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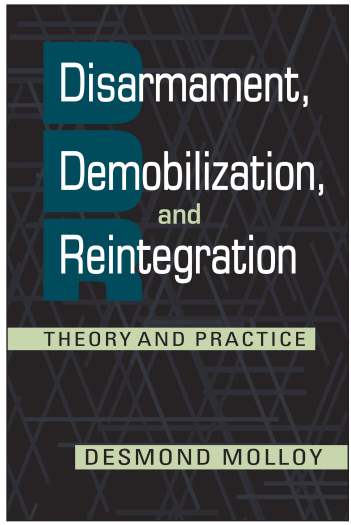
Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Theory and Practice



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Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

For decades, scholars and practitioners of disarmament, demobi-lization, and reintegration (DDR) processes have been searching for an elusive success. In their search, they have consistently focused on striving for and counting the metrics of quantitative results—those results that can easily be enumerated. The most popular quantitative metrics—the "easy" options—have included the number of guns collected, the number of combatants demobilized, and the number of former combatants securing sustainable livelihoods as a result of reintegration support. Such quantitative results fit neatly into the logical framework of a program document as indicators of achievement that make sense to donor and program evaluators. The United Nations (UN), World Bank, and main bilateral donors continue to support DDR in a common belief that it forms a critical element of postconflict intervention. Practice demonstrates that DDR contributes to the initial cessation of fighting and to progressively stabilizing the postconflict environment in addressing the most volatile potential spoilers. Thus, DDR practice has predominantly focused on former combatants in addressing short-term imperatives. In measuring the quantitative indicators, however, a decade of scholarly investigation using refined empirical methodologies has failed to identify clear, generically applicable evidence that DDR, among a multitude of violence-reducing and peacebuilding processes, actually contributes to postconflict stabilization and the socioeconomic reintegration of former combatants.[1] DDR is therefore a highly disputed concept in terms of its effectiveness and its translation from theory to practice.

For me, as a practitioner fully immersed in the design, implementation, and consideration of DDR processes (including in Sierra Leone, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Niger delta, Sri Lanka, and Colombia) and who is convinced of its efficacy, this scholarly failure to confirm evidence-based metrics that indicate success in DDR has been a puzzle. If answers cannot be found, perhaps the wrong questions are being asked. Burned out from the attrition associated with implementing a type of

DDR in Haiti in 2007, I retreated to the comfort of scholarship at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies to deeply contemplate this conundrum. What is successful DDR? When is DDR successful? What causes DDR failures? Is the "leap of faith" of DDR, which involves a series of risks, worth taking in addressing armed violence? Do the benefits outweigh those risks? In the course of my search for answers, additional questions arose: Is there a place for DDR in the evolving dynamic of global violence? Is evolving UN policy on DDR undermining its potential? *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Theory and Practice* takes you along my journey through these questions.

DDR has become an essential aspect of many postconflict peacebuilding efforts. After twenty years of UN and World Bank institutional engagement in the practice of DDR, a body of guiding theory has grown from scholarly analyses and practice-based evidence. In the practice of DDR, *success* is a subjective word, the definition of which depends greatly on the perspective of the relevant actors. Kenji Isezaki, in considering a combatant-focused perspective, contends that the use of the terms *success* or *failure* in relation to DDR is irrational and naive.[2] What is achieved, he says, in implementing DDR is neither success nor failure, though it may be some level of both. DDR is a vital series of processes offering breathing space in which political and security outcomes may be achieved. Socioeconomic outcomes, however, are incidental; the expectations of short- to medium-term socioeconomic achievement through DDR in a very disadvantaged postconflict socioeconomic environment are often unrealistic.

However, even in achieving short-term, combat-centric results, scholars have learned from practice-based evidence that the predominant determinants of success in DDR hinge not on quantitative aspects but rather on the qualitative aspects of program planning, implementation, and achievement. The impact of DDR is contingent upon the belief, perception, and mutual trust among direct stakeholders that both security and related human security have improved as a result of DDR implementation. Success in DDR is about the vertical and horizontal relations between and among the stakeholders involved in the process—state and nonstate, local elites, former combatants, communities, and, indeed, the implementing agencies. Addressing perceptions, attitudes, and aspects of trust in order to achieve sustainable results is about addressing human relations; it requires systems thinking that applies an integrated consideration of these qualitative elements across the range of stakeholders. The perceptions of those stakeholders depend on the management of multiple inherent dilemmas—security, moral, cultural, ideological, legitimacy, and interpretational (hereafter, collectively referred to as security dilemmas).

This book traces the evolution of the theory and practice of DDR by considering selected case studies, related literature, and professional docu-

mentation. It also draws on personal experience and peer consultation. It finds that the critical factors in achieving optimal outcomes in DDR are indeed the perceptions, attitudes, and trust of the stakeholders, including the often-neglected host communities in which the former combatants are being reintegrated. The crux in applying the theory in practice exists in how to manage a range of associated security dilemmas, which result from the conundrum of deciding the appropriate action for addressing the pros and cons of the trade-offs associated with operational phenomena. Neglecting the trade-offs results in a failure to "win the people," including their perceptions, attitudes, and trust. This book demonstrates that prioritizing the phenomenon of security dilemmas in DDR offers an opportunity to address the right questions and to contribute to improved results.

Over the past decade, the evolution of DDR theory has moved toward recognizing the criticality of the qualitative elements of stakeholder perceptions, attitudes, and trust. This recognition is reflected in a growing consensus regarding the benefits of and the moves toward bottom-up approaches and conflict sensitivity in addressing the multiple security dilemmas. Such bottom-up approaches include the establishment of second-generation DDR and community security approaches. In 2005–2009, the attempts at DDR and the reduction of community violence in Haiti (a countercriminality environment) as considered in Chapter 5, which were then tentatively adapted to Somalia and Côte d'Ivoire, reflect the complexity and risks associated with addressing such security dilemmas. In practice, however, in light of the expediency of addressing competing political imperatives and resource and time constraints, the security dilemmas are often neglected.

Attempts to implement DDR in conflicts such as the counterinsurgency environments in Afghanistan and Colombia provided stern lessons regarding how ongoing conflicts enhance security dilemmas and pointed toward the apparent incompatibility of security approaches with human security approaches. The introduction of the robust, innovatively mandated UN combat unit, the Force Intervention Brigade, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) emphasized uncertainty regarding the legality—at least in the context of international humanitarian law—of UN offensive operations. It also raised further questions regarding the potential for implementing DDR in conflict.

Addressing the security dilemmas associated with DDR through innovative bottom-up approaches is time consuming and labor intensive. Doing so requires a high level of expertise, capacity, and deep consideration of the crosscutting issues. It demands a conflict-sensitive approach, local agency, and long-term commitment. It is also expensive. For all of these reasons, it is often placed on the back burner, which constitutes a deficit in addressing perceptions, attitudes, and trust. This failing is often deemed justified in an effort to gain quick fixes in politically charged, volatile environments. Yet, this deficit can actually accentuate the security dilemmas that undermine

the DDR process. The relegation of efforts required to manage the security dilemmas contributes to stakeholders' negative perceptions, attitudes, and distrust. Favoring an apparent quick fix or seeking immediate political wins by focusing directly on former combatants in DDR processes constitutes a decisive deficit that reduces the quality, impact, and sustainability of outcomes.

Greater recognition of the role of the perceptions, attitudes, and trust of stakeholders—in particular, of host communities—in achieving desired outcomes, and thus moving toward next-generation DDR—an evolution beyond second-generation—is offering the opportunity to strengthen the conceptual foundations of DDR. This recognition points out the direction for applying resources, time, and training appropriately in planning for next-generation DDR. It also permits the development of the most effective metrics—quantitative and qualitative—for designing new approaches to implementing and evaluating DDR. These new metrics will contribute to improved outcomes, including lives saved, the establishment of functional normative systems for people living in postconflict environments, and the enhancement of both security and human security.[3]

Within the UN system, the human security agenda is a highly contested concept originally adapted from Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms—in particular, the freedom from fear and the freedom from want. This agenda was relaunched into the world via the *Human Development Report* of 1994.[4] In considering humanitarian action, the report places responsibility to the individual above responsibility to the state. The fact that this agenda implies a move away from the international recognition of the primacy of the state is a major element in the argument against it, as this change poses a threat to states that do not ascribe, generally or occasionally, to Western-imposed liberal standards—that is, universal values in the area of human rights.

The new context of the network mobilization of the ideologically and theologically driven Islamic State (IS) caliphate in Syria, Iraq, and now Libya (and moving toward West Africa) has led to the prickly conundrum of how to address the issue of terrorist infiltration, returning foreign fighters or indigenous radicalized youth associated with violent extremism, beyond the geographic caliphate. In light of the high-profile terrorist outrages and the sowing of panic being committed by or attributed to IS, some consider this as the emerging greatest threat to a global societal sense of security. There is broad consensus that the geographic caliphate—the Islamic State's area of operations, currently primarily in Syria and Iraq—must be attacked militarily and its foundations destroyed. Addressing the network-mobilized global caliphate—its outreach through infiltration, through returning fighters, or through the activities of locally radicalized youth—is far more complex than addressing the geographic caliphate. Can any evolution of next-generation DDR cope with this complexity?

For many scholars of postconflict recovery, DDR is often seen as being closely linked to the security sector reform (SSR) process. SSR, largely necessitated by the changing nature of global polarity following the collapse of the Soviet Union, initially focused on the resizing and retasking of military forces in addressing a changed security environment. SSR was operationalized by reducing host country recurring security/defense budgets to allow a greater contribution to social spending and development in a rapidly democratizing world. SSR has evolved to include the reform of the broader security system, as reflected in the seminal *Handbook on Security System Reform* of 2008, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC).[5] This broader security system, together with military forces and armed national security resources, includes law enforcement services, correctional services, and the judiciary; it also enables and directs the reform of legal frameworks. A close proximity between SSR and DDR, however, is rarely the case in practice, as the two tend to be planned and implemented in parallel rather than convergently. Both are highly charged elements of the security and political landscape contributing to postconflict recovery. Nat Colletta and Robert Muggah discussed the evolving ideas regarding the relationship between DDR and related postconflict activities and SSR in their article, "Rethinking Post-war Security Promotion."[6] They consider a shift from classic state-centric thinking about the security sector to include interim stabilization measures and second generation security promotion. This idea mirrors a similar evolution in DDR toward implementing bottom-up, area-based interventions—also known as the maximalist approach.

DDR is seen as essential in preventing the return to hostilities by dealing with surplus arms and fighters through a human security–guided approach. SSR, in contrast, shapes the sustainability and functionality of the state security apparatus for the state's future stability and development. Although SSR envisages human security outcomes, those outcomes are usually implemented in the context of a national security strategy. Attempting to address SSR and DDR as intractably linked processes has occasionally created a critical mass necessitating urgent reconsideration. Even when the UN has launched peacekeeping operations with the intention of combining the planning and implementation of DDR and SSR under the management of a unified director of SSR/DDR, it has been necessary to subsequently separate the functions. The reasons are primarily the incompatibility of the principles guiding implementation, security, and human security; conflicts of interest among responsible state institutions, supporting agencies, and lead countries; diverse and differing priorities and time frames; and differing mindsets of the professional individuals involved in the implementation.[7] Although DDR may be implemented in the context of SSR, the two do not necessarily occur together. Although this book does not dwell on SSR, the concept is introduced incrementally as a crosscutting issue.

The theory and the practice of DDR are not evolving in a linear progression. Lessons learned from and contributing to practice are drawn incrementally in evolving and eclectic contexts. Neglected ideas from former experiences often come to the fore to be reestablished in new contexts. As such, the structure of this book is eclectic; although it is broadly chronological, it occasionally backtracks to demonstrate incremental learning and the evolution of the application of relevant existing or emerging concepts.

Scholars have been skirting the pertinent questions for decades. They have admonished the practitioner to improve the metrics with more relevant, evidence-based indicators of success. However, they have not suggested what successful DDR looks like. They have counted the weapons collected, considered the numbers of combatants entering the process, and counted the percentage of participants achieving sustainable livelihoods as a result of DDR. They have looked at the numbers and talked to the fighters and applied refined regression analysis in seeking the answer. But they have not found an answer. What is successful DDR? There is no one answer. Has DDR achieved success once its impact as a confidence-building measure has drawn the fighting parties into a cessation of violence in which they work toward a comprehensive peace accord? Does success occur once fighters are disarmed and demobilized? Is it when former fighters are in sustainable, decent alternative livelihoods? Is it when the progress of the postconflict environment becomes irreversible?

The practitioner seems to have a different perspective than the scholar on what constitutes success in DDR. The practitioner sees a series of targeted milestones and achievement, with each one marking a level of success. However, the nature and level of those targeted indicators change progressively in dynamic postconflict environments, in each case-specific context, and in accordance with what is deemed normative in that flux. The qualitative elements of trust and perception have major and heretofore underestimated affects on the achievement of those milestones. Thus, it is not easy for the scholar to investigate, remotely or retrospectively, a DDR process using the quantitative indicators of achievement from the logistical framework of a program document. It is also difficult to measure the qualitative indicators, including levels of trust and people's perceptions from an earlier period, in a dynamically evolving context.

The daily decisions made by the practitioner in struggling for positive results—that is, for success—are often choices between less-than-optimal options based not only on the changing conditions but also on the levels of risk and opportunity at a specific moment. The prioritization of achieving one result often necessitates shifting resources and partly sacrificing some other desirable result. It is a process of addressing a continuous series of dilemmas, and it implies a leap of faith, based on a subjective assessment of the moment, to grasp a fleeting opportunity. This opportunity is often dependent on the qualitative and transient elements of human relations.

Although practitioners feel the pressures of making such choices on a daily basis and experience the sense of risk, the self-doubt, and the sense of moment, they have poorly articulated these frustrations to the scholars. For practitioners, success occurs when one of their many decisions leads to a positive result contributing somehow to the desirable outcome, which can be any of the milestones. Knowing that DDR is only one of multiple processes and influencers contributing to a stabilized postconflict normative environment, these lesser, more attributable milestones are essential in assessing manageable achievement.

DDR was spawned in a series of peace processes in South and Central America, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the changing environment of bipolarity with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. Here the early evolution of theory and practice of DDR was applied in implementing confidence-building measures as an aspect of SSR. These confidence-building measures were perceived to contribute to the stabilization of immediate postconflict environments. Coalescing into DDR, it became a darling of the UN, particularly in the General Assembly, where it was seen as a silver bullet for addressing issues of arms, ammunition, and surplus former combatants in the context of a peace process.

From the practitioner's perspective, however, DDR was not a smooth ride. Over the subsequent two decades, lessons were drawn from trial and error; technical toolboxes and guidance documents were compiled; and the foundations of the theory were laid down. Some of the programs implemented were deemed critical in guiding the transformation of conflict into peace and in rebuilding the social fabric of communities through enhanced trust and reconciliation. In the optimistic post–Cold War era, DDR practice evolved in a somewhat template format, with the human security agenda emerging as an overarching philosophical guide.

With the proliferation in demand for DDR, planners, trainers, and practitioners struggled for coherence in designing efficient, effective approaches to implementation that would contribute to successful outcomes without having to reinvent the wheel each time. Such cases included South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Great Lakes region of Africa, and current-day South Sudan—all considered by the practitioner as cases of classic DDR.

Attempts at implementing DDR along classic postconflict lines using template assumptions in a less-than-classic environment came to a head in Haiti in 2004–2005, an environment of criminal chaos. This situation required a sea change toward an innovative, context-specific community security approach to achieve community violence reduction. While the chaos prevailed in Haiti, the struggle for coherence and results led to the evolution of a new approach to DDR, called second-generation DDR, which took DDR toward a systems approach to conflict sensitivity in

addressing armed violence. Such a direction enhanced the opportunity for community and civil society engagement in DDR.

From 2010 to 2013, my DDR team in Nepal used the opportunity of a small-scale DDR program as a laboratory to test many of the lessons learned to date in addressing an array of the topical crosscutting issues in DDR, such as effective information management, implementing dynamic monitoring, evaluation and adjustment, dynamic management, addressing the gender perspective and psychosocial issues, and improved job placement support. Practitioners took risks and elements of DDR theory were prioritized or abandoned in light of context in order to ensure acceptable outcomes. In a major failure, however, the larger group of qualified Maoist combatants that had remained as pawns of the political process in cantonment were ultimately treated to a quick fix by being bought off with a cash lump sum. The concept of using cash incentives for engagement in DDR will merit some scrutiny.

Neither classic DDR nor second-generation DDR can prepare practitioners to implement DDR in ongoing offensive operations. In such situations, the security perspective remains dominant, as the transition to a post-conflict environment has not yet been achieved, and the human security agenda is suppressed. This throws up a major dilemma to DDR implementers in what appears to be a premature environment for DDR. Attempts at DDR in Afghanistan and Colombia offer contrasting examples of DDR in war that exude the complexity and frustration of such efforts. The aggressive mandating of the UN Force Intervention Brigade in DRC in 2013 contributed to further complications in implementing DDR.

How has the DDR theory dynamically evolved in response to diverse, dynamic contexts and perspectives? How has this evolution influenced policy development, particularly in the latter half of its twenty-year evolutionary period? In compounding the complexity of evolving DDR, no two contexts are the same. In this flux, can the UN's Integrated DDR Standards of 2006 (IDDRS) keep pace with the theory? Are those standards still relevant? Such concepts as interim stabilization mechanisms, the value of former combatant cohesiveness, the reality of UN commitment to the gender perspective in DDR, and the role of reintegration in transforming social capital and contributing to reconciliation in the community further influence that policy development. Key organizing concepts to facilitate the study of reintegration—political economy, context, separation trajectories, and the multicentric notion of community—have arisen. Both scholars and practitioners continue to struggle with the conundrum of devising criteria and agreed-upon metrics to permit evidenced-based analysis of the achievements of practice for planning and evaluation purposes. However, a new school of DDR is suggesting that both scholars and practitioners have been asking the wrong questions. The functional metrics are not the quantitative ones that have heretofore been the subject of focus, but the qualitative

ones—that is, the perceptions, attitudes, and trust of the stakeholders, particularly within the communities, that DDR is contributing to their interests in creating normative systems.

DDR is not an end in itself. Its successful implementation means that it acts as a contribution to the delivery of a peace process or to the reduction of armed violence, while also mutually supporting and affecting other practice areas associated with the same objectives. How should DDR be included in pre-ceasefire peace mediation? Why do the complementarities and tensions experienced as a result of the association between DDR and justice, transitional justice, and the impact of amnesties raise much current debate? How does the folly of convoluting SSR and DDR and addressing them en masse from a security perspective threaten practice? How does the privatization of elements of SSR and DDR to profit motivated private military security companies threaten to erode human security motivation? Can support for regionally, culturally, and religiously sensitive designed approaches to something beyond a perceived Western orientation of DDR be garnered and be applied to Islamic DDR? Can a heightened sensitivity to local solutions lay the foundations for next-generation DDR? It is time to reboot both the theory and practice of DDR to address a dynamically evolving global environment. DDR implementation must involve genuine attention to the qualitative metrics of the perceptions, attitudes, and trust of the people and stakeholders in order to address risk and security dilemmas.

Next-generation DDR may have to contend with demands for implementing DDR to address the contexts of violent extremism and organized crime. However, evidence indicates the incompatibility of concurrently embedding DDR's human security approaches into security operations. Trust does not exist in these cases, and DDR is about trust. Western states are awaking to, and perhaps overhyping, the imminent threat presented by the return of foreign fighters or indigenous youth inculcated by the ideals of the caliphate. What have we learned in recent second-generation community security approaches to DDR that may help us create an effective next-generation DDR? How can this contribute to global policy in addressing violent extremism? Ultimately, the ability to apply a new generation of DDR methodologies to armed violence reduction and in supporting disengagement of fighters, criminals, or radicalized youth in evolving complex contexts will depend greatly on levels of trust between stakeholders and on the willingness and capacity of actors to take multiple leaps of faith.

Notes

1. Stabilization here implies an intervention that is designed to solidify the capacity and legitimacy of a host government in a conflict or postconflict environment.

2. Kenji Isezaki, formerly chief of DDR in Sierra Leone, led the Afghanis New

Beginning Program's DDR process on behalf of Japan in Afghanistan and has written extensively on peacebuilding. He is currently head of the Peace and Conflict Studies faculty at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He has been my friend and inspiration for many years. He introduced me to DDR and ultimately drew me into scholarship in Japan in 2007. He also plays a mean jazz trumpet.

3. See David Kilcullen's theory of normative systems: "The population wants predictability, order and safety and that safety comes from knowing where you stand and knowing that if you do this or don't do this, following the rules, you will be safe." "Interview with Dr. David Kilcullen," Octavian Manea, Small Wars Foundation, November 7, 2010, accessed July 4, 2012, http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/597-manea.pdf.

4. UN *Human Development Report* is published annually by UNDP and provides one of the world's top sources of international development data.

5. OECD/DAC, *Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008).

6. Nat Colletta and Robert Muggah, "Rethinking Post-war Security Promotion," *Journal of Security Sector Management* 7, no. 1 (2009).

7. In the 2013 UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire, under operational pressure, the combined tasking as director of SSR/DDR was eventually split into two posts addressing parallel rather than converged processes.