

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rethinking Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs

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This article introduces the special issue on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and 'Armed Non-Statutory Actors' (ANSAs), whose title we prefer to the less precise label of Armed Non-State Actors. The understanding that DDR programs are essential in helping to prevent the recurrence of war in post-conflict situations is at the heart of current peacebuilding practice and the academic literature on peacekeeping and stabilization. However, the changing strategic context of DDR programs and in particular the proliferation of ANSAs presents new challenges, the responses to which have been characterized as 'second generation' DDR. The changing context poses new questions and forces us to rethink assumptions and templates of DDR as the concept is blurred and expanded. The main question is if it makes sense to hold on to the concept or whether the assumptions associated with it will impede the rethinking of templates for violence reduction in the future.

Introduction

For decades, national and international actors have used programs for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants as standardized key elements of peace operations, with the aim of controlling violence and avoiding the resurgence of armed conflict.¹ In the 1990s, international DDR programs were used mostly to deal with statutory and insurgent armies following peace accords to which the warring parties were signatories. Since then, however, other types of armed actors, such as militias, have grown in importance and have influenced the stability of governments and the security of civilian populations by demonstrating a high degree of flexibility and

adaptability to shifting circumstances (Raleigh 2014). In Africa, for example, their influence is evident in the enduring conflicts in peripheral areas, as in the case of pastoral or religious militias in the Sahel; in contested elections in Kenya (2007–08), Zimbabwe (2008), and Côte D'Ivoire (2010–11); and in the high incidence of political violence in areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Somalia. Militias have become one of the main agents of political violence in other parts of the world as well (*ibid.*).

In response to the shifting anatomy of armed conflict, the DDR concept has increasingly been reconfigured to 1) deal with armed groups while conflict is still ongoing and without a negotiated peace accord being in place, and 2) deal with situations of armed conflict that involve hybrid forms of violence as well as a range of armed actors that control, or influence significantly, populations

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and territories, without being part of peace negotiations or under direct state control. And even though the kinds of warfare that ANSAs are involved in are often characterized as 'asymmetrical', some of them possess increasingly sophisticated arsenals of guided light weapons which pose considerable threats to international security (Small Arms Survey 2014). At least 84 ANSAs (including those no longer active) from 40 countries have acquired guided light weapons worldwide since 1998 (*ibid.*). Thus, the pressure for engaging such actors is mounting.

In research and policy, the stretching and blurring of the DDR concept to adapt to the changing contexts of violence and conflict has been described as 'second generation DDR' (Coletta and Muggah 2009) and has been the subject of the 'new horizon discussions' in the UN (UN DPKO 2010). These discussions form part of the context of this special issue. They concern a range of programs which broadly aim to reduce violence and build trust in conflict-ridden areas before, during or after peace negotiations. Second generation DDR programs include initiatives that aim specifically to disarm and dismantle militias ('DDM'), transform and provide exit options for at-risk youth and gangs, and develop alternative approaches to disarmament and the control of unregulated weapons, such as the 'flexible sequencing' of DDR in which Reintegration precedes Demobilization and Disarmament (RDD) (UN DPKO 2010).

In this introduction we will discuss some of the assumptions and theories of change that have influenced commonly employed DDR templates, and which have been challenged by the changing strategic context of their implementation (also reflected in the second generation DDR). As part of the discussion, we will introduce the articles of the special issue, each of which will provide deeper understanding of specific kinds of armed actors and contribute to discussions that pertain to the second generation DDR: Nikkie Wiegink focusses on the assumption that DDR programs should cut the lines of

command and control, taking a group of former RENAMO combatants as an example; Brian McQuinn puts forth an analysis framework of rebel organizations that has implications for how different armed groups can be approached for DDR; Helene Kyed and Michael Gravers provide insight into the current peace process in Myanmar that involves ethnic militias. They argue that in this context, a sort of 'reintegration' of militias would have to take place before disarmament and demobilization; and finally, Dennis Rodgers and Steffen Jensen elaborate on what DDR policy makers can learn (or should not learn) from programs that aim to reduce gang-related violence.

In the following section we will first explain why we translate the ANSA acronym to 'Non-Statutory Actors' rather than 'Non-State actors;' and second, describe recent developments in the field of DDR programs which have never before been so comprehensive in their scope and areas of competency as now. In the two next sections we look into 1) the assumptions that underpin national and international attempts to disarm and demobilize ANSAs, as well as various alternative ways of conceiving of problems and solutions in the field of DDR, and 2) the assumptions that underpin reintegration. We argue for the need to reconsider these assumptions and reach a better understanding of ANSAs as well as the contexts they operate in, in order to conceive of alternative ways of dealing with ANSAs and reducing violence. As we suggest in the conclusion, we might have to abandon the DDR concept in order to do this.

DDR and 'Armed Non-Statutory Actors'

In the current debate, statutory armed entities are often labelled 'armed non-state actors' (ANSAs) – or 'non-state armed groups' (NSAGs) – and are defined as any organized group with a basic structure of command operating outside state control that uses force, or the threat of force, to achieve its objectives (DCAF and Geneva Call 2011).

These actors, ranging from insurgent armies and militias to vigilantes and urban gangs, exercise some degree of control over territory and populations, and they may develop levels of organization similar to or even surpassing that of statutory armies. However, we suggest that 'armed non-statutory actors' would be a more appropriate designation. The 'non-state' label can easily be a misnomer since such armed actors often have close relationships with state and political elites, yet they are not necessarily under the control of state authorities. Rather, their trajectories can be similar to those of 'twilight institutions' (Lund 2006) with no fixed relationship to state actors – one day supporting them, the next day opposing them, so to speak. Hence, while these armed actors can be in open conflict with statutory security forces, or operate in situations of 'no peace, no war,' they can also be linked to state institutions in wider networks of security governance, or 'security assemblages' (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009).

In the international community, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is the default template to meeting the challenges that armed actors represent, as described in the United Nations' voluminous 'Integrated DDR Standards' (IDDRS 2006). Disarmament is the collection, management and/or destruction of arms. Demobilization is the controlled discharge of members from armed forces or other armed groups from military to civilian status, while reintegration is the long-term process of integrating ex-combatants economically, politically, and socially into communities. The UN supports the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of statutory armed forces and other armed groups through: the demobilization of part of the state armies or regular armed forces in situations where governments ask for assistance in order to adapt their forces to peacetime needs, and secondly, through the disbanding of irregular or informal armed groups (Ibid. 2–26). In spite of the importance of these armed groups, they are barely mentioned in the IDDRS standards. The role

of militias in current warfare, for instance, is only touched upon once in the document.

Over the years, the scale, complexity and scope of DDR programs has grown.² The number of people counted as 'combatants' eligible for DDR benefits has grown, reflecting the inherent problem of making sharp distinctions between civilians and combatants in contemporary warfare (Jensen and Stepputat 2001). Programs comprise an ever-expanding field of interventions, such as access to land, cash transfers, and employment and, as described in relation to the second generation DDR, additional measures of area-based trust-building and weapons-control have complemented the core of the DDR template (Muggah 2009).

DDR is the largest intervention in nearly all of the UN's ongoing large-scale peacekeeping missions and it is ascribed key importance as a field in which peacebuilding can make a direct contribution to restoring public security, law, and order (Berdal and Ucko 2013). The field is dynamic and the international DDR standards (IDDRS) have been continuously reviewed from their inception onwards, most recently in 2010, and overseen by a UN interagency working group on DDR which represents more than 20 UN agencies.

Recent events show that the interest and indeed the faith in the DDR template is unabated among national as well as international actors. This was demonstrated by the First Global Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Summit held in Colombia in 2013 where, among other issues, the involvement of municipal and regional authorities was discussed (GDDR 2014); by the launch in 2013 of the African Union's DDR capacity building program (AU DDRCP)³; by the development in the AU of 'DDR Operational Guidance Notes' on, for example, national DDR initiatives, children in DDR, and women in DDR (AU DDR 2014; AU DDR 2015); by the implementation in Somalia of a national DDR program for disengaged Al-Shabaab combatants and at-risk youth (UNSC 2015); and by the launch in 2015 of a joint UN DPKO and UN University policy research platform, called 'Building New DDR Solutions'

which focusses on the strategic challenges that DDR programs face in dealing, for example, with how to counter radicalization and violent extremism.⁴

In sum, the last few years have seen a tremendous vitality within the policy and practice of DDR, which has demonstrated a sustained focus on technical assistance (including South-South), knowledge management, and adaptation to new strategic challenges. Nevertheless, while expectations to what DDR programs can achieve in terms of peace and development have been heightened, experience shows that the DDR template fails to meet its aims in many areas affected by armed violence. In the Central African Republic, for example, the permanent DDR programs have been described as utterly out of sync with reality, with militias being re-mobilized years after they had effectively faded away because their members suddenly are entitled to benefits from the bureaucratic DDR program (Nicolaysen 2012). In general, as Muggah (2007) has suggested, the widespread assumption that DDR is causally related to violence reduction and the prevention of the resurgence of war, seems to be 'empirically unfounded.'

In spite of the policy dynamism and the broadening of the DDR enterprise, the concept, policies, instruments, and practices seem to be held in place and are underpinned by a number of unchanged assumptions which, as we will argue, are unfounded when we consider DDR in relation to ANSAs, or in some cases, even traditional DDR programs. It has been argued that the assumptions at work in the field of DDR are not explicitly stated (De Vries and Wiegmann 2011; Jennings 2009; Munive 2014). As emphasized in discussions about 'theories of change,' an important first step in enhancing strategies, programming and evaluation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is to become more explicit regarding the underlying assumptions of how change is supposed to come about, and of how the chosen inputs and activities are expected to produce particular outputs, outcomes, and impacts (Vogel 2012).

In the following we will consider two sets of assumptions. The first concerns the general idea that violence will be reduced if combatants (engaged in ANSAs) are demobilized and disarmed. The second set concerns ideas about the necessity of reintegration and how ex-combatants are best reintegrated into society by preparing them for employment and improved livelihoods.

Assumptions about Demobilization and Disarmament of Armed Non-Statutory Actors

National and international engagements of prescribed DDR templates in relation to ANSAs are based on the assumption that this will contribute to peace and stability. Yet it seems that the assumption has to be proven on a case by case basis in today's increasingly diffuse and complex contexts of armed violence, where armed conflicts are characterized by hybrid forms of violence – as signposted by the World Bank Development report from 2011 – while many non-war contexts, influenced by ANSAs, see indices of violence that are similar to or higher than those of civil wars.

Whereas research on various forms and dynamics of ANSAs – be they vigilantes, militias, gangs, organized crime groups or protection rackets – has been growing slowly within the past ten to fifteen years, it is still limited to what we know and have seen on how programs actually demobilize and disarm, and what the intended and unintended effects are. In Afghanistan, for example, a relatively successful DDR left a power vacuum that the Taliban and other insurgents, as well as a range of criminal groups exploited to their advantage (Koehler and Gosztonyi 2014). Having to operate in the context of the DDR-induced power vacuum and in the absence of official Afghan security forces, the US and ISAF started to work with any local armed group that they deemed effective against the insurgents. This approach gave a new lease on life to officially demobilized militias of local strongmen. They frequently set up private security companies, or were

hired as semi-official militias protecting ISAF installations or strategic roads (ibid.).

Another illustrative, albeit extreme, example serves to highlight the possible unintended consequences when statutory forces subject ANSAs to DDR programs. This was the case of the Colombian army's demobilization in the mid-2000s of the right wing paramilitary Bloque Catatumbo in the Norte de Santander province, a strategic area of coca cultivation and gasoline smuggling across the border from Venezuela. Civilians were leaving the area in anticipation of the process, fearing that guerrillas would take advantage of the power vacuum.⁵ Their fear was later confirmed by the arrival of the guerrillas. Although top paramilitary chieftains were either imprisoned or extradited to the United States on drug-trafficking charges, many mid-level commanders formed their own criminal organizations, dubbed 'bandas criminales' (criminal bands), or BACRIM, by the authorities. Dedicated to drug trafficking, extortion, gold mining, etc., the BACRIM have actively sought business alliances with the guerilla organization, FARC, and today there is almost no fighting between these armed groups in the region (FIP 2015).

Because of the variation among the ANSAs, it does not make sense to treat them in any uniform way. Due to the general idea that the state is defined by its monopoly on violence, armed non-state actors have usually been seen as diametrically opposed to stability and statehood. Particularly in countries where this Weberian image of a state with monopoly on the legitimate use of force is a mere fantasy, statutory security forces are simply not in a position to coerce or compel ANSAs to disarm and to ensure legitimate and effective protection of people. Furthermore, like statutory security forces, ANSAs can be double-edged swords in that they are sources of security as well as insecurity, and have potentially constructive as well as destructive effects in processes of state-building and peacebuilding. In many cases, they provide protection and sometimes other services to populations in their areas of influence, thus earning a certain legitimacy.

This is the case in Myanmar, analyzed by Helene Kyed and Michael Gravers in their contribution to this special issue. The authors give us a brief historical background of the armed conflict and the current peace negotiations between the central government and no less than 16 armed ethnic organizations. Apart from pointing to the urgency of considering the future of mid- and lower ranked members of the ethnic militias, they argue that a traditional template for DDR, starting with disarmament and demobilization, is very unlikely to be successful. Many commanders have been running de facto micro-states, and any talk of disarmament is likely to undermine peace negotiations as there would be no one to guarantee either protection or political reform for a more federal kind of constitution. As an alternative, Kyed and Gravers suggest reversing the sequence of standard DDR and considering various options for reintegration and/or formalization of status quo before any talk of disarmament and demobilization – what the UN DPKO (2010) has called 'flexible sequencing' or RDD.

Kyed and Gravers also highlight a sensitive issue which is common to many situations of peace negotiations and talks about DDR: for example, like the FARC in the current peace negotiations in Colombia, the ethnic militias in Myanmar will not buy into the vocabulary and meaning of the concept of disarmament and demobilization, since they believe that giving up their arms amounts to defeat or surrender. The sensitive nature of the issue was very precisely captured in Afghanistan, where the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) team working on DDR issues was carefully instructed: 'If fighters are to be removed from the battlefield it is critical that reintegration is **NEVER** seen or profiled to them as an act of "Surrender." The terms "Surrender" and "Laying down of weapons" should **NEVER** be used in any conversation, discussion or reference' (ISAF 2011 emphasis in original). As in the case of Myanmar's ethnic militias, armed groups are often unsure that promises made in return for disarmament will be

fulfilled. So disarmament and demobilization should be approached with care and sometimes reframed or even re-conceptualized with regard to the specific context; in these situations, disarmament and demobilization might take place in stages, and even follow reintegration. Thus, it is likely that ensuring stability in places such as Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and Iraq, will mean bypassing the standard DDR templates and focussing instead on power-sharing agreements as the solution in the short term.

Given the vast diversity of ANSAs, analysis and understanding of the specific organization, their dynamics, the institutions they establish among populations and their political economy are crucial to any attempt to deal with peacebuilding processes in areas of ANSA influence (Arjona 2014). In his contribution to this issue of *Stability*, Brian McQuinn offers a framework for analysis of one important set of features of ANSAs, namely their internal organization and cohesion. This has the potential to serve as a diagnostic tool to predict the challenges and possible pathways in terms of their post-conflict DDR trajectories. Looking at features such as organizational hierarchy, codes of conduct, degree of centralization of authority, use of violence towards communities, and the modes of inclusion of new members, McQuinn illustrates how these features can explain the DDR trajectories of four armed groups: the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias De Colombia – Ejército Del Pueblo (FARC-EP), the Communist Party of Nepal, and Thubactis Battalion (Libya).

A different strategy for reflecting over the future of DDR programs in relation to ANSAs is to look at what we can learn from other templates for violence reduction in contexts where ANSAs are important actors. Accordingly, Dennis Rodgers and Steffen Jensen compare responses to gangs and ANSAs engaged in armed conflict. While Hazen (2010) has warned that we cannot just lump together gangs and conflict-related armed groups, Rodgers and Jensen suggest

several elements that warrant comparison between assumptions and forms of conventional DDR programs on one hand, and templates of violence reduction related to the 'war on gangs' on the other. However, they argue that perhaps we should not take so much from the war on gangs – which arguably has a number of unintended consequences such as the risk of reproducing, freezing and even 'radicalizing' criminal gangs – as from research into more organic ways in which gangs and the subsequent violence transform over time without external intervention. Based on their ethnographic research, Rodgers and Jensen demonstrate how exit from gangs happens through 'organic processes of gang desistance' due to age, family, religion, or new opportunities, but also how (the capacity for) violence can be an asset and a way out of the gangs and into politics, more organized illicit markets, or the security sector.

Hazen (2010) mentions the longevity of armed groups as one of the important differences with shorter-lived gangs. However, as suggested by recent research on how rebel groups have formed and then fizzled out in Uganda between 1986 and 2006, few of the armed groups survive the initial phase of setting up the group (Lewis n.d.). These findings resonate with work by Schlichte and Wennmann, who both point to the problems that armed groups face in surviving beyond the initial mobilization. The reasons for these problems are: 1) the loss of legitimacy that they risk as they engage in armed conflict, where the population they operate among is also suffering from the violence, as argued by Schlichte (2009); and 2) the elevated economic costs of maintaining even low-intensity warfare, compared to the more limited start-up costs of armed groups, as Wennmann (2009) has pointed out.

These reflections lead to a conclusion which is difficult to handle for political and institutional actors. Many institutional setups which deal with violence, such as the war on gangs and the war on terror, are in fact (accumulated) emergency responses to

specific situations, conceived to ensure the public of the ability of authorities to act, as Rodgers and Jensen argue. In some cases, however, it might be a better overall solution to just 'wait and see': to let ANSAs run their course and dissolve, as many of them will do anyway, instead of employing templates that risk exacerbating problems or having unintended outcomes. While this is not a likely path, it is still worth considering the implications for DDR programming in specific cases. It also has implications for the way we imagine the 'reintegration' of ex-combatants, as we will see in the following section.

Assumptions about Reintegration

The reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life is a common and complicated challenge for all DDR programs—whatever the model adopted (Giustozzi 2012; McMullin 2013; Bowd and Ozerdem 2013). Numerous reports analyze the failures or successes of past DDR programs in reintegrating ex-combatants (Scanteam 2010; STHLM 2010), and a range of manuals exists that presents lessons learned on how to create the best conditions for reintegration. The IDDRS (2006: 1.10 p. 2) adopt the following definition of reintegration: 'Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.'

The reintegration component of DDR programs is based on several assumptions. Here we will challenge three of them. First, it is assumed that combatants are removed from their communities when they are mobilized and that they therefore, a) should return to where they lived prior to the war,⁶ and b) need special reintegration arrangements unlike the broader war-affected population. In many cases, however, the ANSAs' members are operating in the localities where

they were mobilized, being part-time combatants and/or already 'integrated' in the community (Jensen and Stepputat 2001; Torjesen 2013). ANSA members typically defy clear-cut distinctions between civilians and combatants. For instance, in war-torn South Sudan, many rebels live in settlements which are described as half camp and half village, where fighters coexist with civilians and cattle.⁷

Secondly, since demobilization is assumed to break the links of command and control, reintegration is seen as an individual process, even in cases where DDR programs comprise communal development projects in order to diminish resentment from non-combatants in the 'home communities.' However, as Nikkie Wiegink documents in her contribution to this issue, structures of command and control is not the only factor that forges the cohesion of armed groups. Friendship, family relations, shared identity, shared experiences of hardship and marginalization and others are factors that make groups cohere. Furthermore, commanders as well as members are likely to see the benefits of reintegration as the prize of demobilization provided by commanders, who in this way look after their people and maintain a position of leadership or patronage.

Since prior links and hierarchies so often form part of the reintegration process, many observers have raised the question of how organizations/groups of combatants can transform into entities with a different role in a more peaceful society, rather than being dismantled (Jensen and Stepputat 2001; Knight 2008; de Vries and Wiegink 2011; Munive and Jakobsen 2012). From a state-formation perspective, Giustozzi (2012) argues that organizations of former combatants historically have had important roles in the political processes following armed conflict. They have constituted political entities with an 'organizational capital' that have enabled the political mobilization and representation of otherwise atomized masses of people, be it in the form of parties, veteran organizations or other elements of 'civil

society.' As Knight (2008) has argued, DDR should be viewed as a continuation of the political dialogue entailed in peace talks, and that specialized and focused forms of assistance should be conceived of to enable the transformation of the organization of (in this case insurgent) armed groups. This would also take into account that many ANSAs provide an important identity for their members and reflect widespread claims for recognition (Jensen and Stepputat 2001).

Thirdly, reintegration aims to reduce the causes and likelihood of remobilization by reducing the economic motivation for youth mobilization into armed groups. The widely held assumptions that young unemployed men are prime candidates for recruitment as soldiers (ILO 2010; Lamb et al. 2012), and, lacking alternative livelihood options, regard conflict as an income-generating activity, has had a profound impact on the way post-conflict interventions are framed (Munive and Jakobsen 2012). Programs use employment and improved livelihoods as solutions to the problems that ex-combatants are perceived to pose to stability. Because 'greed' is assumed to be a motivating factor for mobilization of unemployed youth, combatants are treated as rational utility maximisers rather than political beings; that is, being unemployed, these youths become more marginalized and have no voice and hence no peaceful way of conveying their grievances.

Assuming that poverty, marginalization, and unemployment facilitate the mobilization of combatants, DDR programs focus on providing alternative (non-military) economic opportunities for ex-combatants. However, the alleged root causes and the general lack of opportunities require more structural and long-term investments. As many scholars have noted, rank-and-file ex-combatants are usually reintegrated 'back into poverty.' Support for reintegration, by nature, can only bring about a few quick wins. It is generally believed that education or vocational skills training is a first step in economic reintegration, but sustainable jobs are few in restrained economies and training is sometimes poorly

suited for the labor market needs. Thus, a recent independent evaluation of the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) reintegration efforts concluded that 'relevance can be limited and efforts conducted often limited both financially and technically' (Conoir and Bonard 2013: 38). More specifically, the evaluation holds that a) training or vocational training is just part of a continuous, systemic, and coordinated reintegration process whereby ex-combatants receive support for further employment, self-employment, and integration in markets; b) training and/or vocational training is often delivered at a standard level, hampering in some cases the possibility of many ex-combatants to acquire the needed skill levels in saturated markets (tailoring, carpentry, mechanics etc.); c) training in other cases is perceived by ex-combatants to be a first step towards further entitlements, and generally ex-combatants are not fully committed to the program; and d) follow-up microenterprise investments do not capitalize on state-of-the-art technology that could make a difference for program beneficiaries (Conoir and Bonard 2013: 38). Furthermore, the report states that the type, quality and length of vocational skills training provided is central to the potential success of a DDR program. However, in practice the type of training carried out often does not even amount to half of the duration required for a civilian in peace times.

Criticism of the narrow focus on training calls for a more holistic approach to reintegration, and has fed into attempts to support broader programs to generate employment, including private sector development. This move is reflected in the United Nations' Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income, Generation, and Reintegration (UN 2009). The policy paper summarizes the UN's three-pronged approach to post-conflict support, which combines relief and emergency interventions with longer-term economic planning. The first track targets war-affected and vulnerable populations (particularly ex-combatants and youth); it concentrates on consolidating security and stability, as well

as implementing short-term, labor-intensive public works programs to rebuild social and economic infrastructure. The second track is intended to consolidate the peace process by rebuilding local communities through initiatives such as investing in local infrastructure, promoting local-level employment opportunities, restoring the natural resource base, and rebuilding local government capacity. The third track aims to assist in the creation of sustainable 'decent' work, involving macro-economic and sector policies, institutional capacity building and a framework for social dialogue. The UN is now in the process of developing an operational guidance note for the policy and the development of proposals for its implementation.

The World Development Report *Jobs* goes beyond the logic of keeping young men off the streets, with the goal of avoiding renewed conflict. Responding to the observation that demobilization typically means a step down, economically and status-wise, for ex-combatants, the report claims that jobs can compensate for 'the loss of identity and status associated with the dissolution of armed forces and militias and the income lost' (World Bank 2012: 195). As the UN working group suggests, 'livelihoods or employment options that offer a sense of purpose and respect may thus provide an important source of resilience' (UN/IAWG 2012: 12).

However, while no one disputes that more jobs is a positive thing, there are no empirical grounds to link unemployment, underemployment, or low-productivity employment to violence and war (Cramer 2010). Thus, recent research has called into question the stabilizing impact employment is assumed to have, suggesting that creating jobs does not inhibit violence (Berman et al. 2015). An analysis of employment and violence in the Philippines concludes that violence increased with employment (Ibid.).

Most of the reports and the critical academic assessments of reintegration programs cited above have looked into traditional DDR programs, but there is no reason why they would not be true in the reintegration

of ANSA members. As noted above, reintegration is a political rather than (only) an economic process, and there are reasons to consider cases where it would make sense to facilitate the process as a collective one rather than an individual process. Most importantly, however, is that reintegration makes less sense in relation to cases of ANSAs where their members are already, in several aspects, integrated in the communities in which they live and operate.

Conclusion

Despite the abundant literature on lessons to be learned from previous DDR processes, there is little evidence that DDR programs actually produce all of the desired outcomes (Schulhofer and Sambanis 2010; Dudwick et al. 2013). Loopholes and gaps remain, in particular around the mechanisms at stake in the successful social and economic reintegration of former combatants (Podder 2012; Bowd and Ozerdem 2013; McMullin 2013; Munive 2013). In particular, the emphasis on vocational training seems misplaced in many contexts, but perhaps critical observers are right when they suggest that vocational training persists because it is what donors are willing to fund and what implementing agencies are familiar with, and therefore involves little risk (McMullin 2013: 190ff).

While this inertia of traditional DDR programs can be explained, we hope that agencies and donors will do more than just continue to rely on the well-known templates when confronted with the changing strategic environment of DDR. It seems that many donors and other actors in the global DDR policy regime have yet to fully acknowledge this changing strategic environment. Conducting DDR programs amidst open conflict and using the template to deal with a range of armed non-statutory actors means that the conditions to support DDR efforts are lacking, and that it is necessary to become aware of and critically assess and revise the assumptions that operate in this field.

The 'second generation' DDR which has developed from the challenges of the

changed strategic environment, engages a much broader range of templates for violence reduction than traditional DDR. This development of the DDR enterprise can be compared to a similar trend of 'mission creep,' as in the case of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). When this agency became involved in mass repatriations in the 1990s, the ever broadening agenda for peace, development and reconciliation created unrealistically high expectations for repatriation programs. While this led the agency to return the protection mandate to the core of the UNHCR, the overarching question is whether the DDR concept can survive the blurring, expansion and unfulfilled expectations of the past two decades – and whether it should.

This special issue looks into various issues of understanding ANSAs and assessing the assumptions regarding DDR programs' aims and effectiveness when targeting ANSAs. Not surprisingly, the contributions argue for the need to better understand the wide range and heterogeneity of ANSAs in order to 'do no harm' and reduce violence. They also argue for the development of more diverse strategies and templates to deal with the challenges – and possibilities – they represent. For example, instead of insisting on achieving the state's monopoly on violence, the agents of the global DDR regime may eventually improve chances for peace by considering different forms of violence management involving ANSAs, rather than focusing solely on their 'elimination' through DDR programs. However, for this to happen, perhaps it is necessary to abandon the DDR doctrine and the 'parochial', as Rodgers and Jensen put it in this issue, ways of thinking and operating that characterize this field. Hopefully this issue can contribute to a necessary rethinking of how to manage the violence associated with armed non-statutory actors.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Notes

- ¹ This special issue is based on the workshop 'Armed non-state actors' and Templates for violence reduction, DIIS, September 25–26, 2014. The workshop was funded through the Defence and Security Studies that DIIS carries out for the Danish Ministry of Defence. Conclusions do not reflect the views of the Ministry or any other government agency, nor do they constitute any official DIIS position. Jairo Munive's research was funded by the Danish Consultative Research Committee on Development Research.
- ² For an introduction to the DDR field see e.g. Berdal and Ucko 2009, CCDDR 2009; Muggah (ed.) 2009.
- ³ For more information see: <http://www.tdrp.net/africanunion.php>.
- ⁴ See <http://unu.edu/news/announcements/building-new-ddr-solutions-a-new-policy-research-initiative.html>.
- ⁵ Known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC, these militias often worked in collaboration with the Colombian army and usually targeted the rebels' civilian supporters. See <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1130>.
- ⁶ For a critique see De Vries and Wiegink 2011.
- ⁷ See <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/an-elusive-peace-in-south-sudan>.

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