mankind, we must now enter the supremely important limitation that it is an entirely masculine activity (Keegan 1994, 76).

This is further perpetuated by romanticized views of women, "to the men in battle, they symbolize the alternative – a place of love, caring, and domesticity, and indeed, all that is good about the nation which their heroic fighting protects" (Cohn 2013, 1). Mathers points out that this is quite to the contrary as the paid and unpaid work women do, "sustains armed forces around the world, and has done so for generations" (Mathers 2013, 124). By viewing women's place as only on the home front, they are denied agency and patriarchal values are reinforced.

Even after the fighting has ceased, women continue to face difficulties as the labels associated with wartime switch to those associated with the post-conflict period. They are now identified as either victims or perpetrators, with women often being

categorized as the former, "...the months and years so comfortably labeled 'postwar' in practice are riddled with wartime ideas about men-as-actors and women-as-victims, misleading ideas that serve to perpetuate the very conditions that set off the conflict in the first place" (Enloe 2013, xvi). Neither one of the aforementioned gendered labels accurately portrays the multitude of functions women play in wartime. They can be all at once political protesters, victims of rape, perpetrators of genocide, mourners of children, workers for the war effort, or champions of peace, and this list is still a conservative picture, at best.

A number of women echo sentiments expressed by men for why they chose to join or support fighting. Reasons frequently heard include "forced recruitment, agreement with the war goals, patriotism, religious or ideological motives, a lack of educational opportunities, and economic necessity" (Bouta et al. 2005, 12). Women have also used membership in armies as a tool for equality and a chance at a better life. In the case of female soldiers in Eritrea, participation in war helped them to demonstrate their value to society and their equal position of power with men (Gilmore 1999, 1).

Regardless of how or why women join armies, their participation tends to fall under three categories: combatant, supporter, or dependent (Bouta et al. 2005). Anyone actively engaged in fighting a war is considered a combatant. Supporters encompass a number of different roles including, but not limited to cooks, spies, messengers, and porters. Dependents are generally defined as wives, children, other female relatives, and sex slaves. Additionally, many female ex-fighters identify as having fought intermittently in between performing other non-combat tasks.

Women and girls in irregular armed forces and fighting groups may be given forced or voluntarily to men with superior rank as wives or sex slaves. These unions often carry benefits and protection for women because the “bush wives” of high ranking or commanding officers can yield great authority. Mazurana and Carlson state that amongst the bush wives in the RUF, the commanders’ wives “kept in communication with the commander and would select and send troops, spies, and support when needed. These girls and young women decided on a daily basis who in the compound would fight” (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 14). This did not mean that bush wives were not subjected to rape or violence at the hand of her husband, but it did provide women and girls with some level of protection and a better life than those who did not become wives. Coulter states:

Those girls and women who did not become wives were forced into labor, which could mean domestic work, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of small children, but it could also be farmwork or looting expeditions. According to most people I talked to, girls or women who had no “husbands” suffered physical hardship, lack of food, and frequent rapes. A “wife,” on the other hand, would be protected from sexual abuse by other men and would also often have girls working for her, making her own situation less straining (Coulter 2009, 112).

The role of bush wife further complicates the way women function in war and how they can identify as victim and perpetrator at the same time.

In the post-conflict context, women’s ability to access resources drastically affects their ability to live peacefully and happily. These resources can be anything from physical material items such as shelter, firewood, or water to mechanisms of justice, access to education, or the ability to be given micro-finance loans. Gender systems, much like class, caste, and race systems, operate to legitimize views of men as superior and

women as inferior in order to justify continued unequal access to “power, authority, and resources” (Cohn 2013, 6).

Gender and International Policy

When thinking about gender, we must be aware that it is a social construct that acts upon individuals differently based on the cultural space they occupy. Judith Butler argues “gender is not only a social construct but a performance as well—less a state of being than a process of becoming” (Butler 2006, 1990). Additionally, Cohn defines it as follows:

...gender not only structures our lives as individuals; it also shapes, and is shaped by, the institutional and symbolic universe we inhabit, and the material processes – such as economic growth or decline, ‘globalization,’ militarization, or climate change – which constitute the context and conditions within which our lives play out (Cohn 2013, 3).

In this way, the socio-cultural norms, values, and practices of gender affects a single mother living in Saudi Arabia differently than a single mother living in Norway, as these cultures have entirely different views of gender roles. Societies’ views on gender across the globe vary drastically. As scholars and practitioners, it is important for us to view gender as a:

...structural power relation [which], rests upon a central set of distinctions between different categories of people, valorizes some over others, and organizes access to resources, rights, responsibilities, authority, and life options along the lines demarcating those groups (Cohn 2013, 4).

Gender is a global issue and is being recognized as an important factor in the brokering of peace agreements, post-conflict processes, transitional justice mechanisms, development projects, and for the promotion of peace. Gender equality was first

mentioned in the UN Charter in 1945. It stated in its preamble that “we the people of the United Nations determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women...” (United Nations 1945). The UN continued to lead the way in international gender equality by declaring the years 1976-1985 “The United Nations Decade for Women”. It was also during this time that the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. CEDAW went into force in 1981 specifically it focused on:

Protecting women’s human rights at all times, advancing substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict and ensuring that women’s diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peacemaking, and reconstruction processes... (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1979, 2/24).

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, produced what is largely considered to be “the most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action, and [a] current source of guidance and inspiration to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, everywhere” (UNWOMEN 1995, 3). The conference was attended by 17,000 participants, 30,000 non-governmental organizations, and representatives from 189 governments (“The Beijing Platform for Action: Inspiration Then and Now”). Hillary Rodham Clinton, at the time First Lady of the United States, seminally remarked, “If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women’s rights...and women’s rights are human rights” (Rodham Clinton 1995). The Platform identifies twelve critical areas of concern for women:

1. Women and the environment
2. Women in power and decision-making
3. The girl child
4. Women and the economy
5. Violence against women
6. Human rights of women
7. Education and training of women
8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
9. Women and health
10. Women and the media
11. Women and armed conflict

The Beijing Platform for Action also put forth the concept of gender mainstreaming and made it compulsory for all UN operations. As defined by the UN Economic and Social Council, gender mainstreaming is:

...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UNWOMEN 1995) .

Although the Platform for Action was adopted 20 years ago, no signatory has yet achieved equality for women and girls or fulfilled its mandate as outlined above.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), calling for greater protection and inclusion of women in peace processes. UNSCR 1325 marked the first time a UN Resolution “explicitly recognize[d] women’s multiple roles and experiences of conflict and peacemaking” (Patel, De Greiff, and Waldorf 2009, 159). It importantly recognizes that the UN needs to alter the way it acts with regards to women and girls to ensure the rights gained under CEDAW and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are respected and upheld. O’Neill and Ward conclude that:

The sheer scope of the resolution is a monumental achievement in that it calls for the active participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in conflict resolution, peace negotiations, decision-making, refugee camps, mine-clearance, sanctions, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (A. O'Neill and Ward 2005).

In reference to DDR, it asks that bodies and individuals involved in the planning and implementation of DDR programs, “consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and...take into account the needs of their dependents” (United Nations, paragraph 13). UNSCR 1325 was the first time women had ever been included explicitly in DDR mandate.

Furthermore, in 1999 the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) became “the first UN body to develop a Gender Action Plan” (Basini, 2013, 539) to implement gender mainstreaming from the top down. Together, UNSCR 1325 and the UNODA Gender Action Plan meant that all DDR programs after the year 2000 have had to provide specific provisions for women through the process of gender mainstreaming. [Sadly, this is not the reality as is discussed in the following section.]

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

DDR aims to “(re)build the state’s capacity to (re)assert a monopoly over the legitimate use of force. It has become a regular feature of negotiated peace agreements and peacekeeping missions since its formal appearance in 1989” (Waldorf 2013, 703). Over 40 countries have engaged in more than 60 DDR programs to date, the success of these DDR programs varies with some ending in failure or never reaching completion (Muggah 2014). The reasons for failure vary with each case, but many are affected by the sheer complexity of the project and its heavy reliance on the involvement of factors from

the political, military, humanitarian, and socioeconomic realms (Fisas, Carames, and Luz 2006, 5). As the field has progressed, many programs have grown to adopt regional or multi-country approaches as opposed to national ones. This is largely in recognition of the effects conflicts have on neighboring regions. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan relayed the importance of DDR programs in his 2000 address to the UN Security Council, stating:

In the civil conflicts of the post-cold-war era, a process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration has repeatedly proved to be vital to stabilizing a post-conflict situation; to reducing the likelihood of renewed violence, either because of relapse into war or outbreaks of banditry; and to facilitating a society's transition from conflict to normalcy and development. Furthermore, the process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration may have a symbolic and political importance beyond the sum of its parts. Even if full disarmament and demobilization prove unachievable, a credible programme of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration may nonetheless make a key contribution to strengthening confidence between former factions and enhancing the momentum toward stability (Report of the Secretary General 2000).

The success and continued importance of DDR programs has come into contestation and many in the peacebuilding world are looking to other post-conflict alternatives.

In order to better understand DDR's importance to successful peace post-conflict, a number of definitions are required. The United Nations Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) define DDR as:

A process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by funding their civilian livelihoods (UN DDR 2006, 6).

The integrated standards were released in 2006 to "address serious problems in the planning, implementation, and coordination of past DDR programs" (Waldorf 2013,

705). The standards were created with several principles in mind, namely that DDR be: “people-centered, non-discriminatory, accountable to the participants and beneficiaries, and participatory” (Report of the Secretary General 2006). Whereas DDR traditionally took an approach that, “stem[ed] from a narrow preoccupation with security as it is feared that ex-combatants inadequately reintegrated into society could become potential spoilers to any peace process” integrated standards show a switch in focus to a rights-based approach (Basini 2013, 538).

There have been three generations of DDR initiatives and thinking (Muggah 2014; Muggah and O’Donnell 2015). The first took place at the inception of DDR as a post conflict mechanism in the late 1980s and ended in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Programs in the first generation include El Salvador, Guatemala, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Cambodia, Haiti, and the Philippines. The latter three are considered failures due to an inability to collect the targeted number of weapons or not demobilizing enough combatants (Muggah 2014). All of these programs were focused on removing weapons and demobilizing soldiers who were seen as spoilers to the peace process. The second generation of DDR shifted the focus from short-term peace to also include long-term stability and development. Included in the second wave are the bulk of DDR programs to date. An expansion of DDR timelines, massive budgets (comparatively with first generation programs), and some relaxing of eligibility guidelines to include supporters and dependents in a few cases, categorized the period. Additionally, it was during this generation of programs that criticism began to mount for the efficacy of DDR programs. The years 2009-2010 ushered in a third generation of programs that focused on

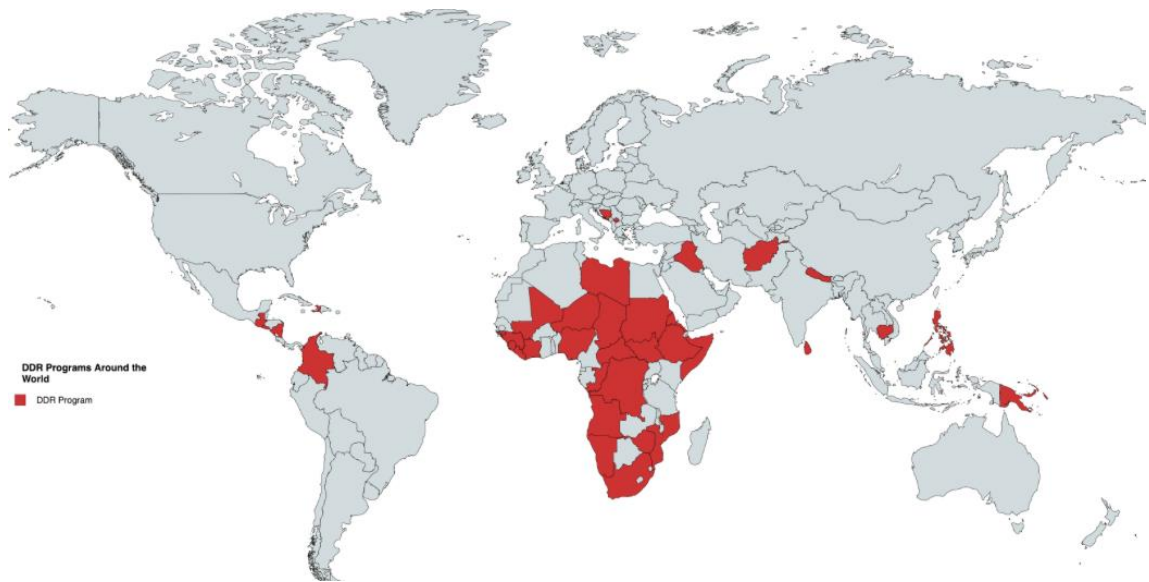
placing “macro and micro level politics” in a central role in DDR design and implementation (Muggah 2014). It acknowledges that DDR success hinges on multiple stakeholders, most importantly, the community where the program is to take place.

Countries like the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been designed with these new guiding principles in mind.

Muggah aptly states that:

Many DDR practitioners still disagree over the ultimate goals of the exercise, the correct sequencing of interventions, how wide the selection criteria for beneficiaries should be set, metrics of success (including effectiveness and efficiency), and how best to reconcile ‘security’ and ‘justice’ imperatives (Muggah 2014).

DDR is a complex process and one that is constantly evolving and adapting to highly localized forces. In phase one of DDR—disarmament—practitioners seek to remove as many small arms and light weapons (SALW) from the hands of combatants as possible. This decreases the chance of a resurgence of violence. The second phase, demobilization, transforms regular and irregular armies by either drastically reducing them in size or disbanding them entirely. Demobilization takes place in cantonment sites where combatants are stationed for the duration of the phase and receive civilian identification, health screenings, and other useful information to help their transition out of the military or armed group. The final phase of DDR, reintegration, can take many forms but generally aims to provide tools and skills to ex-combatants to aid them in becoming socially and economically integrated into their communities. Many countries around the world have utilized DDR as a tool to transition from war to peace. In Figure One, below, countries depicted in red have had at least one iteration of a DDR program.



DDR Programs Around the World		
Afghanistan	Ethiopia	Nepal
Angola	El Salvador	Nicaragua
Balkans	Guatemala	Niger
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Guinea	Nigeria
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Papua New Guinea
Cambodia	Haiti	Philippines
Central African Republic	Iraq	Republic of Congo
Chad	Kosovo	Rwanda
Colombia	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Cote d' Ivoire	Libya	Somalia
Democratic Republic of Congo	Mali	South Africa
Djibouti	Mozambique	South Sudan
Eritrea	Namibia	Sri Lanka
		Sudan

Figure One: DDR Programs Around the World

There was a notable change in how DDR planners and state actors approached the process during the 1990s. Historically, two things took place to cause this shift. First,

because of decades of intractable non-linear conflict, the number of soldiers had drastically increased and was at “an all-time high in 1987, when there were 28.8 million soldiers worldwide” (Jensen and Stepputat 2001, 9). Second, DDR was taking place largely in the developing world, which meant that there were multiple hindrances due to weak political, social, and economic infrastructure. Whereas Cold War era DDR was able to rely on the power of the nation-state, post-Cold War era DDR had become the responsibility of the international community (Jensen and Stepputat 2001, 10). With these two shifts, DDR became a seriously relied upon tool in the international peacekeeping toolbox. DDR’s importance as a peacekeeping tool has made it subject to frequent evaluation for best practices and lessons learned, but it is difficult to standardize as there can be no ‘one size fits all’ approach to post-conflict.

DDR and Gender

Although originally devoted solely to the demilitarization of able-bodied men, DDR has expanded to include vulnerable groups (children, women, the disabled), dependents, and refugees, as well as internally displaced persons (Muggah 2005, 2). Members of these vulnerable groups are often neglected during DDR planning and implementation or given the exact same benefits as men, thus not addressing their specific needs. Scholars have suggested that this negligence stems from an image of women, children, disabled persons, and the elderly as non-threatening. Women in particular are often seen as “nurturers of life and as ‘positive’ social actors who support violence reduction and peace—an image that encourages greater acceptance of the idea of women as victims of armed conflict rather than as perpetrators of violence” (Patel et al.

2009, 160). While being labeled a victim can assist women in the process of returning home to their families, it also paints an inaccurate picture of women's experiences in war and dispossesses them of their agency. In their case study on Sierra Leone, Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson state that "by being treated as passive victims or 'dependents,' they are again stripped of control of their lives and their sense of dignity" (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 15). It is also important to note that by labeling women and girls as dependents or victims, their role in the performance of war is not acknowledged and this often causes them to be ineligible for DDR benefits. Mazurana and Carlson contend that "this assumption—that women and girls were victims only, with no significant role in either the execution of war or the building of peace—is detrimental for their future and could adversely affect the country's recovery" (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 26). In fact, it is possible for women and girls to gain positions of greater power, equality, and liberation within armed movements as was seen in Eritrea, with the Maoists in Nepal, and in Mozambique among many others.

The Integrated DDR Standards, enacted by the UN to standardize DDR practices around the world, altered the way women are defined in combat by separating female combatants from females in support roles, "females associated with armed forces and groups" (FAAFG), and thus allowed inclusion of the multitude of roles women play in war. They define FAAF as follows:

[FAAFG include] women and girls who participated in armed conflicts in supportive roles, whether by force or voluntarily. Rather than being members of a civilian community, they are economically and socially dependent on the armed force or group for their income and social support (examples: porter, cook, nurse, spy, administrator, translator, radio

operator, medical assistant, public information officer, camp leader, sex worker/slave) (UN DDR 2006, 8–9).

Defining some women as dependents and others as combatants changed the way women interact with DDR and allowed women in support roles to access DDR benefits.

While the reintegration phase of DDR can be considered the most challenging phase of the process because of its inherent reliance on community acceptance of ex-combatants, many women face significant obstacles during the disarmament and demobilization phases as well. Five challenges, in particular, prove to be especially difficult and frequently result in women not participating in DDR: access to the program; communication; childcare provisions; inadequate healthcare; and security. A discussion of each of these challenges follows.

Eligibility is a large hindrance to successful disarmament and demobilization of women as the “...general foundation for DDR programs [is] to increase security, as female combatants are not directly regarded as a major security threat, they are not generally targeted...” (Bouta et al. 2005, 17). This rationale is a gendered stereotype that wrongfully presumes that women are innately innocent victims while men are violent perpetrators. In this case, the notion of threat in general is gendered. This type of stereotyping negatively affects both men and women and it is extremely dangerous during times of fragile peace.

Traditionally, DDR has paid very little attention to women and children involved in the armed forces. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) points out that:

By overlooking those who do not fit the category of a “male, able-bodied combatant,” DDR activities are not only less efficient, but run the risk of reinforcing existing gender inequalities in local communities and exacerbating economic hardship for women and girls participating in armed groups and forces, some of whom have unresolved trauma and reduced physical capacity due to violence experienced during the conflict (Douglas and Hill 2004, 32).

Eligibility is frequently limited by “one man, one gun” policies. These not only blatantly discriminate against women but also require combatants to be armed in order to participate in the process. Problematically, men typically control access to weapons, “experience has shown that commanders sometimes remove weapons from the hands of women, and especially girls, prior to arrival at the assembly point” (Douglas and Hill 2004, 36). Behavior like this, and the overall decision to leave out women in the disarmament process, strips them of their agency. Bouta et al. add that even women who do bring a weapon with them to the DDR process are not always eligible because they “have to rely on male superiors for confirmation of their combatant status” again affirming their disadvantaged position (Bouta et al. 2005, 17). For programs that do specify the inclusion of women, there is no commonly accepted definition for “female combatant” across DDR programs, making it extremely difficult to standardize eligibility.

Women who are deemed dependents of male ex-combatants frequently receive fewer benefits regardless of the actual amount of participation in the given conflict. Bouta et al. state, “benefits are often calculated based on the family and given to the soldier, but since the soldier may misuse the benefits, there is a need to monitor whether assistance reaches the intended targets” (Bouta et al. 2005, 24). DDR programs that view women as

only occupying roles not associated with combat, run the risk of greatly reducing the reality of women's experiences.

The second major challenge for women during disarmament and demobilization is communication. The majority of communication about DDR and its logistics is funneled through commanders. DDR planners and implementers also have to rely on commanders (especially of rebel or opposition groups without formal military rosters) for data on their troops, specifically how many soldiers make up the ranks and what is the age and gender breakdown of said troops. Many commanders lie about these numbers, reasons for doing so are frequently related to personal benefit and monetary gain but can also be political in motive. The latter especially affects women, as both opposition and government armed forces typically want to appear as having few or no child and female soldiers. These policies "often result in commanders having significant control over who is deemed eligible, so corruption and deceit on their part can become particularly damaging" (Mazurana 2005; Mazurana and Cole 2013, 205). If programs offer monetary compensation for the return of weapons, commanders and higher-ranking male soldiers frequently trick female and child soldiers into giving them their weapons.

As previously mentioned, many demobilization programs require combatants live in cantonment sites for long periods of time, including up to several years. For women this is problematic as cantonment sites frequently lack proper childcare provisions, healthcare, or security. In many of the countries where DDR takes place, women are expected to be the primary caretakers of children; women who became pregnant during their time as combatants may have to raise their children as single mothers. They will

additionally require medical assistance, food, and clothing for their children. Programs and cantonment sites that do not take these measures into consideration, force many women eligible for benefits to drop out from the program early on. Ex-combatants have generally been away from medical care and have not been examined by a doctor during the course of the war. Women going through this process need access to obstetric and gynecological care with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. Some women have experienced extensive medical trauma as a result of repeated rapes or violent rape and require medical treatment for uncared for injuries. During this time the program needs to have planned for an adequate number of female military UN observers to be on site to assist with security and screening (Basini 2013, 544).

Reintegration phases are generally rife with problems and are often unable to achieve their goals. Many programs fail to give ex-combatants the tools they require to become contributing members of society. The importance of this phase for the ex-combatant within the DDR framework cannot be overstressed, particularly in countries where ex-combatants have been militarized since childhood, separated from their families, or have not had the opportunity to learn a vocation or any valuable civilian skills. Barth points out that “skills acquired during the war, even if very useful in peacetime, are not recognized” (Barth 2002, 24). Success in the reintegration phase of DDR leads to a revitalization of the economy (through a drop in military expenditures as well as an influx of civilian workers) and improves overall stability of the post-conflict nation. The vast majority of women and girls that participated in armed forces will not reintegrate with the official DDR program, but instead, will self-reintegrate (Mazurana

and Cole 2013, 206). As with all phases of DDR, but especially true during reintegration, there is no “one size fits all” method.

DDR programs have a tendency to focus on helping communities return to normalcy but for protracted conflicts this is not possible because, “in long lasting wars, it is correct to state that there is no situation of normalcy to return to” (Hauge, 2008 311). For women especially, the roles assumed during war are typically a departure from their usual gender roles, whereas males tend to reinforce their masculinity in war (Hauge 2008, 311). Civilian communities are critical of “masculine” traits gained during combat; girls and women who are perceived as violating gender norms are not readily accepted and can be seen as violent, aggressive, and promiscuous. This hindrance is especially apparent when the women have been raped, forced into marriages, worked as sex slaves, or had children. In Eritrea, where many women fought in the EPLF (Eritrean People’s Liberation Front), women state that they were proven equal to men by acting like them. While this equality was empowering for female combatants during the conflict, it has not been easily translated during peace. The EPLF attempted to create an Eritrean Women’s Association to increase political participation post-conflict but “male religious leaders insisted women’s participation would cause them to lose their virtue and their virginity”, causing many of them to feel fearful and ashamed of joining (Campbell 2005, 384). The newspaper the *Eritrea Profile* states:

People, who have not seen it with their own eyes, are not willing to believe that women are not inferior to men, this has implications for how a woman’s understanding of herself must be affected. All rules for what a proper girl must be and do have to be unlearned. The aim becomes to behave in a masculine way (*The Eritrean Profile*, 14 March 1998 cited in Barth 2002, 17).

Bouta et al. adds that “[women] are expected to revert to pre-conflict labor patterns, face legal restrictions to land ownership and inheritance, and have limited mobility, especially if they are responsible for children and other dependents” (Bouta et al. 2005, 27). The economic and social hindrances they face are numerous owing to “a lack of skills, education and resources required to engage in an income-generating activity” (Hauge 2008, 297). These problems can be eased if DDR planners and implementers take into account pre-existing gender norms and work with communities to prepare for the reintegration of women who may no longer fit these roles.

Literature on DDR points to numerous factors in addition to those aforementioned that hinder the reintegration process. These factors include, but are not limited to, how the combatant entered the conflict; if the conflict had clear “winners” and “losers” and what side the combatant was on; the amount of time spent absent from his or her community; if the combatant was a child soldier; if the combatant was sexually abused, the nature of this sexual abuse, and if a child or children resulted from the abuse; the level of community acceptance of fighters or fighting forces; after conflict, the ex-combatant’s ability to enter the formal employment sector; if the ex-combatant has access to capital, healthcare, and childcare.

Conclusion

It is clear from the literature presented above that gender plays an important role in how people experience war and the post conflict period. DDR programs assist in bringing stability and peace during the fragile period following the cessation of

hostilities. Thus, women's experiences in DDR are an integral part of rebuilding war-torn societies and ushering in a new era of peace. Women's needs are not uniformly or adequately addressed across generations of DDR programs though. This thesis examines women's participation in DDR programs and answers the question: what factors contribute to successful experiences for women in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this section I discuss the approach used in gathering research and the overall methodology behind my analysis. First, I share how I became interested in this research subject and how my research question was designed. Next, I outline my research question and findings. Last, I will discuss my research design and methods used.

I have been extremely interested in DDR programs since I began undergraduate studies on peace, conflict, and human rights. I completed my undergraduate thesis on Sudan's DDR program and have continued to be intrigued by DDR as a post conflict mechanism. In graduate school, I discovered I was also passionate about gender and women's issues. This topic came as a natural marriage of two areas of research I was interested in.

I originally wanted to explore the correlations between women being present at negotiation and peace tables and women's inclusion in DDR. As I began to explore the research field, it became clear to me that the primary data required to make those correlations was simply not there yet. I hope that this can be an area for future research in my academic career. I shifted the gears back towards solely focusing on women's experiences in DDR. What I found in preliminary research was that women were frequently painted as an add-on in DDR, sometimes tacked under the category of "vulnerable groups". This seemed contradictory to the monumental leaps in recognizing women's rights and needs in international policy, many of which relate directly to DDR. I decided I would look at DDR programs from their inception to today and find instances

where things were working well for women. I asked myself “How can women be successful in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration campaigns?” As I looked at the literature, I began to understand that the answer to this question was generally vague and not concrete. I found that many practitioners had been asking themselves similar questions and the results were largely inconclusive.

Research Question

Through examining international policies on gender, past and current DDR programs, and literature on women and war, I began to see patterns in a few main challenge areas and decided that I should look at success through isolated factors. These patterns ultimately led me to hone in on my research question: What factors contribute to successful experiences for women in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs? The extensive literature discussed in Chapter Two on women’s roles in war coupled with research gathered from final DDR program assessments led me to understand the first challenge facing women in this process, their inclusion and eligibility to the programs. Examining the existing international policies on gender and suggestions from practitioners and scholars on improving DDR practices pointed me towards factor number two, that women have specific needs with regards to their safety and security, health, and children during the demobilization period. Lastly, the case studies I read from DDR programs around the world showed the need for women to have concrete support networks and access to economic security in order to successfully reintegrate into civilian communities.

Many case studies initially surveyed were extensive in nature but only focused briefly on the experiences of female ex-combatants. I focus on Sierra Leone as my main case study because of the extensive amount of research available and the large number of females involved in the conflict. Sierra Leone has been lauded in the international community as a highly successful DDR program, mainly due to the large number of ex-combatants reached, yet it only included a fraction of the women and girls involved in the conflict. As tools of comparison, additional case studies are used here based on the amount of relevant data provided on females in the DDR process.

Research Design

This thesis examined existing academic and policy research on female participation in DDR. The methodological approach is qualitative in nature and focused on traditional library research. It examined academic papers, professional reports and evaluations, newspaper articles, and published works of non-fiction. It relied heavily on academic research, governmental reports, and documents from both the UN and the World Bank. This thesis utilized DDR case studies from all over the world as tools of comparison but narrowly centered on Sierra Leone as its main focus because the target literature suggested it to be a successful case.

The existing body of literature focuses heavily on the failures of past and present DDR programs and best practices but very little on the successes. Correspondingly, the literature on women and DDR is a narrow, and often very specific category; because of these limitations in the current research, I began my research by conducting a broad survey of all DDR programs where women were included in the process. This decision

allowed me to develop a more complete picture of where, when, and how women have found success through the DDR process and what factors allowed them to do so. I also turned to academic writings and theories on gender, with particular attention and focus on gender and war to help situate women's unique needs in conflict and in the post-conflict period. Data were collected through accessing online materials on JSTOR, LexusNexis, and other databases made available through the George Mason University Library. In addition to online materials, a wide variety of conventionally published works were used.

Analysis relied heavily on the literature, and in particular the vast body of work on women in Sierra Leone written by Coulter (2008, 2009), Mazurana (2002, 2004, 2005, 2013), Cole (2013), and McKay (2002, 2004). It is because of their extensive and thoughtful work on female ex-combatants and girl soldiers in Sierra Leone that I chose to make the country my main case study. Through numerous hours of library research, I identified hindrances and challenges that women were facing during DDR programs regardless of situational aspects such as location, culture, and conflict duration. I consolidated the litany of challenges I discovered into three major areas correlating to each stage in DDR. These three major challenge areas were eventually analyzed and converted into three factors which, when addressed, enable degrees of success in DDR programs for women and girls. While the needs of girls are mentioned throughout the thesis, adult women were the main focus and girls have only been included to provide a rounded understanding of how females interact with DDR.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY OF SIERRA LEONE

Background and the Nature of Women's Lives Before War

Sierra Leone is a West African country approximately the size of South Carolina with a religious and ethnically heterogeneous population (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Women and girls in Sierra Leone, elsewhere in Africa, and much of the developing world, face extraordinarily gendered circumstances in their daily lives. In Sierra Leone in particular, men and women live in a “traditional” society whereby the culturally assigned separate roles with men holding what westerners would describe as the superior position. When Sierra Leone became independent in 1961, its government was “largely based on indirect rule by over 200 paramount chiefs” all of whom were men (Hanlon 2005, 1). Although the 1991 Constitution affords women equality with men, this is frequently not the case as most people abide under rules of customary law, which still hold women to be inferior to men (Coulter 2009, 59). Sierra Leone has a plural legal system with statutory laws, customary laws, and religious laws. Under both religious and customary law, women are secondary to men. Even in the Constitution, where women were afforded equality as stated above, contradictions exist that weaken these statutes. For example, section 27 prohibits discrimination against women but then includes two exceptions to the section stating it will not apply in matters of adoption, marriage, divorce, death, property and inheritance, and when it contradicts with customary law (Kamara 2005).

Customary law purports women of all ages as legal minors, stating that they must always be for or be of someone (Coulter 2009, 75). In a girl's life she would typically strive to be married and have children during which time she would be subject to female genital mutilation, polygyny, and (too often) domestic violence. Before the war, domestic violence was never spoken about as, "such behavior was considered almost normative and among certain ethnic groups physical chastisement of wives was a right husbands had and were free to exercise" (Abdullah, Ibrahim, and King 2006, 15). Even today, women and girls frequently do not finish primary school, have very low literacy rates, some of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world, and some of the lowest life expectancy rates (Coulter 2009, 71; UNICEF 2016).

Most rural families survive through farming, in fact, "farming is the main economic activity with 70 percent of the population of Sierra Leone living in rural areas"(Coulter 2009, 65). Land, and the right to use it, is thus of extreme importance to livelihood. While women participate in farming and often do some of the most grueling tasks, men typically control land use inheritance. This has huge implications for women after the war returning to rural areas. Farming is the often the only way to make money but men own and restrict access to all the land. Men hold property titles, pass land down to their sons or nearest male relatives, and are able to purchase land. Women are seriously disadvantaged by not being able to own, inherit, and operate farm land by themselves. Typically, men "slash, burn, and clear farms, while women are responsible for planting, harvesting, and processing food" (Coulter 2009, 66; Leach 1994, 77). The

roles of men and women on the farm are tied together but the economic advantage favors men as the primary owners of the land.

Sierra Leone was originally colonized in 1787 by the British and became independent in April of 1961. The beginning of Sierra Leone's descent into conflict occurred in March 1967 when Siaka Stevens was elected as President. Although the British government had backed the Sierra Leone People's Party, Stevens was a member of the opposition party—the All People's Congress (APC)—and it took three subsequent military coups before he was able to begin his presidency. Hanlon suggests that it is because of this rocky start that “Stevens was necessarily concerned with consolidating power, which led to the development of a patrimonial system and one-party state” (Hanlon 2005, 1). He would go on to rule the country as a socialist state for seventeen years (O'Neill and Ward 2005, 19). During his rule the country's infrastructure rapidly declined and the period was marked by overall corruption leading ultimately to the election of Joseph Saidu Momoh in 1985 as President. Under Momoh's rule, by 1987 the country had to declare a state of economic emergency and fierce opposition began to mount against the government. Momoh had greatly slashed education funding and declared that access to education was a privilege and not a right: “[P]rivileges went through the patrimonial system, and young people felt increasingly excluded” (Hanlon 2005, 1). One such member of the opposition was Foday Saybana Sankoh who traveled to Liberia to learn revolutionary tactics from President Charles Taylor. He united with other young men who felt excluded and suffered from increasing poverty and unemployment. In 1991, Sankoh led the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) as its

commander and ignited the protracted civil war through a series of attacks on villages in the east of Sierra Leone.

Civil War

The war in Sierra Leone lasted 11 years (1991 to 2002). The war was largely fought between the government and the RUF. The rebel movement's basic political agenda was to rid Sierra Leone of its corrupt leaders and install a new government promising "national salvation and liberation" ("Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone" 2016). Scholars and practitioners have refuted the assumption that the Sierra Leone conflict had diamonds at its root cause. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated in their final report that the decade long civil war stemmed from bad governance:

The Commission heard submissions from a variety of authoritative sources that the war in Sierra Leone was largely the result of failures in governance and institutional processes in the country...that the central cause of the war was endemic greed, corruption and nepotism that deprived the nation of its dignity and reduced most people to a state of poverty. Successive political elites plundered the nation's assets, including its mineral riches, at the expense of the national good... government accountability was non-existent. Institutions meant to uphold human rights, such as the courts and civil society, were thoroughly co-opted by the executive. This context provided ripe breeding grounds for opportunists who unleashed a wave of violence and mayhem that was to sweep through the country. Many Sierra Leoneans, particularly the youth, lost all sense of hope in the future. Youths became easy prey for unscrupulous forces who exploited their disenchantment to wreak vengeance against the ruling elite (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, vol. 2 p. 27, arts. 13–17).

Fanthrope states in an Overseas Development Institute Report that instead of diamond greed fueling the war, "...the more considered view is that years of government neglect

of education and other state services have helped to create a large cohort of unemployed and barely literate young people, easily conscripted by both political and criminal organizations” (Fanthorpe 2003, 54). Hanlon additionally points to a 2003 World Bank study which states that:

It is significant that everyone we spoke to talked of the collapse of institutions as the root cause of the civil war, not diamonds. . . . The collapse resulted in a signal failure to provide public services equitably and an almost total failure to maintain a just dispute resolution system (Hanlon 2005, 2; World Bank 2003, 5).

The RUF was popular with students and poor uneducated men, who saw their plight as a direct result of government policies under the APC. To make matters worse, austerity measures were placed on Sierra Leone by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whom, along with the World Bank, had been providing monetary support to the country since the 1960s. These measures caused severe inflation, mass unemployment, and major cuts on public services (Coulter 2009, 44-45). The people most affected by the economic downturn were those already underserved. Many men joined the RUF and traveled to Liberia, like Sankoh, for military training under the now-notorious Charles Taylor. Charles Taylor was eventually charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for the violence he incited and participated in in Sierra Leone. The ruling, in April of 2012, made him the first head of state to be convicted by international tribunal since the Nuremburg Trials.

There were a handful of other major players in the war. In support of the RUF were the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Force of Liberia (NPFL), and a group of disgruntled Sierra Leone Army (SLA) members called

the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC). The main groups supporting the government included the SLA and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

At its peak strength, the RUF had approximately 45,000 combatants including an estimated 10,000 women and girls who served the group in a variety of roles, including in combat positions (The African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes 1997, 3). The war was particularly violent and frequently employed the tactics of forced drug use, rape and gender based violence, kidnapping, mutilation, looting, torture, and other extreme human rights abuses. The soldiers in the SLA were also known to rape and loot at night, leaving the civilian population with no one to defend them or protect their human rights.

The conflict would not officially be declared over until 2002 after four peace agreements and ceasefires: the Abidjan Peace Agreement in 1996, the Conakry Peace Plan in 1997, the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999 and the Abuja Ceasefire Agreements in 2000 and 2001. The majority of the violence ended with the signing of the Lomé agreement. The war had “displaced over half the pre-war population, left nearly 50,000 dead, 100,000 with amputated limbs or other disfigurements, and witnessed the rape of over a quarter of a million women and girls” (O’Neill and Ward 2005, 23). Although the RUF had lost and were responsible for the vast majority of the atrocities and human rights abuses committed during the 11-year civil war, the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement granted RUF members blanket amnesty and established the RUF as a legitimate political party (Sesay and Suma 2009, 6).

Peace Agreements

The Abidjan Peace Agreement—between the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the RUF—was signed on November 30, 1996, and circulated with the UNSC. The agreement initiated the immediate end of all hostilities between the government and the RUF. It then called for the creation of a national body called the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace who were to be responsible for implementation and compliance of the peace agreement. They would also create a number of additional bodies including the Demobilizations and Resettlement Committee.

Article 5 relates to DDR, it states:

The disarmament of combatants will be effected upon their entry into the designated assembly zones, and demobilization and reintegration as soon as practicable thereafter. The upkeep and welfare of the encamped combatants shall be the primary responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone in conjunction with the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, assisted by the international community (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Revolutionary United Front, and United Nations 1996, 4).

The agreement did not indicate many specifics for DDR but did state that it should be a “well-planned national effort” and to that accord would establish the Demobilization and Resettlement Committee within one month (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, et al. 1996, 4). The RUF and government consulted to nominate seven members to the committee. Once established, the committee “identif[ed] assembly zones and camp areas for RUF/SL combatants for registration, cantonment, and disarmament; all combatants... [were] moved into the zones no later than three months from the signing of the peace agreement” (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, et al. 1996, 4). Additionally, the international community would be called about to assist in the supervision and a Joint

Monitoring Group would be responsible for supplying observers to all processes. The need for specific provisions for the vast number of children involved in the conflict and the presence of women were not mentioned.

The Abidjan Peace Accord was followed by parliamentary and presidential elections in March of 1996. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected president but peace was short lived. The withdrawal of private security and military company, Executive Outcomes, as mandated by the accord saw a quick return to hostilities throughout Sierra Leone. The RUF began attacks again and in March 1997, Foday Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria, inciting further RUF lead violence in Sierra Leone. The fragile peace put in place by the Abidjan Peace Agreement was completely shattered in May of 1997 when disgruntled SLA officers staged a coup d'état and installed the AFRC, with Major Johnny Paul Koroma at the helm, to run the country. Major Koroma declared the war officially over and won by the AFRC/RUF. The coup sparked a string of killing, rape, and looting of civilians in Freetown. In this climate the Conakry Peace Plan on October 23, 1997 was created and signed after the revocation of Sierra Leone's membership in the Commonwealth and the condemnation of the new government from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the UN, and the Organization of African Unity.

The peace plan was negotiated between a committee of five from ECOWAS and a delegation representing the new Sierra Leone AFRC run government, headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma. The Conakry Peace Plan laid out a six-month plan to be undertaken and implemented by ECOWAS. The plan contained six points in total:

1. Immediate cessation of hostilities and monitoring through UN military observers and ECOMOG.
2. DDR [would take place] from December 1-31, 1997.
3. Humanitarian assistance would be allowed into the country in November and ECOMOG would monitor the process.
4. Refugees and displaced persons would return with the assistance of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees beginning December.
5. The constitutional government would be restored beginning April 22, 1998.
6. Immunities for the AFRC leaders of the coup d'état would take effect on April 22, 1998.

(Economic Community of West African States Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and Delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koroma 1997).

The plan went on to detail out each of the six agreed upon steps. It was written that DDR would require “a minimum of 30 days...to conduct effective disarmament and demobilization” (ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and Delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koroma 1997). ECOMOG would serve as supervision and the entire process should be “simple and quick”. Additionally, it was decided that incentives could be given out to ensure participation of all combatants. Reintegration would consist of job training, “access to education at all levels” and scholarships for “further education” (ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and Delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koroma 1997). The plan also asked for assistance in reintegration efforts from the international community.

Peace was short lived as fighting continued after the agreement was signed and two AFRC/RUF campaigns were born in February of 1998: ‘Operation Pay Yourself’ and ‘Operation No Living Thing’. The former consisted of roadblocks forcing civilians to divide all of their items into two piles: one with all of the most valuable items, which would be kept by the AFRC/RUF, and the other with the things that had no value, which could be kept by the civilian (“SOWING TERROR” 2016). While ECOMOG forces stepped in and retook Freetown in March of 1998, they were largely unable to secure peace in the rest of the country. Fueled by anger at the October 1998 death sentence issued for RUF leader Foday Sankoh, AFRC/RUF groups began mobilizing from the countryside until they arrived in Freetown on January 6, 1999 to enact Operation No Living Thing (McHugh 2016). People were mutilated, amputated, raped, and killed indiscriminately; it was one of the most brutal atrocities committed during the civil war.

The event was described as such:

Using women and children as human shields, the RUF along with Liberian mercenaries entered Freetown in an attempt to retake the city. An estimated 6,000 civilians were killed, including cabinet ministers, journalists, and lawyers who were specifically targeted. Large portions of the city were burned and nearly 3,000 children were abducted as they tried to flee. Doctors from Medecins Sans Frontiers, an international NGO, treated 1,862 victims of sexual violence. Fifty-five percent were gang raped and 200 were left pregnant (O’Neill and Ward 2005, 23).

The death toll reached 6,000 to 7,000 civilians before AFRC/RUF forces were pushed out of the city by ECOMOG.

In late May of 1999 the international community stepped in and began diplomatic negotiations in Lomé, Togo between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. A cease fire was negotiated and signed with the creation of a Cease-fire Monitoring

Committee comprised of a chair from UNOMSIL and members of the government, RUF, CDF, and ECOMOG (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Revolutionary United Front 1999, 5). The agreement also established the RUF as a legitimate political party, enabled members of the RUF to hold public office, receive cabinet appointments, and gave Sankoh the position of Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development- the body that oversaw Sierra Leone's diamond mines- and Vice President of the country (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Revolutionary United Front 1999, 9). Sankoh, "all combatants and collaborators" received full pardons "in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of the signing" (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Revolutionary United Front 1999, 15).

With regards to DDR, the agreement established the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration. Article XVI spelled out four points for the encampment and DDR process. They were:

1. Six weeks after the signing of the agreement, a neutral peacekeeping force of UNOMSIL and ECOMOG troops will enact disarmament of RUF, CDF, SLA, and other paramilitary groups.
2. Current members of the SLA will be confined to their barracks, all arms will remain in the armoury, and a neutral peacekeeping force will watch them until the DD phases are complete.
3. UNOMSIL will be present at all locations to monitor and provide security.
4. The government will request financial and technical assistance from the international community to undertake these tasks.

(Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Revolutionary United Front 1999, 20).

While women did not receive a specific mention in Article XVI, their needs were addressed in Article XXVIII where it stated that:

Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitations, reconstruction, and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social, and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Revolutionary United Front 1999, 27).

The RUF violated the cease-fire frequently and even captured 500 UN peacekeepers in May of 2000. This deterioration led to intervention by British troops, who were able to repel the RUF forces throughout the country.

On November 10, 2000, a one-day cease-fire conference was held in Abuja, Nigeria to re-establish the Lomé cease-fire agreement. It additionally asked for the RUF to turn over RUF leader Foday Sankoh and other high level personnel (Peace Accords Matrix 2015). This request was denied. While incidents of cease-fire violation declined from the time of the signing of Abuja I and early 2001, there were still many portions of the country in RUF control and the UN was denied access to many areas. On May 16, 2001 Abuja II was signed and a final cease-fire was upheld. The three instances of peace agreement collapse negatively affected the DDR process as some demobilized combatants re-armed and others were killed; in phase I 1,580 ex-combatants re-armed or died and 1,447 in phase II.

Sierra Leone DDR

Sierra Leone's DDR program is frequently hailed as a success in UN peacekeeping rhetoric. In 2004, when the government declared the DDR process complete, a total of 75,490 combatants had been disarmed and demobilized; 55,000 received reintegration benefits; and 42,330 weapons were collected and destroyed (The United Nations 2005; Dufka 2005; Fanthorpe 2003; Tesfamichael, Ball, and Nenon 2004). The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), in conjunction with the government of Sierra Leone, set up separate procedures for child soldiers. Approximately 6,845 children were demobilized, 8% of whom were girls (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund 2005, x). The DDR program took place across three phases from August 1998 to January 2004. The main goal of the Sierra Leone program was to reduce the prevalence of SALW and breakdown the rebel chain of command, because of this focus the program was designed to be gender neutral as opposed to gender sensitive. Had the design put emphasis on social reintegration, women's needs may have been taken into account more regularly. In Table 1, reproduced from the UN Women Training Centre Glossary, the five degrees of gender mainstreaming in policies and programs are detailed. The Sierra Leone program is degree number two, gender neutral.

Table One: The five degrees of gender mainstreaming

Gender Negative	Gender Neutral	Gender Sensitive	Gender Positive	Gender Transformative
Gender inequalities are reinforced to achieve desired development outcomes	Gender is not considered relevant to development outcome	Gender is a means to reach set development goals	Gender is central to achieving positive development outcomes	Gender is central to promoting gender equality and achieving positive development outcomes
Uses gender norms, roles, and stereotypes that reinforce gender inequalities	Gender norms, roles, and relations are not affected (worsened or improved)	Addressing gender, norms, roles, and access to resources in so far as needed to reach project goals	Changing gender norms, roles, and access to resources a key component of project outcomes	Transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment

Source: (UN Women Training Centre 2016), Glossary of Gender-related Terms and Concepts.

The policy framework for the DDR program was provided by the 1996 Abidjan Peace Agreement and the program was designed in April of 1998 at the World Bank Project Preparation Facility (Teschmichael, et al. 2004, 10). Provisions for DDR Phase I in Sierra Leone began in July of 1998. They aimed to disarm a total of 75,000 combatants. This first phase was a joint work between the government, UNDP, ECOMOG, and the World Bank. It also officially created the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) headed by President Kabbah. The goal for DDR was not to provide long-term reintegration but instead to assist ex-combatants with “short-term support while they began the process of readjusting to

civilian life” (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 10). Phase I targeted the Sierra Leone Army soldiers encamped at Lungi after surrender to ECOMOG forces and additionally extended the opportunity to join the program to any members of the RUF. The encampment sites were all located at Lungi where ECOMOG disarmed the combatants and the UK-based Department for International Development (DFID) provided water, food, and health care (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 12). Reintegration packets consisted of six-months of monetary support through a Transitional Safety Net Allowance (TSA) to be paid in two installments: the first installment (half the total sum) at the time of departure from encampment and the second half three months later at the NCDDR center. The creation of the installments was meant to ensure ex-combatants remained in the community they were demobilized in, prevent misallocation of the funds, introduce more money into rural communities, and provide ex-combatants with support for them and their dependents until training and vocational activities could begin (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 12). Phase I ended in January of 1999 when the RUF and AFRC attacked the city of Freetown during Operation No Living Thing; only 3,000 combatants had been disarmed (Sesay and Suma 2009, 10; Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 13).

DDR efforts resumed with the Lomé Peace Accords and began in July of 1999. The program would focus on weapons collection, a military-led disarmament and demobilization, and reintegration into either new armed forces or civilian life (Sesay and Suma 2009, 11). The signing of the Lomé Peace Accords was followed up with UN Security Council Resolution 1270, establishing the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). UNSCR 1270 specifically mandates “the importance of including

UNAMSIL personnel with appropriate training in gender related provisions [and] cultural awareness” (The United Nations Security Council 1999). A lack of gender-sensitivity was a major criticism point for the highly lauded Sierra Leone DDR program.

Unrealistically, Lomé stipulated that disarmament was to take place and reach completion within a 90-day time frame. Phase II lasted for nine months, disarmed approximately 19,000 combatants, and demobilized 17,500 (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 14). Phase II, spearheaded by NCDDR and UNAMSIL, was halted when the RUF abducted 500 UN peacekeepers in May 2000. The RUF continued fighting until the second Abuja agreement in May 2001. During that year (the Interim Phase), an additional 3,000 combatants demobilized but there was no formal structure in place for DDR.

Phase III of the DDR program began in May of 2001 and added measures to DDR stipulating that the RUF and CDF would be disarmed simultaneously, the SLA would no longer participate in the program, and that up to 3,000 RUF fighters could become soldiers in the SLA. Importantly, NCDDR introduced the opportunity to demobilize as a group, turning in a single weapon for multiple people. This allowed nearly 47,800 ex-combatants to demobilize (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 20). Additionally, demobilization centers only held ex-combatants in encampment for no more than three weeks. In Phase III more emphasis was put on educational and skills training during the reintegration period. Previously (during Phase I and Phase II), ex-combatants would receive approximately \$150 after demobilization and then another \$150 three months later if they were registered with a local reintegration office (Fanthorpe 2003, 56). In Phase III, they removed the second payment and instead offered salaries of approximately \$30 a month

while the ex-combatant was in a registered education or training program. The hope was that the new design would discourage ex-combatants from taking the money but not entering in any sort of formalized training or education program. At the closing date for reintegration registration, June 30, 2002, only 60% of the ex-combatants demobilized had registered (Fanthorpe 2003, 57).

The institutional framework for the Sierra Leone DDR was hallmark in that it created one national, centrally located body to manage the process. This was the first time in DDR history that lawmakers chose this approach and in the final evaluation of the program, it is lauded as a major reason from program success (Tsfamichael, et al. 2004, vii). The main actor designing the program was the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (NCDDR) and was made up of representatives from the government of Sierra Leone, RUF, AFRC, CDF, UN peacekeeping operations, and donors. It was more-or-less autonomous from the rest of the government, which helped it gain confidence in the public eye, “it was viewed as an independent civilian institution, staffed by civilians, assiduously projecting a high level of neutrality in its treatment of the combatants” (Tsfamichael, et al. 2004, vii). Within NCDDR there was the Executive Secretariat who implemented the program and Technical Coordinating Committees who discussed and made decisions on current issues and problems. The program was financed by a multi-donor trust fund coordinated by the World Bank and overseen by the Financial Management and Procurement Unit (Tsfamichael, et al. 2004, vii). There were a number of key regional and international partners including the UN, the World Bank, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom. The UN

was the key partner in assistance with UNAMSIL taking on the task of monitoring the DDR and also assisting with implementation, the World Food Programme provided food for ex-combatants, and UNICEF took over the responsibility of reintegrating child soldiers. The World Bank provided technical and financial support through allowing access to their Project Preparation Facility where the DDR program was designed, and setting up and monitoring the Multi-Donor Trust Fund. The government of Nigeria supported Sierra Leone through the deployment of ECOMOG/ECOWAS troops. Lastly, the United Kingdom assisted with military support during the peace process, developed the new Sierra Leone Army, and provided institutional support for UNAMSIL.

The DDR process in Sierra Leone was fairly typical to previous DDR programs around the world. Combat units would arrive at pickup locations and be transported to the disarmament site. There they would be processed and deemed if they were eligible, usually by handing in a weapon and being identified by a commanding officer. Once they entered the program they would be moved to an encampment site. During this period they would receive health screenings and be interviewed for official records of their military involvement. Additionally, “information would be given on reintegration benefits and combatants would have to make choices of communities to settle into and educational or apprenticeship programs to partake in” (Schroven 2006, 74). Some encampment sites included leisure activities and counseling sessions, but each site experienced differences in services rendered due to “political and financial conditions” (Schroven 2006, 74). Upon demobilization, ex-combatants received a Transitional Safety Allowance (phase I and II) or Reinsertion Benefit (phase III) to help them transition into their chosen

communities before they entered the official reintegration program. This practice is often referred to as “arms for cash”.

Those moving on to the reintegration portion of the program typically enrolled in a vocational training course, during which time they received allowances for six months and a tool kit. Many ex-combatants participated in “stopgap” programs where they would work alongside community members on infrastructure recovery projects. These programs were not officially part of the DDR program but were instead run by UNDP. Stopgap programs typically last between two and three months and are used to provide short-term immediate income generation. Activities can include demining efforts, road repair, school and hospital rebuilding, and other infrastructure repair from war damages. Stopgap programs are an important tool in fostering positive feelings about ex-combatants amongst civilians and providing repairs to damaged infrastructure. They are not meant to replace other long-term reintegration efforts like education and skills based trainings which can provide ex-combatants with the tools for sustained income generation.

Conclusion

Eleven years of violent protracted conflict where very few, if any, areas of the country were left unscathed, left Sierra Leone in ruins. Peace was very hard to come by as the AFRC and RUF continually resorted back to violence. The DDR program is hailed as a great success because of the sheer number of combatants demobilized and the hallmark decision to centralize the process through one national body. The design choice to create the program as gender neutral instead of gender sensitive was a largely missed opportunity to further the status of women in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER FIVE: FACTOR ONE: INCLUSION AND ELIGIBILITY

Inclusion and eligibility in DDR are two of the most important, and possibly most difficult to overcome, factors to women's successful participation in DDR programs. There are combined here because they are of equal importance and cannot be unbundled from one another, solving inclusion without eligibility and vice-versa would be impossible. When women are not included in the mandate and design of a DDR program, they are faced with challenges throughout the process. The first of these challenges are exclusionary policies hindering acceptance and eligibility for women and girls to gain admittance to the program at all. The design of the Sierra Leone DDR program, as pertains to inclusion and eligibility, is discussed below with focus on how this design impedes women's accessibility to the program and their ultimate success in post-conflict society.

The very first DDR programs only envisioned wars as existing between two parties of regular troops. The reality has forced programs to be redesigned to recognize the many different armed groups that become involved in protracted conflicts. The addition of irregular armies and paramilitary groups makes defining the ex-combatant an extremely difficult job. In the case of Sierra Leone, the regular army, paramilitary groups and civil defense forces were all meant to be included in the DDR as stipulated in the peace accords (Ayissi, Poulton, and United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research 2006). Sierra Leone was the first time any DDR program included armed groups other than government forces and opposition forces.

At the time, ex-combatants were typically defined “as somebody who has a conventional weapon” but for members of the civil defense forces and for women and girls, possession of a conventional weapon was rare at best (Jensen and Stepputat 2001, 16). Conventional weapons are typically defined as SALW including land mines, rockets, shells, and other non-weapons of mass destruction.

While Sierra Leone’s DDR process reached a large number of combatants, its design was primarily focused on men and only reached a small fraction of the women and girls involved in the conflict. Of the over 70,000 combatants disarmed and demobilized, approximately 4,751 were women and 506 were girls (Bradley, Fusato, and Maughan 2002, 1). There is little consensus on approximately how many women and girls were involved in the war, but most authors agree that these numbers are drastically low and do not adequately represent the number of females actually involved (Coulter 2009; Mazurana and Carlson 2004). McKay and Mazurana estimate that as many as 12,056 girls were members of fighting forces in Sierra Leone (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 92). There are many reasons for the drastic difference in potential and actual numbers of women entering the DDR program. Below, I will discuss how inclusion and eligibility for the program hindered many women from entering the program and receiving assistance.

Inclusion

The cooperation of army officials and rebel commanders is necessary in the disarmament phase to provide accurate rosters of their ranks in order to determine who is eligible to receive DDR benefits. Every party that is to disarm should hand over their rosters but frequently they do not comply (Jensen and Stepputat 2001, 12). Military

leaders regularly alter the rosters to include or exclude members of their armed group. In interviews Mazurana conducted in Sierra Leone with government officials, one responded: “Yes, we saw hundreds of women and girls come in claiming they were CDFs [Civil Defense Forces], but we knew those forces only contained men, so we took their weapons and turned them away” (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 205). The denial of girls and women within the CDF ranks by both the Deputy Minister of Defense and the National Coordinator of the CDF, was seen as a direct deterrent for female CDF members to enroll and collect benefits (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 21). Acknowledgment of the existence and importance of the roles women play in war is crucial to their ability to access post-conflict benefits. This is evident in other DDR programs where particular groups were unable to be a part of the process because those in charge did not want to admit they were breaking actual or informal laws by including these groups in the fighting.

For example, in El Salvador thousands of children ages 16-18 were unable to join the DDR process because the government and armed groups did not want to acknowledge they were illegally using child soldiers. Under Salvadoran law, men ages 18 and older must serve in the military; during the civil war children ages 16 and older were allowed to voluntarily enlist, but it is known that both the Forces Armada de El Salvador (FAES) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) recruited children heavily (Verhey 2001, 7).

In Mozambique there have been reports of some ex-combatants receiving support from multiple sources while others received none (Baden 1997 cited in Barth 2002, 6). Mozambique required all participants in the DDR to be officially demobilized by their

commander and hand in weapons, a uniform, and any documentation and ammunition they possessed (Ollek 2007, 40). Other examples of errors in registration lists can be seen in Namibia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia to name a few.

In Guatemala there were serious registration issues with the unified guerrilla group, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Many people were left off the list that should have been included and many people were added to the list that were not eligible. Leaders in the URNG later admitted that there had been a competition among them to see who could get the most people on the list (Hauge and Thoresen 2008, 219). The reliance on these rosters can be twofold for women: first, their commander must acknowledge their actuality as a member of the fighting group; and second, they must identify the woman's role in the fighting group. The latter is a determining factor in DDR benefit eligibility.

The DDR program in Sierra Leone had three possible categories of identification: combatant, camp follower, and supporter. The program did not make any provisions for dependents of DDR participants. The program was designed to primarily assist combatants and thus participants had to identify as a combatant to receive benefits. As will be discussed later, the shame and stigma surrounding women identified as rebels was a great deterrent to participation in DDR and many women chose to self-demobilize. In Liberia, they added the category of women associated with fighting forces to "reduce the experience of stigma linked to being an ex-combatant for those women who wish to participate in DDR but would otherwise be repelled (Schroven 2006, 84).

Ex-combatants placed in the first category would be included as primary beneficiaries while the following two would only allow them to receive benefits through the male supporting them, there were no secondary beneficiary provisions. In DDR programs in general, secondary benefits are provided to dependents of ex-combatants and are often not enough for survival and require additional support from the primary beneficiary. They are not intended as a supplement to the care provided to the dependent by the primary beneficiary, their role is to give additional and direct support to the dependent. Primary benefits consisted of “some monetary and material assistance and...three to six months of vocational training” (Coulter 2009, 155, 264). The material items given were simple, a sleeping mat, soap, and a bucket (Hoffman 2005, 332).

Towards the end of the process Sierra Leone introduced a micro-credit program for the wives of ex-combatants. The micro-credit scheme was the only official program targeted at women specifically (Schroven 2006, 77). The program required that anyone wishing to enroll registered with their spouse or a male ex-combatant who would claim the woman or girl was his wife (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 102). Although the program was targeted at women, McKay and Mazurana purport that the micro-credit scheme was “established to address the fact that male ex-combatants were running out of money given to them from DDR and were coming back demanding that NCDDR officials assist them” (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 102). Even if a woman was eligible to participate in the program, relying on a spouse or other male ex-combatant frequently was impossible or not desirable. For bush wives, in particular, it was difficult to access the program. For some it was impossible because many of the husbands had left their bush wives after the

war to find more suitable matches, women considered less “wild”. Female ex-combatants also had a difficult time finding potential matches post-conflict if eligible men knew they had been a fighter or helped the rebels. For other women, it was not desirable because the man they were married to was their captor and/or had been abusive during the conflict. The end of the war was an opportunity for them to escape. By establishing a micro-credit program that required their husbands to be present, those women would be less likely to escape. Additionally, there were reports of increased domestic violence from husbands who wanted access to their wives’ funds (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 45).

Before the war, men and women in Sierra Leone did not combine their income and held separate financial responsibilities. For example, men were typically charged with buying long-term food staples (rice and oil) and clothes for their dependents, while women paid for the costs of caring for children (school fees and materials) and small day-to-day needs like ingredients for a sauce (Coulter 2009, 70). In her ethnography of the Mende people in Gola, Sierra Leone, Melissa Leach stated the following:

Husbands and wives do not know the full extent of each other’s resources and expenditures. It is accepted that men and women keep their financial affairs private. While this can lead to ambiguity and suspicion, too much openness is also thought to invite problems. Wives often suspect husbands to be withholding resources, spending them on co-wives, or depleting them unwisely such as on “unnecessary” litigation or social investments. Keeping cash stores and flows private is considered to maintain marital harmony partly because such flows remain hidden, rather than being brought into the open where they might invite palaver (Leach 1994, 195).

Since men and women preferred to keep their money independent of one another, and were seen as having separate financial responsibilities, asking women to bring in their husbands or another man to verify their eligibility for the micro-credit program was

extremely problematic. Coulter also adds that the requirement led to some men abducting women and girls and forcing them to pose as their wives so they could take the money (Coulter 2009, 160).

Essentially, all women wishing to participate in DDR were reliant on either the word or the physical presence of a man validating their role. As women in wars often occupy multiple roles and rarely can be categorized as simply “fighter”, relying on the word of a male superior or husband to categorize them as a combatant is problematic at best. Additionally, requiring validation from a man is particularly troubling in the case of women and girls who have been forced into marriages. By terming the women dependents of their husbands, the DDR program is further entrenching abuse and missing out on a valuable opportunity to separate captives from their abuser. The inability to sustain oneself economically is one of the main deterrents for many women and girls in abusive relationships to not seek assistance or refuge (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 102).

DDR processes that specifically target and recruit women for registration have a much higher success rate with female registration than programs without a specific gender outreach component, as was seen in the 2004 Liberian DDR program, which will be discussed in more detail below. The marked difference in female participation between Liberia’s 1997 program and their 2004 program was the result of adding gender mainstreaming into the DDR process. With UNSCR 1325 on the global agenda for UN led initiatives, programs beginning in 2000 were to implement gender mainstreaming into their program design. Phase III of Sierra Leone DDR began in 2001 but did not include any of the gender specific DDR guidelines laid out in UNSCR 1325. Had they done this,

women might have been more successfully included and cared for. It was not until 2003, when the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) began, that a peacekeeping mission received an explicit mandate to implement UNSCR 1325 (Basini 2013, 542).

The Liberian war officially ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana on August 18, 2003. Provisions for a United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) led DDRR program were included in the agreement. The inclusion of a gender program meant that all UN efforts in Liberia were coordinated through gender mainstreaming. In addition, Liberia's newly elected Special Representative of the Secretary General and President were both female and invested in seeing the resolution incorporated into UNMIL's work. Most importantly, an Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) was created within UNMIL to "build capacity for gender mainstreaming both within and outside the mission by raising awareness of gender concerns through advocacy, training, support, monitoring, and reporting" (Basini 2013, 542). The OGA was not in place until after the DDRR had already been planned, resulting in a missed opportunity for further inclusion of women and girls.

UNMIL estimated demobilizing 38,000-45,000 ex-combatants, 2,000 of which were to be women. UNIFEM estimates that as many as 10,000 females participated in fighting capacities in the war and even more in support functions (Douglas and Hill 2004). In reality, 101,495 combatants registered for disarmament and 90,000 moved on through to the rehabilitation and reintegration process (Jennings 2008, 20). In total, 22,000 women participated in the disarmament and demobilization process (Basini, 2013, 541).

Inclusion is an incredibly important factor in successful completion of DDR, as it would be impossible to receive the assistance needed and given through the program without first being included in its design, planning, and implementation. By not fully and adequately including women and girls and acknowledging the roles they play during conflict, DDR is failing its mandate to contribute to overall peace and human security during fragile post-conflict periods.

Eligibility

Many of the female fighters interviewed by Chris Coulter in her book *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives through War and Peace in Sierra Leone*, related that:

...they had been trained as fighters during their time with the rebels, soldiers, or Civil Defense Forces, but many admitted to having fought only intermittently, in between serving as spies, laborers, bush wives or sex slaves, making the definition of who was fighter more complicated (Coulter 2009, 126).

The multiplicity of their roles often made them ineligible to participate in the DDR program at all. In Megan MacKenzie's work on securitization and females in the Sierra Leone DDR, she concludes that the DDR process was "reliant on gender stereotypes that assume men experienced the conflict as soldiers and women experienced it as victims or noncombatants" (MacKenzie 2009, 244). This follows a general theoretical understanding of war as associated with masculinity and peace as associated with femininity. The over simplification of women's roles in the Sierra Leone conflict caused them to miss out significantly on the benefits available to them and downplayed the importance of women in fighting forces. Chris Coulter states, "the focus of the Sierra Leone DDR was on disarming male fighters, and as girls and women had played many

different roles in the war, the narrow classification of them as dependents or ‘bush wives’ effectively excluded them from the process” (Coulter 2009, 158). Thousands of women and girls were certainly abducted by the RUF and AFRC, but thousands also joined voluntarily and participated in the violence. Additionally, women slipped through the cracks because they were ineligible as adults and had aged out of the child specific DDR program, even though many of them were abducted and participated in the war as children.

Bouta divides women in irregular armies into four main categories: combatant, support worker, abductee, and wife/dependent (Bouta 2005b, 7). Combatants are anyone actively engaged in fighting and are typically issued a weapon making them easily eligible for most DDR programs. Support workers are an integral part of both regular and irregular armies and are comprised of such jobs as porters, cooks, spies, and doctors. Support workers in regular armies rarely or never engage in active combat. In irregular armies, such as the CDF and RUF in Sierra Leone, support workers may take on a number of different roles including combat. If a support worker is engaged in active combat, they are typically provided with a weapon from a communal source or use unconventional weapons such as machetes or weaponized farm tools. Bouta points out that “without a weapon, they often cannot prove that they have participated in armies during conflict and thus get excluded from [DDR] assistance after conflict” (Bouta 2005b, 7). Abductees are fairly common in conflict involving irregular armies. While some conflicts see large numbers of men or small boys abducted, women and girls are also forcibly recruited in large numbers. In Mozambique both boys and girls were

abducted by the thousands by Renamo; in Rwanda young Tutsi girls and women were taken as spoils of war; the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers forced men and women to join their ranks and sometimes used women as suicide bombers; in both Liberia and Sierra Leone children of both sexes were abducted frequently. These examples are by no means exhaustive and many more conflicts have participated in the abduction and forced recruitment of women and girls. Abductees may be forced into marriages, become sex slaves, or participate in combat and support roles. These women may choose to not participate in DDR, regardless of eligibility, because of shame, this is discussed further on. Lastly, women and girls can participate in war as wives and dependents. These women may also be known as camp followers because they “follow their male counterparts into the bush and live in the direct vicinity of the barracks and camps” (Bouta 2005b, 8–9). Women frequently occupy many of these roles throughout the span of a conflict. These multiplicities are challenging for DDR programs and women are best able to access post conflict assistance if all women are eligible for participation, regardless of their role during the conflict (Bouta 2005b; de Watteville 2002; Barth 2002; Farr 2003).

In Sudan, the Interim DDR Program (IDDRP) defined women’s roles into four possible categories: female combatants; women associated with fighting forces and armed groups (WAFFG); female dependents; and women in war-affected communities. Only women categorized in the first two roles were eligible for DDR benefits. Community security support programs were created to assist the latter two categories. While the DDR program in Sudan, one of the more recent iterations of the practice,

shows tremendous thought and strides in implementation of the needs of women and girls in DDR, concurrent programs, such as the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) in the Africa Great Lakes region, continue to exclude females.

All DDR programs before Sierra Leone operated under a strict “one-man-one-gun” entry requirement. Programs beginning in the mid-2000s have generally tried to stray away from this policy in favor of a more inclusive approach, which looks to target special groups. These groups vary based on the context of the conflict but are typically comprised of women, children, the disabled, internally displaced persons, and refugees. Critics argue that “these expanded mandates have sacrificed efficacy by trying to include too many people” (“Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Africa” 2016). In the planning of the Sierra Leone DDR, women were not identified as a group requiring special assistance. Had they been it is very likely that the program could have been lauded as a success story. UNAMSIL did choose to set up a special DDR program specifically aimed at the vast number of child soldiers and children otherwise involved in the conflict.

In phases I and II, from September 1998 to May 2001, only armed combatants were eligible for DDR benefits, dependents and wives were added to the DDR mandate in phase III from May 2001 to January 2002. In the initial two phases every combatant was required to turn in a weapon to enter the program and additionally, were asked to assemble and disassemble an AK-47 or similar weapon. The justification for this requirement is that “it was believed that the ability to assemble and disassemble a weapon

was a good litmus test to determine whether an individual had participated in the conflict as an armed combatant” (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 18). This rule was not supposed to apply to children demobilizing but was often administered due to staff confusion (Mazurana and Carlson 2004). Under the Cape Town Principles, created in 1997, child soldier is defined as:

Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members (UNICEF 1997, 12).

For DDR this means that children participating in fighting forces are eligible for post-conflict assistance regardless of their role in the armed group. Officially, entrance would be granted to children who were “aged 7 or above; have learned to ‘cock and load’; have been trained; have spent 6 months or about in the fighting forces” (MacKenzie 2009, 251; UNICEF 2005; Ollek 2007, 49).

Female fighters typically did not have their own gun as rebel commanders controlled the distribution of weapons and women who were in possession of a gun were often forced to give it to a male who did not have one (Coulter 2009, 159). Mazurana and Carlson found that:

Many women in the CDF were ordered to hand in their weapons prior to demobilization, then were left behind as their male colleagues were transported to assembly centers. Others indicated that their guns were taken away by their commanders and handed to male fighters. Many who were not ‘primarily’ fighters had used weapons from a communal source but did not possess guns themselves (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 159).

Fighters in the CDF often possessed weapons like knives and machetes and only accessed SALW for a communal source, but these were not accepted for entrance at the DDR.

Commanders, who controlled access to weapons, used the eligibility requirement as a way to make money. They would provide young men or relatives with a weapon to register with and in exchange would take the monetary and physical items given to the “combatant” at registration (Coulter 2009, 159). For women who did own a weapon there was still no guarantee they could enter the program because men might take or steal the weapon before they register. This was the case with a female ex-combatant interviewed by Chris Coulter; she states “the men took the guns from we the women. But some only disarm with the woman they love, so they will take your own gun and give it to her” (Coulter 2009, 155). In DDR phase III, groups could disarm together, where one weapon could be used as admission for multiple combatants. It appears that many female combatants did not know this was an option and it was thus not properly utilized (Coulter 2009; Mazurana and Carlson 2004). While this option did give women a way to enter the DDR program without access to a weapon, it relied even more heavily on identification by a commanding officer as he was required to be present at the time of registration and identify that all members of the group were part of his combat unit (Schroven 2006, 93). The Guatemala DDR program also offered the option to enter the process individually or collectively. This will be discussed in greater detail with regards to the reintegration process.

Although Liberia’s DDR eventually added aspects of gender mainstreaming into program design, as discussed previously, they initially adopted a “one-man-one-gun” entry requirement, thus alienating some female ex-combatants. Nobel Peace Prize

winner, Leymah Gbowee, made the following remarks about the inclusion of women in the process:

Far fewer girls and women turned in guns than we knew possessed them...I knew some of them had had their weapons taken by male commanders who wanted to claim the DDR money for themselves. Others didn't show themselves because they feared being stigmatized. The majority of Liberia's female fighters evaporated, as if they'd never existed (Gbowee and Mithers 2013, 171).

Women and girls in Liberia could also demobilize as women associated with fighting forces (WAFF) or children associated with fighting forces (CAFF). If they chose to do so, they would not be required to turn in a weapon to access the program but would lose the transitional safety allowance given to ex-combatants during the rehabilitation and reintegration phase (Olek 2007, 62). Commanders would also remove weapons from women and children thus forcing them to enter DDR as WAFF or CAFF.

Hindrances to Participation: Shame and Stigma

Women's inclusion does not always mean that there are not other hindrances to participation. In Sierra Leone, some women that did meet the eligibility requirements found that the shame and stigma associated with joining the DDR outweighed the benefits they would receive by entering the program. According to interviews conducted by Chris Coulter, if the women were deemed eligible and categorized as a combatant "it would make it more difficult for them to be accepted back into their communities, and it would also make it more difficult for them to get married, as they were told that no man wanted a 'rebel woman' (Coulter 2009, 159). For women and girls that used the end of the war as an opportunity to escape their captors, entering the DDR program would bring

them directly back into the armed forces they risked their lives to get away from.

MacKenzie suggests that:

In order for the DDR to have met the needs of the large number of women and girls who escaped from the armed forces, the DDR should have specifically targeted escapees by making efforts to inform them that they were eligible for the DDR and that their safety would be ensured during the process (MacKenzie 2009, 252).

Stigmatization also kept many escapees away as they did not want to, again, be associated with the armed forces or rebel groups (MacKenzie 2009, 252).

In the Sierra Leone post-conflict context, women and girls were both victim and perpetrator. Community acceptance is greater for women who identify themselves as a victim. These women felt that if they joined the DDR it would be the same as admitting that they had joined the fighting willingly as opposed to through force. Schroven explains that “women who identify with the latter [ex-combatant] are perceived to breach norms they should otherwise adhere to after the war, after the return to ‘normal’ life” (Schroven 2006, 106). The reality for these women is seen less as a dichotomy between perpetrator-victim and more as a sliding scale:

In interview after interview, women would tell me of almost indescribable pain and suffering, and I was given detailed descriptions of rape and humiliation. Indeed, most of my informants have been victims in any of the definitions of the word, but this does not mean that some of these women did not also at times loot, kill, and cut off hands, although these latter experiences have generally been more difficult to talk about in this particular postwar social context (Coulter 2009, 150).

The desire for female ex-combatants to hide their identities and escape stigma is seen in many other countries including El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Namibia, Uganda, Mozambique, and Liberia (Bouta 2005a, 18). In some communities,

missing out on DDR assistance is still preferable to the shame and stigma they will receive if they return to their communities as an ex-combatant. In Liberia, Olivia Bennett found that “as far as most men are concerned, when you [a female combatant] come back, you are out... They hardly want you to come near the children” (Bennett, Bexley, and Warnock 1995, 39). In Zimbabwe, female fighters grappled with similar shifts in their role in society post-conflict, “the values of civil society and the values of the liberation army are often in opposition to each other, and women who have been influenced by their time as soldiers have to repress the soldier part of their identity in order to be accepted” (Barth 2002, 8).

These women have a tendency to retreat into the shadows at the end of war while they grapple with the reintroduction of traditional gender roles in society during the post conflict period. They may, as many women did in Sierra Leone, self-demobilize or spontaneously reintegrate. The latter is a concept outlined in McKay and Mazurana’s work; they found that the most common form of reintegration for girls in Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique was to simply return back home to their communities (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 36). Self reintegration may seem like the only option for some women and girls, especially those forcibly recruited, but these women are left with little to no physical and psychological assistance making their survival and success rate low.

Conclusion

With limited resources and often too-short mandates, DDR programs need to accurately stipulate who is eligible for participation in the program. It is clear, for female ex-combatants to have successful and positive experiences in DDR, they first and

foremost must be eligible and included in the process from planning through to implementation. The multiple and varied roles occupied by women and girls in fighting forces cannot be oversimplified into categories like “soldier”, “dependent”, and “camp follower”. Doing so is at the peril of reconciliation and lasting peace for the post-conflict nation. If all women are included and eligible for DDR programs, their success will contribute to the restoration of human security post conflict. It will allow women to make first steps towards reintegrating into their communities, becoming contributing members of society, and rebuilding peace after war.

**CHAPTER SIX:
FACTOR TWO: WOMEN’S NEEDS DURING CANTONMENT**

The first two phases of DDR—disarmament and demobilization—typically consist of assembly of soldiers (and sometimes dependents and camp followers) at a cantonment or encampment site, registration, weapons collection, distribution of identification documents and interviewing for data collection, medical screening, and finally transportation home. During the cantonment period, women’s needs with regard to safety and security, health, and childcare provisions are a key factor to their successful utilization of the DDR program.

Although every program differs, most utilize cantonment sites or encampments to house former combatants while they complete the disarmament and demobilization phases. As mentioned above, it is incredibly crucial for cantonment sites to provide for female needs to prevent program attrition. The highest levels of program drop out occur during cantonment because of inadequate facilities, concerns for safety, lack of proper medical attention, and insufficient material resources (like clothing, sanitary supplies, food). While men also suffer from these issues, women face the additional challenges of sexual assault, medical issues pertaining to sexual trauma and reproductive health, and a lack of childcare. A female commander from Burundi explains the need for female specific provisions in the DDR process, she states:

...women are not involved in the DDR policy or process, and thus cannot represent women’s needs. The result is that there are very poor conditions for women in the cantonment camp; there is no balanced nutrition, no clothes for women, no toiletries, no feminine hygiene supplies. So the women are treated like men (Mazurana 2004, 63).

Making provisions for women's specific needs, especially with regards to safety and security, health, and childcare, is a key factor in determining women's successful participation in DDR.

Safety and Security

Safety and security are vital for lasting peace in a post-conflict society. In fact, increasing overall safety and security are frequently stated as the sole purpose of conducting DDR activities (Bouta 2005a, 17). It is also important though, to provide a safe environment for ex-combatants during disarmament and demobilization, as encampment sites can often become sites of continued violence. Large numbers of men feeling increased levels of boredom and frustration can very easily be incited to violence, especially as tensions are high and men from both the winning and losing sides may be contained in the same space. In Bo, Sierra Leone, anthropologist Daniel Hoffman recounts in his narrative ethnography that violent outbursts frequently occurred as aggravated men waited in line to access the DDR registration even with the presence of armed UN peacekeepers (Hoffman 2005).

Occasionally, weapons are collected after initial encampment instead of during the registration period. When this happens, weapons are typically stockpiled within the encampment site, leaving the men gathered together with access to weapons for continued fighting. De Watteville points out that in Mozambique, men forced their way into the encampment's weapons storage and stole SALW (de Watteville 2002, 9). For women, this situation can be very dangerous and can serve as a deterrent for entering the

DDR program at all. During DDR Phase I in Sierra Leone, ECOMOG stored collected weapons rather than destroying them as was laid out in the DDR plan. When UNAMSIL took over DDR implementation, they began destroying the weapons collected. It is important for all those entering the DDR process to be present at encampment because it provides a valuable opportunity to distribute information and to facilitate the process of establishing records and formal identification. If the situation is volatile, many women and girls will not feel safe housed in encampment sites. In some DDR programs, notably Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Nicaragua, women were not present at all due to exclusion or deliberate misinformation (de Watteville 2002, 6).

In Sierra Leone, interviewees reported to Mazurana and Carlson that their many concerns about personal security kept them from entering the program even though they were eligible. The women feared the large numbers of men, bad security provided by UN peacekeepers, and the lack of privacy (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 20). Members of the CDF were extremely fearful of being housed with members of the RUF, “CDF girls reported immediate threats to their lives when RUF youth became aware of their affiliation” (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 20). A woman interviewed by Megan MacKenzie related that “she had reason to believe that if she showed up at the DDR she would be killed by the Special Security Death Squad, a brutal, specialized armed group” (MacKenzie 2009, 253). Other interviewees reported that they were interviewed post-registration in a room that was not private, thus making them susceptible to threats once their affiliation was exposed (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 20). UNIFEM suggests that the registration process should have separate entry points for men and women and ensure

that they receive individual identity cards, as this may increase the possibility of escape for captured girls and women (Douglas and Hill 2004, 35).

Many of the aforementioned are concerns experienced by men as well. In Liberia, while there were some problems with implementation, the cantonment period was designed with the assistance of the Office of the Gender Advisor and fully complied with UNSCR 1325. The camps had “separate housing facilities and gender and age appropriate assessments, medical and counseling services” they also had separate entrances into the site for men and women though many of those were unable to be used due to a collection of mud and rainwater near them (A. O’Neill and Ward 2005, 56).

Women and girls who had escaped the rebel forces or their bush husbands did not want to go to a DDR site only to find themselves surrounded by their captors again. McKay and Mazurana found high instances of spontaneous reintegration in Mozambique, Uganda, and Sierra Leone, as abducted women and bush wives took the end of the war as a prime opportunity to escape (McKay and Mazurana 2004). While spontaneous reintegration allows women to free themselves from the domestic and sexual abuse of their captors or bush husbands, it also removes them from any possibility of receiving reintegration support. Bouta finds that many, if not all, of these women find themselves “in isolation and extreme poverty after the conflict ends” (Bouta 2005a, 18). There are reports indicating that many instances of sexual violence occurred in the DD camps (Coulter 2009, 164). Making additional preparations for women’s safety and security, as will be discussed in detail below, can help break the cycle of continued physical and sexual violence.

In all encampment situations, and especially in those lasting over periods of several months, it is important that women have separate shelter, cooking, and sanitation facilities and that they are well lit and adequately guarded. Bouta suggests that encampments can increase security and safety through, “guards or fenced quarters and [installing] special facilities suitable for women, men, and children, such as separate sanitation facilities, food adapted to children’s needs, and distribution of appropriate clothing” (Bouta 2005a, 26). Increasing female visibility throughout the site through heavy female representation in staff can help ensure female participants that there are people looking out for their needs. It also increases the likelihood that staff will be informed of female-related grievances, as many women will feel more comfortable relaying issues to a member of their own sex. Throughout all phases of DDR in Sierra Leone, there were no female Military Observers deployed to the DDR program (United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund 2005, 16). The implications of this are that women have not been provided with all of the necessary tools to help them through the DDR process. Having female military observers present represents a recognition of the importance of both men’s and women’s security during encampment. It renews the commitment the DDR program has to providing a safe environment where women and men can make the difficult transition from combatant to civilian.

Additionally, locating encampment sites outside of public eye, for example in former army barracks, can also improve the DD process. NCDDR, the Sierra Leone government body responsible to design and implementation of the DDR in conjunction with the UN, frequently used old schools as demobilization sites and then returned the

buildings to the community after the ex-combatants had left. Many of Coulter's informants and their families felt that "female fighters should not have been asked to disarm in such an open or public space as a DDR camp", she suggests this is due to the overall shame female ex-combatants and their families felt about them having fought in the conflict (Coulter 2009, 163-164).

In Sierra Leone, many women did not show up at registration sites for fear that once they were identified they would be arrested and prosecuted for their crimes. While amnesty and participation in DDR are fiercely debated topics amongst the international community, it is important for accurate information to be provided to potential participants about their country's specific amnesty provisions. The Lomé Peace Accord provided a blanket amnesty for all atrocities committed before its signing. Women and girls have less access to written information than men due to lower literacy and school completion rates. In the early 2000s, during the time the majority of ex-combatants entered the DDR program, female literacy rates in the country were 18.2%, while males had a 45.4% rate (Fanthorpe 2003, 53). Many scholars point to the use of female communication channels as extremely important in disseminating accurate information about DDR programs (Bouta 2005a; de Watteville 2002; Barth 2002).

Both MacKenzie and Coulter write about their informants' grave fear of the pictures taken for their ID cards at the cantonment sites. The cards and photos were simply meant to help international aid workers identify who was eligible for training programs, rations, financial assistance, and other benefits. Many women believed the photos would be stored in a computer and then circulated widely, essentially shaming

them for their participation in the civil war, potentially aiding in their arrest, and ultimately barring them from finding a job or receiving a travel visa (Coulter 2009, 165; MacKenzie 2009, 254). Circulating information about what the ID cards would be used for through local women's networks, health centers, and other loci of female communication could have greatly decreased the irrational fear surrounding them and may have increased female participation in the DDR.

Women's Health

Historically, health services suffer tremendously during periods of civil war and protracted conflict. In Rwanda, most health workers were killed during the genocide; in Bosnia and Herzegovina the majority of health professionals fled the country and never returned. In the DRC years of conflict left the health infrastructure in shambles (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 34). When international aid workers provide health services they are targeted, as has been seen with the kidnapping of health workers in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and the violent attacks in the Palestinian territories (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 34). Women receive the brunt of the burden associated with health, as they disproportionately suffer from sexual violence, bear offspring, and, in many societies are responsible for the caring and well being of others. It is vital for women to receive adequate medical attention that is specifically suited to their needs.

In Sierra Leone, too often women were not given personal hygiene kits or separate toilet and shower facilities during encampment. At the Interim Care Centers (ICC) run by UNICEF, where child combatants were demobilized, and within the traditional adult DDR program "... 43 percent [of women and girls] reported not

receiving adequate clothing; 54 percent did not receive proper sanitation materials, including soap, shampoo, and feminine hygiene products; and 23 percent did not have access to medical care when requested” (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 22). Women ranging anywhere in age from 10-50 require personal hygiene kits that include sanitation supplies, “without such supplies, girls have to stay home from school, mothers cannot take their children to health facilities and women may miss work or training” (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 37).

While some participants may be suffering from combat related injuries, women may also have been infected by a variety of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), be pregnant, and suffer from traumatic injuries from repeated rape, genital mutilation, or forced abortions. Coulter, Persson, and Utas state the following as common health conditions experienced by female fighters in Africa,

...headaches from being beaten and psychological issues, stomach ache—possibly from STDs and pelvic inflammatory diseases, effects of drug abuse, scabies and skin diseases, chest pain, pain from beatings, genital injuries or infections such as swelling, fistulas, vaginal discharge, genital itch and pain from trauma to the genital and anal regions and sexual abuse (Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008, 34).

In order to properly treat the conditions above, DD centers should have separate health facilities for women where female doctors and staff treat them and guards are present. This is particularly important if women are not separated from the men who have beaten or raped them in the past.

Rape, and more specifically, gang rape, was a wide spread tactic used during the Sierra Leone conflict. Based on data collected during the DDR program, human rights reports, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the vast majority of these rapes

were committed by members of the RUF between 1998-1999 (Cohen 2013, 397). The majority of rape victims were females of all ages, though there are accounts of male rape, both perpetrated by other males and by females.¹ Chris Coulter found that most of her informants experienced and differentiated between two different types of rape. The first were the rapes committed at the time of their abduction and the second were the prolonged sexual abuse committed by their boyfriends or bush husbands:

When they talked about what happened, they would describe how the first rapes were often performed by several men and could go on for days. These rapes were then usually followed by the entrance of one man, often of higher command, claiming the woman as his “wife” and thereby “saving” her from future rapes and in turn making her feel loyal to him for having saved her (Coulter 2009, 127).

There have been a number of theories about why rape was used as a weapon of war in the Sierra Leone context. Mazurana and Carlson suggest that rape was part of a large gendered strategy that allowed the rebel groups to function during war. Thompson believes the the RUF additionally used sexual assault as a means for controlling the civilian population (Thompson 2006, 350). Richards suggests that rape was a part of male initiation and a large culture of violence (Richards 2008, 30). Coulter agrees with Richards but additionally suggests that “war rapes in Sierra Leone also reflected the low status of rights for women in Sierra Leonean society” (Coulter 2009, 127). Regardless of why rape was so popular during the civil war, it left many, if not all, women suffering from health concerns due to sexual abuse.

¹ See Dara Kay Cohen, 2013 for an interesting study on female combatants as perpetrators of wartime rape. Also, Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children 2002, 13.

STDs (except HIV and Hepatitis C) can often easily treated by antibiotics but some, if left untreated, may lead to maternal and fetal death, pelvic inflammatory disease and sterility. Infertility in Sierra Leone society would cause additional social stigma as no man would marry a woman unable to bear his offspring (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 39). Additionally, if left untreated, STDs will continue to be transmitted among the population leading to greater prevalence of illness, infant mortality, and a lower overall life expectancy. DD programs should screen all participants, regardless of age, for STDs, and provide medical attention for current STD outbreaks, preventative tools in the form of condoms and STD education, and medicine for the treatment and curing of STDs. The MDRP in the Great Lakes region of Africa, addressed these issues by establishing medical teams at demobilization centers, whose main aim was to address HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and services for rape victims (Schroeder 2005, 19–20).

HIV prevention and transmission education is a critical component in the rebuilding of developing post-conflict societies. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, HIV continues to be spread because of “...a complex set of social factors, including gender inequality, economies of labour migration which separate families, levels of commercial or ‘survival’ sex, dangerous traditional practices, intravenous drug use, and unsanitary medical procedures” (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 48). Women are biologically more susceptible to HIV infection and frequently pass the virus to their offspring during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding. In Sierra Leone, the only systems for screening blood for infections are in Freetown, meaning that blood transfusions done elsewhere may contain HIV (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, 49).

In 2003, Save the Children reported that women in Sierra Leone have the highest rate of infant and maternal mortality rates worldwide (Save the Children (U.S.) 2003, 32). Adolescent pregnancy, unwanted and forced pregnancies, and lack of pre-natal care are all extremely dangerous and prevalent factors for women in Sierra Leone. Abortions are illegal in Sierra Leone but can be obtained on the black market for around \$100, a sum around the average annual income in Sierra Leone (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002). Fear and stigma play greatly in women's ability to seek medical attention for pregnancies as the result of rape. In Rwanda, a conflict that saw similarly astounding numbers of wartime rape, health professionals generally only discovered a woman was pregnant if she sought them out for other visible genital infections, after an attempted abortion, or requests for late term abortion (Enloe 2013, 133). Health centers during the encampment phase should be prepared to see women suffering from complications of self-inflicted or amateur bush abortions. It is also important that DD account for nutritional needs of infants, children, and pregnant women as they differ from those of adult men.

While both men and women in combat in the developing and developed world can be susceptible to psychological injuries, women and girls are often more directly affected because of the additional trauma of sexual assault. Societal and social stigma can cause further psychological distress as women try to reintegrate back into their former communities and are shunned.

Childcare Provisions

Providing ex-combatants with childcare provisions during encampment is integral for female participation. Women who are unable to make other arrangements for their

dependents will need to be provided with shelter, a safe place for their children to be looked after while they attend training and other demobilization activities, nutrition formulated for babies and children, children's medical needs, material assistance like clothing and shoes, and possibly the opportunity to enroll their children in school. While men are free to leave their families for long periods of time while they are kept at cantonment centers or are receiving training packages, women are disproportionately burdened by the afore mentioned necessities of childcare. With the deterioration of support networks that takes place during the war, women are left with little to no assistance with the rearing of babies and small children. Local women may provide vital assistance by watching the children of others, but with the fierce shame associated with females in the fighting forces, this opportunity is not always open to females wishing to participate in DDR and may be more readily available to men. One of MacKenzie's informants relayed that during encampment: "the counseling she was given 'to not do bad' was useful, but argued that she needed help with the children she gave birth to from the rebels. She noted that men had the advantage of being able to leave behind their children while women were left to care for them" (MacKenzie 2009, 249).

The official Sierra Leone program did not offer provisions for the offspring of participants. If DDR programs do not explicitly make provisions for dependents to attend alongside their parents, women can be left with a difficult decision: abandon their offspring or opt out of receiving much needed DDR assistance. Mazurana notes that:

Women were also critical of demobilization programs that required numerous forms of transport, long periods within cantonment or demobilization sites, and did not allow women to care for their children. They pointed out that men were at an advantage to afford transportation as

well as have their wives look after the children for months or in some cases years spent at assembly or demobilization sites, options women often lacked (Mazurana 2004, 65).

While sending ex-combatants to encampment directly after disarmament can decrease attrition rates, it can be problematic for women. Scheduling demobilization programming around women's availability, mainly during the day and in convenient locations that do not require extensive travel, can enable them to utilize community networks or bring their children with them. Barth and Watterville relate that the Uganda program found success in allowing families to be present at encampment, making "registration and collection of data on dependents easier" (Barth 2002, 9). The Uganda DDR program also allowed women who had been abducted to reside with families and other female ex-combatants, increasing the feeling of support and security (Barth 2002, 9)

In Sierra Leone, the long civil war violated and hindered the ability for traditional ceremonies of adulthood to take place, thus leaving children over the age of 18 and children under the age of 18 but whom had given birth, in precarious positions. Joseph Momoh, of Children Associated with the War (CAW) explains the situation as follows in an interview with Megan MacKenzie:

...some girls that were around the age of 16 would feel strange going through the DDR because they were not seen as adults because they didn't go through ceremonies but they didn't see themselves as children because they had had sex and some had children... You can have a baby but if you haven't gone through the ceremonies you are not considered mature enough to have a child and you are still considered a child. A mother is someone who has gone through the ceremonies... If you give birth to a child you are not an adult and you cannot carry out adult responsibilities so that is why some parents don't want to [send] their girls through the DDR because their girls had babies and it was shameful (Father Joseph Momoh, printed in: MacKenzie 2009, 254).

In both the main DDR and any programs specifically targeting children, it is important to provide assistance to these new mothers and adults. Many of them will lack basic knowledge about child rearing and, due to the longevity of the civil war and the high number of children abducted, will not have learned the skills necessary to be the head of a household. In Uganda, a program headed by World Vision addressed some of these issues by specifically targeting the needs of abducted girls including: “trauma counseling for sexually abused girls, health and nutrition facilities for babies, and training for young mothers” (de Watteville 2002, 8). Post-program living provisions should also be made for new widows, young mothers, and other new heads of household. In Angola they supported young families by assisting with home construction (de Watteville 2002, 17).

Conclusion

While inclusion and eligibility are crucial to women’s ability to access the assistance provided in DDR programs, the encampment period is a critical component for completion of the program. After registration and the removal of weapons, ex-combatants have pressing physical and psychological issues that need to be attended to. These are all addressed during the encampment period. When women are provided with female specific medical attention, a secure environment that ensures the discontinuation of physical abuse, and provisions for their dependents they are able to fully participate in the program and ready themselves for the reintegration period.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FACTOR THREE: REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

The reintegration phase of DDR is perhaps the most difficult and certainly the most important. De Watteville specifies that the reintegration phase is complete once ex-combatants and their families have the ability to sustain their livelihoods through income generation and the community has accepted them (de Watteville 2002, 12). Ex-combatants who have completed the first two phases of DDR but fail to enroll or complete the reintegration phase face significant challenges when returning to their chosen community. They also can pose a major risk to fragile states of security. An example of this was seen in Angola in the late 1990s where UN reports linked the failure of the DDR program to high levels of crime (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research 1999). Depending on the length of the conflict, ex-combatants may not possess any of the education or skills required to acquire a job and contribute to the economic and social fabric of society. This lack of participation coupled with lasting psychological trauma and potential physical disabilities, causes ex-combatants to seek validation elsewhere. For women this can lead to an engagement with un-regulated professions such as prostitution and for men it may lead to aggression and domestic violence. At their most threatening, these grievances may lead to a renewal of conflict as ex-combatants return to irregular armies and threaten the cessation of hostilities (Bouta 2005b, 12).

While the disarmament and demobilization phases of Sierra Leone's DDR program are generally hailed as a success, the reintegration phase has received more criticism. In the final report on the DDR, Tesfamichael, Ball, and Nenon of Creative

Associates International caution that DDR programs are not intended to deal with “long-term economic and social rehabilitation and poverty reduction” (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, v). They go on to state that while many ex-combatants successfully participated in the DDR program, these ex-combatants would move on to face problems civilians were facing, namely “lack of full-time, long-term employment opportunities, particularly for youth; a weak social and economic infrastructure; serious questions of governmental accountability at all levels; and an uncertain regional environment” (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, v). While their caution is certainly relevant to gauging the success of the reintegration program, women, children, and disabled ex-combatants face additional difficulties in successful reintegration into society. UNICEF and NCDDR created programs specifically tailored to help reintegrate children and NCDDR partnered with Handicap International to assist disabled ex-combatants, but there was not a reintegration program designed specifically for the needs of women. Women are a critical component of society and as such need to be included in reintegration programs. The number of women entering initial phases of DDR is already drastically low compared to the number of women involved in conflict and of that small percentage, even less make it through to the reintegration phase.

As traditional gender roles are reintroduced, female ex-combatants have to grapple with the loss of status and autonomy they may have received during the war. In addition, conflicts contribute to an overall degeneration of society that is particularly difficult for women to navigate. There is a breakdown of traditional family structures, leaving many households female headed and without a male breadwinner. Reintegration

programs can attempt to address these issues through providing education, vocation, and skills trainings that allow women the opportunity to contribute to society and have a better chance at achieving economic security. It is also important that female ex-combatants have a support network in place to assist them while they reintegrate. This third factor is discussed in greater detail below.

Economic Security and Ability to Contribute to Society

The post-conflict economic situation of countries that have experienced protracted conflict could be described as bleak, at best. The status of the Sierra Leone economy during the DDR is no exception. The country is rich in natural resources such as diamonds, gold, and rutile but these resources yield little economic gain for the citizens of the country because of underdevelopment and corruption (Filipov et al. 2006, 32–33). The second largest sector of the economy is agriculture and this is how the vast majority of people living in rural areas create their livelihoods. An estimated 85% of the population depends on semi-subsistence agriculture (Stavrou et al. 2003, 17). Additionally, other service sectors where people may find alternative modes of employment are restricted to urban areas as the rural parts of the nation are too underdeveloped to support anything but agriculture (Filipov et al. 2006, 33). Even if service sector positions were available, the vast majority of the population would be unable to seek employment there owing to a severe lack of education and training in skills based labor. In general, unemployment and underemployment were widespread in Sierra Leone during the post-conflict period, with about 33% of ex-combatants reporting employment in 2003 (Stavrou et al. 2003, Appendix 1, 10; Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 61).

Access to income is an extremely important step in reintegration. Without it ex-combatants do not have the ability to provide basic needs like shelter and food, may not be able to receive needed health care, nor participate in training and education programs, or send their dependents to school. They cannot begin savings accounts, or join farming and small business ventures that require initial investments or tools (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 207). These challenges can lead some women to enter or remain in abusive relationships or to participate in the illegal money make sector as prostitutes.

The majority of women in Sierra Leone are unable to access higher paying positions because of a strikingly low literacy rate. In 2004, a few years after the cessation of conflict, reported literacy rates for females aged 15 and above were only 24.2% compared to 46.93% of males in the same age range (Filipov et al. 2006, 37). Yet, Mazurana found that receiving training and education that could lead to employment in government and civil society jobs was of extreme importance to females in the DDR program. Women wanted to “be active members of the citizenry and support themselves” (Mazurana 2004, 66).

The importance of earning an income and contributing to society cannot be overstated. Coulter found that her informants believed “it was very important to them to be able to contribute to the household, because this made them feel more respected, and this included the facet that having an income was seen as improving the relationships with their husbands” (Coulter 2009, 181). Contributing to society can help female ex-combatants feel like they are not a burden to their community, which can lead to greater levels of acceptance and psychosocial healing.

Micro-credit structures are a frequently used tool in reintegration programs. As mentioned previously, Sierra Leone added a micro-credit program aimed at female participants during DDR Phase III but it had some major flaws like requiring the applicant's husbands to be present for access into the program. In Eritrea the Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACORD) created a successful micro-credit scheme aimed at reaching female ex-combatants and the wives of ex-combatants. The project was called "Barefoot-Bankers" and it provided support through access to credit facilities and trainings in business, administration, and management (de Watteville 2002, 12). Part of the success from the program stemmed from their initial hire of a female ex-combatant whose job it was to reach others and tell them about the benefits of the program. Additionally, ACORD representatives went door-to-door to help rural women gain access to the program and encouraged local businesses and community centers to provide childcare services so the women could attend the trainings (de Watteville 2002, 12). They also created a group liability option where women with no collateral for their line of credit, could receive their loans as a group.

The reintegration program in Sierra Leone allowed participants to join in vocational training and education opportunities. During the encampment phase, ex-combatants would complete a questionnaire to determine what type of training was most appropriate for them. Some ex-combatants would return to school, others would enter high-skill training programs like computer science, or enter vocational training in fields like agriculture, mechanics, carpentry, tailoring, gara tie-dying, hairdressing, and driving (Tesfamichael, et al. 2004, 57–58). The Liberia reintegration program enabled a similar

structure, with ex-combatants selecting the type of package they wanted while at the cantonment site. Most men preferred to join education programs while women typically chose vocational training. Very few people chose agriculture or immediate employment opportunities available (A. O’Neill and Ward 2005, 57). While short-term vocational training costs less money and allows ex-combatants to quickly enter the civilian economic sphere, O’Neil warns that women may not be excited about these opportunities in marginalized professions:

Jobs training programs that focus on traditional responsibilities for women, such as hairdressing or sewing, will be immediately rejected by many. Jobs that build upon motivations for equality and justice and non-traditional skills they’ve already acquired—such as police officers, election organizers, and political party organizers and candidates—may be better received (J. O’Neill 2015, 6).

These low-skill jobs are also not frequently needed in the labor market, resulting in a flooding of newly trained people who are unable to obtain employment (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 211). The vocational training did not take into account the ability of the local economy to provide employment for the number of ex-combatants entering the programs. Shepler writes that the skills greatly outweighed the demand (Shepler 2005, 169) and Hoffman comments that “from the beginning it was clear that the country’s ability to support newly minted welders, mechanics, and gara dyers was nowhere near the 77,000 that passed through the program” (Hoffman 2004, 141–142). Similarly, in Liberia most ex-combatants wanted to resettle in Monrovia resulting in an excess of similar skills, “this is at best a prescription for sustained poverty, at worst a prescription for disaffection and renewed violence” (A. O’Neill and Ward 2005, 57). Coulter also found that the majority of the female ex-combatants she spoke with in Sierra Leone stated they wanted

to be successful businesswomen (Coulter 2009, 182). Instead the official DDR program and many NGOs running training programs, offered women the opportunity to learn skills in traditionally female-based occupations. These positions were certainly not the only things the women had the ability to do though. Mazurana compiled the list in figure 2 of skills collected by Farr and Bouta that female ex-combatants in Africa felt they could provide to their communities post-conflict.² Reintegration programs can capitalize on many of these skills and translate them into income generating jobs for female ex-combatants. Even if these opportunities had been available, education and literacy programs would first be needed for women to access higher-skill job markets.

² Reproduced from (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 211), originally printed in (Mazurana 2005b, 41).

Skills developed by women members of armed opposition groups in Africa

- Assessing infrastructure of cities
- Calculated risk assessment and risk taking
- Communication skills and the ability to build relationships under difficult conditions
- Coordination skills
- Decision-making skills
- Handling weapons
- Information searching and gathering, dissemination of information to members within groups, and acting on information in a timely manner
- Management skills
- Management of teams and team logistics
- Map reading
- Mediation and conflict resolution skills
- Medical skills
- Military intelligence work
- Mobilizing people
- Negotiation skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Protecting civilians by organizing their movement and access to food, water, and shelter
- Results-oriented approaches
- Scarce-resource management
- Searching for common ground and mobilizing as women
- Solidarity, discipline, commitment and team work
- Spying and disguising oneself
- Survival strategies
- Tolerance and persistence under difficult conditions
- Understanding city layouts

Figure 2 Skills developed by women members of armed opposition groups in Africa

Educational opportunities and higher-level job training programs can equip women with the skills and tools they need to make worthwhile contributions to society and feel value and worth within their new civilian role. While these opportunities were available, low literacy rates and high instances of self-reintegration made them less accessible to women. Most of Coulter's informants were illiterate and reluctant to enter into any of the education programs offered by the DDR because they were typically not

hosted in adult education centers and the women felt too old compared to the other students (Coulter 2009, 183). Additionally, women in Sierra Leone typically stop attending school once they have had children, so many ex-combatants that had borne children during the conflict, regardless of their age, may not have felt comfortable going back to school. Reportedly some DDR implementers discouraged adult women from entering education programs on the basis that “since so many of these young women now had children and few had husbands to assist with income, they would need to develop skills rather than continued education to support themselves” (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 22).

Even for women who did wish to attend education programs, the responsibility of dependent care greatly affected their ability to participate and ultimately reintegrate into civilian society and contribute to the local economy. In Liberia, Irma Specht found that female ex-combatants wanted to attend school but believed that they would not have enough time to attend school and earn a living to support themselves, their children, or sometimes their siblings (Specht 2006, 99). While some NGOs in Sierra Leone did offer childcare during the vocational training process, the official DDR program did not. The financial burden posed by children is large as they need food, clothing, shelter, health care, and many women want to have the ability to send them to school. The disproportionate number of female-headed households added further to the dire economic situation as many of these women faced gender-specific constraints to accessing capital and modes of income generation (Jacobson 2013, 225–226; Brück and Vothknecht 2011, 98). Stigma and rejection of returned female ex-combatants also contributed to the

childcare burden, as many women would have traditionally relied on family members or the community to assist with childcare.

Female ex-combatants in El Salvador faced a similar situation reintegrating into a patriarchal society. In a survey conducted by Camille Conaway and Salomé Martínez, 95 percent of female ex-combatants worked at home after the war, 80 percent of those demobilized has children under the age of 12, and 29 percent headed a household (Conaway and Martinez 2011, 18). Some women there had to decline opportunities for further education through scholarship programs because of childcare and household responsibilities, instead offering the spot in the programs to their husbands or boyfriends (Conaway and Martinez 2011, 18).

In Colombia as well, female participants in DDR were not able to engage in all the opportunities available because they were too busy caring for their spouses/boyfriends and children. Kimberly Theidon recounts:

At mealtime, the men pulled out a chair, sat down, and waited for their partners to serve them. The women, many with a baby slung over one hip, walk back and forth from the kitchen serving the men and subsequently clearing the plates. The women care for the children, while the men participate in the various DDR program requirements, which included educational and vocational training (Theidon 2009, 31).

In her study on DDR in Colombia, Jacqueline O'Neill suggests that programs should either provide childcare as a benefit, assist in sensitizing communities and encouraging them to engage in communal childcare, or scheduling training and education programs around women's availability and in locations that are convenient for them (J. O'Neill 2015, 5).

Many female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone turned to the business of being a “girlfriend” or outright prostitution as they frequently saw no other alternative to survival (Coulter 2009, 199; Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008, 38). Similar patterns have been witnessed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 3; Higate 2004, 43). For those women that worked as “girlfriends” they would enter into short-term relationships with men where they would receive food, gifts, clothing, and sometimes money in exchange for extra-marital sex. While this is generally taboo, it has become a necessary means for some women. Coulter explains that:

On the one hand, women are not supposed to get involved in extramarital sexual activities. On the other hand, many formerly abducted women and female ex-combatants, and sometimes their entire families, depend on “boyfriends” and lovers to support them, and in order to be attractive to existing and potential boyfriends they had to signal sexual activity (Coulter 2009, 203).

Although these women are exchanging sex for material objects, this activity is seen as separate from prostitution, which would be categorized as having relations with multiple men in one evening and only engaging with them for the purpose of sexual acts.

Support Network

A key opportunity for women’s success in the reintegration phase of DDR is the creation of support networks. “Social science research indicates that women are generally more reliant than men on peer groups and are quicker to form and depend on networks” (J. O’Neill 2015, 6). Helping female ex-combatants reintegrate into their old communities or new communities can greatly increase their ability to survive through greater access to childcare options, trauma and psychological support, increased

livelihood options, and overall emotional wellbeing. Exclusion from the community can leave women “without essential forms of support and protection,” it can also mean that they do not have needed access to childcare “so a child may be left alone, abused, or blamed for anything that goes wrong,” additionally they, “may not [be] able to borrow money or participate in community activities such as communal farming” (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 207). These forms of community exclusion often take place as female ex-combatants return to civilian society and are regarded with negative stigmas for having broken cultural norms and traditional gender roles.

Female fighters in Sierra Leone, and in many other places around the world, are deeply hindered by social shame and stigma and this affects the DDR process heavily during the initial phase and again during reintegration. As Coulter explains:

Overlooking the existence of females as fighters in Sierra Leone certainly lead to errors in program design, as discussed above, but many hindrances to DDR participation for women stem from their communities as well. Perceptions existed that if a woman was to disarm, she would be seen as undesirable in her community and would be unable to find a husband in the future (Coulter 2009, 159).

The ways in which shame and stigmatization disadvantage women’s access to DDR has been discussed earlier in this thesis. In terms of reintegration, it separates women from the support networks that they typically rely on and it disadvantages their marriage prospects. Coulter, Persson, and Utas underscore that marriage is often seen as mandatory in African societies (Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008, 35). In Northern Uganda, women and girls who escaped the Lord’s Resistance Army found it difficult to reintegrate into society because “they are perceived to have been willing wives of rebel commanders and face negative attitudes due to their loss of virginity” (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 36f).

Divorce rates after the war jumped to 50-65% as men no longer wanted to be married to female ex-combatants (de Watteville 2002, 14). In the Democratic Republic of Congo women who participated in the fighting “have also been reported to be regarded by their communities as having ‘lost their value’ and dishonoured their families due to the assumed sexual abuse and involvement with multiple sexual partners” (Coulter, et al. 2008, 27). Although women saw gains in status during conflict in Eritrea, post-conflict there were high-levels of divorce as men “wanted to remarry civilian women they considered more feminine” (Mehreteab 2002, 34; Mazurana and Cole 2013, 209). In Mozambique as well, former female fighters were left without social networks and found it difficult to marry because men did not want “equal partners in marriage after the war” (Coulter, et al. 2008, 31).

Women’s associations are a terrific reintegration tool as they foster community acceptance, create safe spaces, and build a natural support network for a variety of needs female ex-combatants may have. In Sierra Leone, a woman named Juliana Konteh began an organization called the Women in Crisis Movement to assist the women she saw in her community that had turned to commercial sex work. She provided the women and their dependents with food, negotiated free health care for them from nearby NGOs, held talks about HIV prevention, and ultimately created a community space where the woman could talk, pray, learn, share meals together, and provide childcare. Eventually the organization received the support of the UN and established “three vocational training centers, a school for the children of the trainees, a clinic, and outreach into communities across the

country... a credit program for graduates has helped hundreds to establish small businesses” (Mazurana and Cole 2013, 209).

There are interesting experiences in fostering women’s growth through women’s associations in refugee camps that could be translated into the DDR model. In a UNHCR led camp in Bosnia, women created volunteer groups that allowed them to take on leadership roles; “many acquired new confidence, new skills, and a new vision of the future” (de Watteville 2002, 15).

In El Salvador, women’s organizations were present before the war and thrived substantially after the war ended. An estimated 100 such associations were active in 1991 (Conaway and Martinez 2011, 20). These associations have been invaluable resources to female ex-combatants and have provided many tools to aid in the reintegration process:

[They]...have led efforts in rehabilitation and stabilization in their homes and communities, raised the visibility of women through documentation of their experiences, pushed women forward into political positions... have advocated with relative success on land issues, provided much-needed educational and psychosocial programs, ensured a degree of women’s participation at municipal and state levels, and helped put in place important legislation safeguarding women’s rights (Conaway and Martinez 2011, 20).

In addition, many of the groups developed small projects on issues like “health, occupational training, education, micro credit, and enterprise” (Conaway and Martinez 2011, 20). The group “Las Dignas” conducted occupational training focused on traditionally male professions like carpentry, masonry, and auto mechanics. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) said “the group recruited low-income women and single mothers, provided stipends and child care in addition to

occupational training, emotional support, and weekly workshops on gender issues” (Stephen, Cosgrove, and Ready 2000, 6).

An article published in *the Guardian* in 2008 showed similar associations forming in Colombia among former female Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) members:

Todos Somos Mujeres ('We are all women') consists of 40 women who meet every Thursday on the patio of a colonial house in the town centre. Half are former combatants with the AUC; the other half had children or husbands killed by the same group. Through sharing their experiences, the two sides have formed a strong bond and now hope to start workshops with both women and men across the country (O’Keeffe 2008).

It is clear from the examples above that women are one another’s greatest resource in the reintegration process. The formation of a support network can add to emotional well-being, provided badly needed resources, trainings, and support, and create a sense of community that may not be immediately possible with community members that did not participate in the conflict.

Another way the reintegration phase of DDR programs can benefit women is by providing the option to collectively reintegrate. This option was offered to participants in the Guatemalan DDR. Most ex-combatants chose to reintegrate individually, but a group of 355 individuals, 109 of which were women, decided to reintegrate as a collective community (Hauge 2008, 309). The group purchased three different farms where they would collectively live and work the land. One of the immediately positive outcomes from women was the ability to become a landowner without their husbands, something extremely uncommon in Guatemala. Additionally, the group naturally broke down traditional gender roles, as they all needed to work to sustain the land. Women in the

group worked in forestry, cattle, honey production, and agriculture, all traditionally male occupations (Hauge 2008, 309). The female ex-combatants also had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles on the cooperative's board and create committees focusing on women and children's issues. Lastly, the collective nature of the farms provided childcare accommodations and shielded the women from much of the domestic violence faced by the female ex-combatants who chose to reintegrate individually (Hauge 2008, 310).

Women are primarily responsible for caregiving and therefore spend most of their time caring for offspring, elderly family members, and sick or disabled family members. The health situation in Sierra Leone was particularly poor after the war. The conflict left a large number of amputees that were unable to participate in the hard labor of agriculture production or share any of the burdens of childcare. The establishment of more women's associations and the possibility of collective reintegration could provide support networks where women can share their individual responsibilities as a group. This would allow more women to participate in other reintegration activities like education and skills trainings. Women's associations and collective reintegration also provide female ex-combatants with the opportunity to form new and repair old bonds, contributing to an overall increase in psychosocial health, emotional well being, and trauma healing.

Conclusion

The ability to gain education and skills during the reintegration phase is critical to female ex-combatants' post-conflict survival. Many women believe literacy and education are solutions to many of their problems, but are unable to attend the programs offered to them because of the immense responsibility of dependent care. DDR programs

can help by engaging in community sensitization campaigns that encourage communal childcare; providing childcare during training programs; creating special programs for the disabled and scheduling them at the same time as training programs for primary caretakers; and holding training programs in locations that are convenient for women, among other things.

Too often vocational opportunities do not reflect current employment needs and result in flooding the market with more low-skill jobs than it can support. Reintegration programs could utilize skills that women gain while they are in fighting groups to enable them to access higher skill jobs and stimulate the economy. Micro-credit schemes have also been helpful in allowing women to start small businesses or join community initiatives that require a cash buy in.

The creation of women's associations can also help repair broken social bonds and create new communities where female ex-combatants and their dependents can find many of the services and material items they need to successfully return to civilian life. Furthermore, the option to collectively reintegrate and capitalize on social structures formed during the war, many of which find women in more empowering roles than is the traditional norm, is a great opportunity for women. Bouta states that "reintegration is often more complex for female combatants, especially because it tends to go hand in hand with the reintroduction of prevailing pre-conflict gender relations" (Bouta 2005, 9). Collective reintegration can assist in breaking down this pattern by men and women working side-by-side and sharing the responsibilities of domestic work, child rearing, and income generation through agriculture and other means.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to identify the factors that allow female ex-combatants to successfully enter and complete the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process. Through traditional library research, comparative analysis of DDR programs around the world, and the use of Sierra Leone as a focused case study, I isolated three factors that strongly contribute to positive experiences for women in the transition from war to peace.

First, in the initial phase of DDR, women's inclusion and eligibility are paramount. If all females that participated in the conflict are not included in the DDR program design, they will not be able to access any of the benefits associated with the program. The multiple roles women play during war need to be acknowledged in order to allow women serving in vital support roles to enter the program. DDR designs that do not make provisions for dependents negatively impact women categorized as wives or who supported the fighting groups as sex slaves. It additionally places unequal burden on women who traditionally provide the majority of dependent care and the large number of newly female-headed households that exist after periods of protracted violent conflict. Future DDR programs should expand categories of identification to include the multitude of roles women play during war including but not limited to, fighters, porters, nurses, spies, wives, sex slaves, and child dependents. Using neutral titles like "women associated with the fighting forces" can also mitigate feelings of shame and stigma

surrounding the identification of oneself as part of the war. For many females, this alone serves as an overwhelming deterrent to entering DDR programs.

The practice of requiring male commanders to verify females within their ranks through providing detailed rosters to DDR implementers, is exclusionary towards women as these men rarely, if ever, include women in support roles or even women in combat. Additionally, the roster system allows for instances of rampant corruption, especially if the DDR program provides a cash incentive for weapons turned in. These “cash for guns” programs lead many commanding officers to exclude women, children, and the disabled from their rosters and instead put family members and friends who they can later take the cash incentive from. This problem could be mitigated for women if more female roles were included in the program eligibility, then commanders may see the worth of also entering in the names of females in their ranks.

One-man-one-gun policies are beginning to be abandoned in DDR programming, but were once the standard test of eligibility. This approach to DDR hinders women as they typically do not possess their own weapon and instead access one from a communal source. It also disadvantages women who participated in the war in support roles and never had full access to a weapon or women who fought intermittently but also provided assistance in non-combat roles. While the adoption of group disarmament policies does help, there are still many instances of men taking guns and other weapons away from women so they can disarm with them instead. Allowing participants to enter the DDR program without a weapon could help mitigate these concerns but it also may cause higher levels of corruption as ineligible people may join the DDR to receive benefits they

are not entitled to. This is an area for further research and a serious issue for designers and implementers of current and future DDR programs.

Second, during the disarmament and demobilization phases when ex-combatants are placed at cantonment sites, women's safety and security, health needs, and access to childcare are necessary for their full participation. Demobilization processes typically require participants to live in cantonment sites from anywhere between two weeks and upwards of six months. For women, this poses special challenges as their needs differ from their male counterparts. Females located at cantonment sites need to be assured the demobilization period will not become a site for further sexual and physical violence. DDR offers a unique opportunity for abducted girls and women to free themselves from their captors but they will be unable to do so if they are not kept safe during the process. Additionally, periods of long cantonment can lead to boredom, frustration, and aggression. There have been multiple instances of violence and rearming at cantonment sites, as ex-combatants grow wary of the process. This risk can be diminished by deploying more peacekeepers and having adequate staff to complete the demobilization process as quickly as possible. Women's security can be increased by the presence of female peacekeepers and staff members. Separate entrances for men and women in, entrance to the cantonment site, lavatory and shower facilities, sleeping and cooking quarters, and medical screening rooms contribute to a safer environment for female ex-combatants.

Paying special attention to female health needs also contributes towards successful participation in DDR programming. Small things like a personal hygiene kit

that includes female sanitary supplies can greatly increase the likelihood women will be able to participate in the program. In cases where women have suffered violent and or continued sexual violence, there will be a number of other associated health problems that will need to be treated. Women suffering from incontinence or painful fistulas, for example, may feel ashamed of the way they smell or be bed ridden and unable to attend useful information sessions or preliminary trainings. It is also important for there to be female doctors and staff available often women are reluctant to disclose sensitive medical information in the presence of a man. HIV prevention and treatment is a key component in many DDR programs. These trainings can be more successful if they are held separately for men, women, and children and tailored to the specific audience. There is also evidence that women suffer from greater psychological injury due to the added trauma of sexual assault.

Childcare provisions are extremely integral to female participation in DDR. Throughout the process women need access to adequate care and provisions for their children so they can participate in program activities and be assured their children are being cared for. During the demobilization phase, children need shelter, medical assistance, material items like clothing and shoes, and opportunities to attend school. It is possible to help women with some of these issues by scheduling demobilization activities near areas that do not require extensive travel and can tap into already existing community services (like schools and childcare). In addition, new mothers can benefit from basic classes on child rearing, especially in cases where young girls have had forced pregnancies.

Third, at the final stage of DDR, women's reintegration into civilian communities will be more successful if they have the means to generate economic security and can contribute to and access a support network. Obtaining the skills to provide a livelihood for themselves and their dependents is a crucial component of successful reintegration for any former combatant. Women face additional challenges due to their lack of education and their low literacy rates, exclusionary laws that hinder them from land ownership, and the return to traditional gender roles which may find women's work located more squarely in the domestic and informal work sectors. Educational programs are always highly desirable especially for participants who entered the conflict when they were children. For women, these programs cannot be utilized without proper childcare. DDR programs that can offer schooling for children or childcare alongside education, vocation, and skills training during the reintegration period can increase the number of female participants. Obtaining skills that allow women to participate in the economy helps them contribute to society and feel a higher sense of self worth. A likely outcome is easing ill will from the community if these ex-combatants are not perceived as a burden. Micro-credit schemes are essential tools for reintegration programs as they allow participants to participate in land sharing, start their own business, or join professions that require tool or an initial buy in. Women have less access to credit traditionally but some programs have seen success through offering micro-credit directed at women through women's associations.

In general, women's associations are invaluable resources to the reintegration process. They provide support networks for female ex-combatants that are most likely

missing from their new communities. These associations can also offer childcare provision, an increase in overall emotional wellbeing, material assistance, and skills training opportunities. Support networks can also be created through DDR programs that give the option of collective reintegration, where a group of ex-combatants reintegrate into a new community they create together. Through collective reintegration women are able to assume leadership positions, learn jobs that are traditionally male, share the tasks associated with child rearing and domestic work, while forming new bonds and establishing a civilian livelihood.

DDR programs have evolved and progressed exponentially since they began but they still face challenges in how to best assist vulnerable groups like women. If the three factors outlined in this thesis are addressed, women will have an increased chance of participation, completion, and successful transition from combatant to civilian. There are still a number of questions to be asked and many areas of further research. In particular, it is important to explore how DDR can help create lasting women's empowerment during peacetime. Is there a positive correlation of having women at the peace table and better experiences for women in DDR?

APPENDIX

A. Timeline of Sierra Leone Conflict and DDR (“Sierra Leone Profile - Timeline” 2016)

1991, March- Civil war begins as Foday Sankoh and the RUF capture towns on the Liberia border.

1991, September- Multiparty system adopted in a new constitution

1992- President Joseph Momoh is overthrown in a military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser; Strasser announces plans for a multi-party election (the first since 1967).

1996, January- Captain Strasser is overthrown in a military coup led by Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

1996, February- Ahmad Tejan Kabbah elected president.

1996, November- Abidjan Peace Agreement signed between Kabbah, Sankoh and RUF rebels.

1997, May- Peace deal falls apart as President Kabbah is deposed by members of the RUF and Major Johnny Paul Koroma leading the AFRC; Koroma suspends constitution, bans demonstrations, and abolishes political parties. Kabbah flees to Guinea.

1997, July- The Commonwealth suspends Sierra Leone.

1997, October- UN Security Council imposes sanctions on the selling of arms and petroleum products; ECOWAS establishes a peace plan.

1998, February- ECOMOG enters Freetown and drives RUF from the capital.

1998, March- Kabbah returns to Freetown.

1998, June- UN deploys UNOMSIL.

1998, September- DDR Phase I begins, ends December.

1999, January- RUF attack Freetown for weeks, kill 5,000 but are eventually driven out.

1999, May- Ceasefire negotiated between SLPP and RUF; peace talks begin in Togo and Lomé.

1999 July- Lomé Accord negotiated; rebels receive some positions in government and a blanket amnesty for crimes before 1999.

1999, October- UNAMSIL established to carry out provisions of Lomé Accord; phase II of DDR begins, ends April 2000.

1999, November/December- ECOMOG and UN forces attacked outside Freetown.

2000, April- UN forces attacked and hundreds of peacekeepers are abducted by the RUF.

2000, May- RUF enter Freetown, British paratroopers sent in to evacuate British citizens; Foday Sankoh is captured; interim phase of DDR begins, ends May 2001.

2000, November- Abuja Ceasefire Agreement signed between SLPP and RUF.

2001, May- Abuja Ceasefire Review Agreement negotiated to re-establish provisions from the Lomé Accord; phase III of DDR begins.

2002, January- War declared over; 45,000 combatants disarmed.

2002, May- Kabbah wins victory in election.

2004, February- DDR of upwards of 70,000 combatants complete.

2005, December- UN peacekeeping troops leave; UNAMSIL is complete.

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