THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION:

An opportunity of inclusion as peacebuilders

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She has experience in the design of international projects for displaced population to improve their living conditions and welfare. Has worked as a leader and volunteer in programs for building social net, especially among children through the creation of reading spaces and community spaces to strengthen ties with families and communities but especially encouraging the participation of children as citizens. This document is a product of the dissertation prepared for the postgraduate in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies at the University of Bradford (England), and entitled "The role of children in Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration: An opportunity of inclusion as Peacebuilders" which examines the role of children and adolescents in the peacebuilding process especially during Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

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ABSTRACT

There is growing literature about the importance of the role that children have played in armed conflicts and several theories have explained the engagement with armed groups. However, little attention has been paid to the role that children and youth have played during the peacebuilding process.

Based on secondary data, this paper explores this role through the Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process as crucial in the post conflict reconstruction in ensuring security and enabling the conditions for recovery.

By studying some experiences of children DDR, It argues that the inclusion or marginalization of children have been shaped by the different approaches and principles that underlie DDR. Much of these principles have been founded in the human rights frameworks and theories that have explained conflicts. In particular, it is observed that these approaches have influenced constructions of childhood that in part have overlooked the experiences that children face during conflicts. Children's agency is marked by the dynamics of conflict which are all different, these dynamics allowed them to acquire new skills to survive, navigate and cope with the adversity. Although the concept and implementation of DDR have evolved over time and many efforts has been done to include the children as a vulnerable population that has been affected by conflict, this participation still remain questionable in the ground.

It is argue that DDR as a precondition of peace building process cannot reinforce the marginalization that children have experienced before and during conflict. Conversely, this study states that DDR is the perfect opportunity to leverage children's agency and catalyse it towards more positive and transformative actions in which they can ensure a real participation.

Keywords: Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, peace building, marginalization, agency, resilience, human security, peace builders, inclusion.

RESUM

Hi ha una creixent literatura sobre la importància del paper que els nens han jugat en els conflictes armats, i diverses teories han explicat els lligams d'aquests amb els grups armats. Tanmateix, s'ha parat poca atenció al paper que els nens i el jovent han jugat durant el procés de construcció de pau.

Basat en dades secundàries, aquest treball explora el paper crucial que el joves juguen en la reconstrucció post conflicte garantint la seguretat i establint les condicions per la recuperació, tot seguint el procés de Desarmament, Desmobilització i Reintegració (DDR).

A través de l'estudi d'experiències de DDR per a infants, s'argumenta que la inclusió o marginació dels infants han estat marcades pels diferents enfocaments i principis que subjau a la DDR. Molts d'aquests principis s'han fundat en els marcs dels drets humans i en teories que han explicat conflictes. Concretament s'observa que aquestes enfocaments han influït en construccions de la infantesa que en part han passat per alt les experiències què els nens viuen durant els conflictes. L'actuació dels infants ve marcada per les dinàmiques dels conflictes que son molt variades, aquestes dinàmiques els permeten adquirir habilitats noves per sobreviure i enfrontar-se a l'adversitat. Malgrat que el concepte i aplicació de la DDR han evolucionat gradualment i s'estan fent esforços per incloure els nens com a població vulnerable que ha estat afectada pel conflicte, aquesta participació encara es posa en dubte sobre el terreny.

Se sosté que la DDR és una condició prèvia pel procés de construcció de pau i que no ha de reforçar la marginació que els nens han experimentat abans i durant conflicte. Al contrari, aquest estudi exposa que la DDR és una oportunitat perfecta per influenciar l'actuació dels infants i catalitzar-la cap a accions més positives i transformadores en les quals poden assegurar una participació més real.

Paraules clau: desarmament, desmobilització i reintegració, construcció de pau, marginació, agencia, resiliència, seguretat humana, constructors de pau, inclusió.

RESUMEN

Hay una creciente literatura sobre la importancia del papel que los niños han jugado en los conflictos armados, y diversas teorías han explicado los vínculos de estos con los grupos armados. Sin embargo, se ha prestado poca atención al papel que los niños y la juventud han jugado durante el proceso de construcción de paz.

Basado en datos secundarios, este trabajo explora el papel crucial que los jóvenes juegan en la reconstrucción postconflicto garantizando la seguridad y estableciendo las condiciones para la recuperación, siguiendo el proceso de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración (DDR).

A través del estudio de experiencias de DDR para niños, se argumenta que la inclusión o marginación de los niños han estado marcadas por los diferentes enfoques y principios que subyacen a la DDR. Muchos de estos principios se han fundado en los enfoques de derechos humanos y en teorías que han explicado los conflictos armados. Concretamente se observa que estos enfoques han influido en construcciones de la infancia que en parte han pasado por alto las experiencias qué los niños han vivido durante los conflictos. La actuación de los niños viene marcada por las dinámicas de los conflictos que son muy variadas, estas dinámicas los permiten adquirir nuevas habilidades para sobrevivir y enfrentarse a la adversidad. Aunque el concepto y aplicación de la DDR han evolucionado gradualmente y se están haciendo esfuerzos por incluir a los niños como población vulnerable que ha sido afectada por el conflicto, esta participación todavía se pone en duda sobre el terreno.

Se sostiene que la DDR es una condición previa para el proceso de construcción de paz y que no tiene que reforzar la marginación que los niños han experimentado antes y durante conflicto. Al contrario, este estudio expone que la DDR es una oportunidad perfecta para influenciar la actuación de los niños y catalizarla hacia acciones más positivas y transformadoras en las cuales pueden asegurar una participación más real.

Palabras clave: desarme, desmovilización y reintegración, construcción de paz, marginación, resiliencia, seguridad humana, constructores de paz, inclusión.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACR	Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales
CAFF	Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
COALICO	Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers
ICRC	International Convention on the rights of the Child
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	UK Department for International Development
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR
IDDRS	International Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MDRP	Multi country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Prolonged armed conflicts change the patterns of warfare and blur the limits between combatants and civilians, making the latter easy targets. Among the war-affected population, children and youth are put into vulnerable situations that render them susceptible to recruitment and other violations such as forced displacement, abduction, sexual abuse and other threats originated by the environment of insecurity and violence. (Singer 2006, Goodwin-Gill 2003, Boothby et al, Machel 1996,Özerdem and Podder 2011, Blattman and Annan 2008). Indeed, according to UNICEF, there are approximate 300.000 children involved in armed conflicts in the world (ACNUR 2012).

There is a growing recognition of the role that children have played in armed groups and consequently the need to include them in the peacebuilding architecture in which Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) has constitute a crucial instrument as a precondition to ensure security, dismantling former combatants and constructing development, through sustainable ways, promoting long term peace not only at the local, but also at the national and international level (Berdal et Ucko 2010,p.2). Thus it is being highlighted the importance to include children in DDR, considering that historically children and youth have been excluded from peace agreements and has denied their access to DDR. This marginalization has aroused the question about the effectiveness of its outcomes in contributing to the integration of former combatants and the social recovery.

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper poses the question whether DDR has enable children and youth enhance their agency and resilience to contribute actively in a post conflict environment. Seeking to address this question, it is necessary to understand the reasons that children and youth get involved -coerced or voluntary with armed groups? What are their needs in a post conflict setting? And what roles have children and youth played in DDR?

DDR is a concept that has evolved over time and has been object from multiple discussions and definitions. DDR, firstly, emerged in the late 1980´s as a disarmament initiative within the United Nations (UNPKO) peacekeeping operations. During the Cold War, peacekeeping operations used DDR as a manner to demobilise the national army of the defeated country and to ensure the ceasefire agreement. In this context it was an intervention among the states to balance the power monopoly of the Cold War.

Nonetheless, after the end of the Cold War the concept of security shifted from a military approach and crossed the sovereignty of the states, due to the transformation of the geopolitics and the outbreak of the "New Wars" within the previous colonies (Rufer 2005, p. 12). In this context, peacekeeping operations (PKO) encompassed the principles of the liberal peacebuilding such as the establishment of the rule of law, humanitarian and human rights, security sectors reforms and developmental and reconciliation programs, elements that aim to build a sustainable and lasting peace (2005, p.12).

Conventional DDR, were product of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandates and used to take place under peace agreements, followed by the deployment of peacekeeping forces, in which leaders of military forces were politically committed to demobilise and disarm their structures. The main objective was to ensure security by dealing with former combatants in order to avoid their return to war, so it was necessary to rebuild the structures by promoting economic growth and employment and providing humanitarian assistance (Brinkerhoff 2005, p. 6). In this sense, DDR became a task mainly operated by developmental agencies, turning into linear and sequential process, which was susceptible to be transfer to any context overlooking the complexities that each conflict entailed (Berdal and Ucko 2010, pp. 2-3). Much of the current DDR literature agree that DDR cannot be a "prescriptive policy-oriented" and implemented as a magical blueprint (Berdal et Ucko 2009, p. 2).Conversely, it is necessary to address a more comprehensive approach of human security, where the nexus between development and security accounts for the specificities of each context, claiming for local sensitivity and recognizing the political side of DDR (Pouligny 2004, pp.14-19).

In addition, the recognition that DDR is about politics, and it cannot be implemented as a technical and apolitical process, have led to breakdown the assumptions of combatants as homogeneous and a static category, and have led to re-examine the reintegration of ex-combatants through a more comprehensive lens where children, youth and female ex-combatants are recognized as being primordial actors in the DDR (Pouligny 2004).Drawing upon the lessons learned of DDR in the field, the international community has rendered to standardized guidelines, procedures and handbooks that gather together the best practices in order to enhance a better coordination and cooperation. One of the most important guidelines is the initiative of the UN International Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) which called for a more comprehensive approach and recognized the need to address DDR with children and youth as a specific process based on the need to protect children rights with special requirements and responses in the post conflict environment (IDDRS 2014, pp. 217-226).

According to the IDDRS "The DDR of ex-combatants is a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims to deal with the post-conflict security problem that results from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development. Through a process of removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society, DDR seeks to support ex-combatants so that they can become active participants in the peace process" (IDDRS p3)[1].

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[1] According to the IDDRS, "Disarmament is defined as the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programs. Demobilization: is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion. Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/ or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.
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-

The increasing awareness of children in DDR is parallel to the emerging movement of protection of children's rights in the earliest 90's, (Singer 2006, p. 15), which gained significant relevance within the International Community after the end of the cold war when the "New Wars" (Kaldor 1999) emerged and produced the reconceptualization of security. This meant a shift from a military and state approach to a global and people-centred approach known as "human security"[2], what allowed to call for a closer look at the dynamics and realities of the conflicts and led the international community give a place to the most vulnerable population within the broader peacebuilding project.

As a matter of fact in 1996, the UN released the "Machel Report", which highlighted the alarming numbers of children[3] participating in armed conflicts, and called for special responses from the international community to address their special needs of this part of the population (UN 1996). In this sense, child involved with armed groups became a visible matter subject, and a broader legal framework was developed in order to ensure and guarantee their protection. For instance the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) "became the bearer of children[s rights debate" (Reynaert, .Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandevelde 2009, p. 519) and served for the development of later conventions and frameworks[4]. While these frameworks

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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". (United Nations, 2014, p. 52)

[2] According To Kofi Annan "Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a steep towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment -- these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security." (Kofi Annan. "Secretary-General Salutes International Workshop on Human Security in Mongolia." Two-Day Session in Ulaanbaatar, May 8-10, 2000. Press Release SG/SM/7382. 08/27/01). Available in http://www.gdrc.org/sustdev/husec/Definitions.pdf. Accessed on 20 august 2015.

[3] The International Convention on Children Rights, define children to every individual under the age of 18 and the UN has defined youth as "every person between the age of 15 and 24 without prejudice to other definitions by the Member states". (Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly, A/40/256, 1985). This dissertation will used both terms considering the contextual background in which they will be mention. In addition, this dissertation will used the definition based on the Paris principles which states that "A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities" (UNICEF 2007, p.7). When talking about children, this term encompass both boys and girls.

[4] For instance the Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and on Demobilisation and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa (1997). Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) which define defined the conscription or use of children under the age of 15 years as a war crime under the jurisdiction of the court. ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (1999). Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on

advocate for children as social actors, with autonomy and with the capacity to constructing their lives in their own right (2009, p. 521), problems have risen in the ground questioning their real inclusion which has not been clear in the ground.

Although the evolution of DDR has called for a more comprehensive and inclusive perspective, there are still gaps between the rhetoric of peacebuilding and the realities in which narratives about children, has derived from the different understanding of human rights and conflict dynamics that have led to label them as victims in need of protection, powerless and passive agents determined by their intrinsic vulnerability that encompass the international normative of children which define their rights and their needs (McMullin 2011 p. 246) and on the other hand, narrowed understandings of human security has led to depict them as objects of security, considering as potential threats that as ex combatants can pose to the peacebuilding scenario (Nosworthy 2007, p 179).

As is explained before, narratives about children soldier and their involvement in conflict have influenced DDR outcomes. One of the consequences of adopting these stereotypes of children as victims, vulnerable and powerless or as perpetrators and security threats, has been their invisibility in the peacebuilding rhetoric. In this sense, it is necessary to deconstruct not only the children victim/perpetrator paradigm but also it would need to revise the foundations of peacebuilding on which it is based, addressing a more transformational approach enhancing children´s resilience and their contribution to peace (Podder and Özerdem, 2011; Scott, 2011; Denov, 2011; Utas, 2011; Jennings 2008, McEvoy –Levy, 2001- 2014, Moser and McIlwaine 2004).

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This paper appeal for a social constructivist approach which consider the concepts of DDR, childhood, conflict within a particular social, political, cultural and economic contexts. According to Conteh-Morgan, "When agents (individuals, groups, or nations) and events are contextualized in a normative and material structure it

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the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000). On the other hand the United Nations Security Council has issued several resolutions that appeal towards children protection in armed conflicts. (International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) 2010)

becomes easier to understand and even evaluate the resulting political action", (Conteh-Morgan 2005, p.73). It is necessary to clarify that the structures (values, norms and beliefs) that model agent's behaviours underlie power relations and dominance. Drawing upon this definition, this paper critically analysed the extent in which the structures such as norms, values and discourses are constrained by the realities of children in armed conflict and are challenged by their resistance through the exercise of their agency. In doing so, it is necessary to analyses how the different discourses are reflected in grounded experiences of children DDR.

This study will use Giddens (1984) definition of agency as the capacity of individuals of making choices within a specific context. For him, this capability involves the power of resisting or embrace the structures (1984, pp.9-17). White and Wyn (1998) argue that agency is about willingness and volition, moreover, it has embedded a transformative capacity which has a dialectical relationship with the dynamics of the structures (1998, pp. 316-318). Under this view, children's agency in conflict affected countries has been conceived according the principles and norms of DDR, that in some cases have led to build an image of victims and other as violent, greedy and irrationals and have reinforced in some respect their marginalization. Despite the efforts to build comprehensive approaches in which children and youth are seen as social actors this has been questioned in the field. This study argue that agency in DDR need to be understood within permanent relationship with structures, in which the capacity of children as peace builders is reflected in the everyday interactions and the role that children and youth can exert in empower them with their political agency.

Podder (2015) explains children's agency in the everyday in which they look for "diplomatic negotiation, tactics of avoidance, and informal strategies of daily survival" (2015 p. 53) Redefining themselves, surviving or navigating within a challenging environment.

This study call for the integration of a more transformative approach, according to Lederach (1997) peacebuilding goes beyond a peace agreement, it is an 'ongoing process of change from negative to positive relations, behaviour, attitudes and structures' (1997, p. 20), thus it needs to consider the role of local agency, the spaces and mechanisms in which social practices and relationships can be transformed.

According to MacGinty (2014), everyday peace refers "to the routinized practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society that may suffer from ethnic or religious cleavages and be prone to episodic direct violence in addition to chronic or structural violence" (2014, p.549).

Exploring these concepts deeply, could led us understand how are they linked and will give us a more clear understanding how DDR can enable children to reintegrate and participate in the peacebuilding project enhancing resilience from an everyday and transformative approach. This study used a qualitative research method based on the collection of secondary data such as books, academic journals articles, legal frameworks and country reports and assessments. It is necessary to clarify that the experiences analysed in this research was based on DDR articles and publications of international organizations, practitioners and scholars considering the limitation in accessing to primary data.

1.4 STRUCTURE

The second chapter will review the central discussions and debates in order to answer the main question. In doing so, this study will first examine the debates around childhood and the roles of children in the human rights narratives that have emerged in the field of international studies and have influenced the discourses of children recruitment and DDR. Followed by the analysis of the rationales and approaches that has underline children DDR.

Chapter three will draw upon one practical case of children DDR in Liberia, showing how an unidimensional approach were implemented and the role given to children within peace process. The last chapter, will examine a DDR case in Colombia under the lens of the IDDRS (International Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards) and the extent in which this approach have led to integrate children in DDR process as active agents as enable children to be active agents in the peacebuilding process.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

This chapter aims to review the main theoretical approaches that are central in answering the question of this paper. Considering that DDR aims to stabilize security after conflict the main target is the ex-combatants, thus is necessary to understand debates that have emerged around the dynamics of the engagement of children with armed groups. In doing so, the second part will examine whether these constructions about children recruitment have shaped the principles and rationales embedded in Children DDR. Drawing on this discussion, the last part of this chapter will review how children agency have been conceived and the extent that DDR have recognized them as social, political and economic actors in peacebuilding.

2.1 RECRUITMENT: AN UNAVOIDABLE LINK BETWEEN AGENCY AND STRUCTURES

Child soldiering has been analysed across multiple disciplines such a psychology, anthropology, sociology and economy in order to understand the factors and motivations that have led children to get involved with armed groups. According to the literature, understanding recruitment is a necessary step to build a more comprehensive frame for reintegration. This is explained by the fact that recruitment must be understood as a multidimensional issue in which several factors interact, it cannot only be seen as a coercive act but also it needs to take into account the motivations of children and the social, political, economic conditions. All these factors must be considered when programming children DDR (Özerdem and Podder 2011, Brett and Specht 2004, Wessels 2006).

Historically, children recruitment became a relevant issue with the end of the Cold War when the international community started supporting peacebuilding initiatives. The emergence of human security justified the universalization of human rights through and ample body of international norms and frameworks that influenced the policies, processes and programs about children protection (Nosworthy 2010).

To better understand children recruitment it is necessary to examine the interaction between agency and social structures. Child soldiering literature has set out the different manners of recruitment classifying them as push and pull factors or demand and supply drivers Brett and Specht 2004; Wessels 2006, Reich and Achvarina 2006; Andvig and Gates 2009, Singer 2009) According to Specht (2006) , the former explains the reasons why armed groups recruited children. The latter, explains why children decided to get involve with armed conflicts. These approaches underlie the importance of considering the dynamics of the specific context and the motivations and reasons that led children to get involved in an armed group.

2.1.1 DEMAND-DRIVEN FACTORS

Specht (2004, p 193) established that demand of children recruits will depend on the structure of the organisations. It usually occurs when armed groups experience shortfalls of recruited adults and they look for children and youth population as low cost combatants. She also argues that children are most likely to be recruited in places where child labour is an accepted practice and used them in supportive functions such as cookers or porters (2004, p.193). However, this will depends on children availability and the "fishing grounds" where they can be recruited such as schools and refugee camps (Andvig and Gates 2009, p. 90). Another factor that have influence children recruitment is the development of technology and the availability of small and light arms which ease children to carry them (2009, p 78).

All these variables led armed groups to recruited children by coercive ways or voluntary basis and armed groups would find ways to retain children and develop their compliance. This compliance could be achieved through pecuniary and non-pecuniary rewards depending on the economic sources, or by the profits and the advantages that they can take from children (Scott 2011, p. 37). Among the economic incentives, they can receive a payment in cash or give them part of the resources looted or other tangible goods such as drugs, diamonds, or any other valuable good (Scott 2011, p. 40). Nevertheless, when money or looted values are limited, children are usually awarded with non- economic incentives. Some of them are given by the armed groups as a

manner to retain children, satisfying their basic needs, such as food, health or housing or ensuring care and protection (Brett and Specht 2004)

Other ways that armed groups ensure compliance is though the socialization process in which children internalize the set of norms and behaviours of the organisation (Stedman 2001, p.13), Checkel (2009, p.12) argues that "this social process of communication involves changing in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour, in the absence of overt coercion".. This is more evident when children are born in conflict environment and they build their values and identity based on the systems of violence becoming "vehicles of violence rather than citizens who can build peace" (Wessels 2006, p.3).

Sometimes socialization could be reinforced by fear and punishment in order to ensure the indoctrination of any specific ideology, religion or ethnicity and simultaneously, children can be influence by their ecologies understanding this as the social levels where children interact with such as parents, families, schools or neighbourhoods[5] (McCallin 2004, p.71). Moser and McIlwaine (2004, p. 9) argued that when violence is exercise it involves power, and in this case armed groups used them as an instrument of power and intimidation to maintain compliance and cooperation.

2.1.2 SUPPLY/BASED FACTORS

The supply driven factors, has explained recruitment under the theory of greed and grievances. Grievances pose "chronic risks" such as poverty, lack of services provision as education[6], health care, justice and security, influence the decision of children to get involve in the conflict. (Özerdem & Podder 2011, p.67, Andvig and Gates, p. 92, Pugh 2011, p.311). Indeed, Moser and Rogers (2005) argued that these risks exacerbates frustration and alienation especially in male youth, driving them to engage in violent contexts

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[5] For instance, child soldiering in Mindanao, Philippines, fought in the Moro National liberation Front (MNLF), where participation was voluntary and highly influenced by the religion, ideology, and family support which in turned influenced the decision of joining to the MNLF. (Ozerdem and Podder 2011, p. 311)

[6] Collier (2006) found that there is a relationship between low education and conflict, demonstrating that more youth in schools decreases the risk of conflict and vice versa.

On the other hand, some scholars have argued that children recruitment could be explained from economic opportunities (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). According to Urdal (2004) in conflict environments where there are high rates of unemployment, youth and children are susceptible to join rebels if they can get higher profits than they can get from a licit job. Indeed, children and youth find an opportunity in armed groups to gain skills of apprenticeship[7] that they expected to use in order to gain livelihoods.

Demographics studies led by the World Bank (2006) in a statistical study demonstrated the relationship between the proportion of youth population and conflict through the theory of "youth bulge", arguing that in developing countries where economic growth is low and the proportion of youth population is higher and there is no productive opportunities young frustrations could constitute engines of violence and can aggravate tensions and can produce social and economic instability (World Bank 2006, p.9). This theory have been criticised as being reductionist and based recruitment on a simple "rational choice" (Smith & Ellison 2012, p. 2.13).

The main limitation of these approaches is that they are arbitrary and have a narrow interpretation failing into ambiguity ad causality (Pugh 2011, p.311). For instance, there is no support that poverty is a casual factor of recruitment. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence that low-income countries with high population of youth get engaged into conflict (Boyden 2007, p.7). By the contrary, there are experiences that showed that children and youth in conflict –affected countries have decided not to fight (2007, p. 22).

These explanations about children recruitment have led to build the paradigms of children as victims and children as security threats. The former, has been influenced by the human rights, which highlight that vulnerability of children involved in armed groups makes them, recipients of the protection and security from the state and the society. The latter, have portrayed them as objects of security (Boyden 2003, p1) but

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[7] For instance, in the Fifth Progress report the Secretary General affirmed that in Liberia the high rates of youth unemployment were a threat to the security and stability.(UNSC 2004, p. 70)

also have assumed their incapability to take decisions fully informed that affect their lives (Hart and Tyrer 2006, p 9, Cohn and Goodwin-Gill 1994, p. 35).

The next part will assess how these about children soldiering and recruitment have influence DDR outcomes, leaving an ample room to question its effectiveness and the real role of children in a post conflict setting.

2.2 CHILDREN DDR APPROACHES

As mentioned in the introduction DDR with children might be examined under a constructivist approach in which it is necessary to question the principles and norms that underpin each process (Muggah, Berdal & Torjesen 2009, p. 272). This could help us to analyse critically the different paradigms of children soldier embedded in DDR, and question the inclusion or marginalization of children as agents of peacebuilding. In this analysis exclusion is explained as multidimensional, in which social, economic, cultural and political factors are interrelated (Stewart 2008).

It is necessary to highlight the fact that most of the children DDR were undertaken between 1990 and 2006. In this period emerged much of the literature which was elaborated from case studies and has enriched the current state of art. Indeed, much of the DDR programming have change since the UN launched the IDDRS, based on lessons learnt it represents a shift in the traditional discourse and gives a more comprehensive frame. The IDDRS has a specific chapter for children which is built upon human rights and a need of a large scale social transformation (Torjesen 2013, p. 1). It stablished that DDR with children must be performed regardless any political negotiation or peace agreement and it also recognized the need to include a gender approach considering the exclusion of girls from DDR and the need to include the community in the reintegration. It also points out that all the stages of children DDR should reflect the principles of child rights of life, survival and development, child participation and child's best interest (IDDRS 2006, p 1-4). The next section will examine the bias of DDR within the international community, before IDDRS, reflecting some of the debates.

3. CHILDREN DDR

3.1 CHILDREN DDR APPROACHES: MISSING A LINK WITH CONFLICT AND REINTEGRATION DYNAMICS

According to Kemper (2005, p. 3) international organisations developed three kinds of interventions in DDR: rights based approach, economic approach and socio-political approach, we are going to explore deeply the economic approach.

3.3.1 ECONOMIC APPROACH

This focus is oriented to an economic response, inspired in the theory of youth bulge, in which unemployment and large cohort of young people in a country poses several risks. Based on experiences in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mozambique the Developmental Agencies founded that programs need to be oriented towards vocational training and life skills, gearing this skills accessible to civilian life avoiding youth turning into spoilers (Maslen 1997, p.3).This approach reinforce the idea of children as rational agents and objects of security, undermining children agency and their potential as peacebuilders (Kemper 2005, p 35). It is necessary to examine how this approach has influenced DDR programs. One of the aims of DDR is to ensure the post-conflict security, which is guarantee if ex combatants have sustainable livelihoods and supportive networks. For instance, when DDR embed the image of children as victims, destabilisers and "rational agents", programs are oriented to remove the potential risks that they posed to stability, what Jennings (2008, p.162) called the "securitisation of DDR". Under this view, measures as vocational training, catch up educational programs, trauma healing used to be the result of a technocratic, top-down program that aimed to constrain children and keep them busy rather than effectively support their livelihoods as way of development (Jennings 2008, p.164). Under this approach, poverty and unemployment needed to be controlled and securitized, co-opting development under the security agenda by a nuanced approach of human security (Duffield 2007).

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Some of the images, of children as greedy came from the discourse of the political economy of war. According to Ballentine and Nitchzhe (2004, p.12), war economies are fuelled by the growth of informal and back economies, in which armed groups can finance war and obtain profits by exploiting natural resources or other lucrative assets. Under this view, when children and youth join to armed groups by the promise of economic incentives, they can act irrationally because of the deliberate exercise of violence and power that they used against civilians. Drawing upon this theory, recent scholars have argued that in order to shift to a political economy of peace is necessary to tackle the economy of war (Spear 2006, p.178). However, relying on the "economic" reintegration as the only factor of a sustainable livelihood led to understand combatants "subject to rational expectations essentially as a homo-economicus responding to incentives" Muggah and Baaré (2006, p.229).

When children and youth have engaged in armed groups for long term, they expected that in the transition to civil life, DDR could provide sustainable livelihoods. In turn this could generate higher expectations considering the roles that they acquire as civilians such as breadwinner or household and if employment prospects are not delivered it could produce feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction (Lopes Cardozo, Higgins, Maber, Brandt, Kusmallah and Le Mat, 2015, p. 5).

In the same way the UN operational Guide of DDR, established that when socio economic reintegration of young ex combatants does not fulfil their specific needs, they are prompt to take arms if there is no job opportunities, leading to trigger security risks, which undermine and contradicts the objectives of DDR programs (UN 2014). The main limitation of this approach as McMullin (2012, p. 396) and Jennings (2007 p. 214) argue is that associating the notions of dissatisfaction with war recurrence means to overlook the causes of conflicts and its complexities. This is more evident in protracted conflicts in which the reason to fight could change over time.

Reintegration and employment cannot be equated as a simply linear process in which if employment is not provide children would automatically return to war. Some scholars (Jeannings 2008, Muggah and Baaré 2006, McMullin 2011, Podder 2014) have agreed

that incentives in the disarmament and demobilisation stage such as cash benefits package, educational programs and training could only be effective if promises of future employment are real. However, they also argue that this is not a fact to neglect the capacity of children in taking decisions. Indeed, in their assessments of previous experiences they have shown that unemployed children did not wanted return to war (Podder 2014, p.50, Maclay and Zerdem 2010, p.347).

What this have shown so far is that most of the DDR programs that were implemented in the past (1990-2006), justified specific interventions founded in the different paradigms of children vulnerability that human rights and human security advocate. These approaches, tended to minimize recruitment considering force and coercion the only way in which children used to get involved in an armed group undermining other reasons that influenced children's decisions, ignoring the context and experience of children in war. For instance, some of the failures of DDR developed in this period were due to the fact that they diminished the "modus operandi" of the organizational structures, and the different roles and identities that children developed during the conflict (Özerdem & Podder 2010).

Thus, DDR were uniformed applied and shaped a model of the ideal behaviour of children soldiers, restricting their real needs and other expectations. (Mcmullin 2012, p. 390). This usually resulted in a homogenisation of children, downplaying the different roles and power that they exercise within armed groups. Furthermore, under this position remained unaccounted the fact that economic reintegration would depend on other social, political and cultural context (Muggah and Baaré, 2006 p. 230).

Despite the recognition of the international legislation towards children as social and political actors with right of participations, and the highly political character evoked by DDR (Berdal 2006, p.5), children are still constrained to exercise political agency during peace negotiations, reinforcing marginalization and exclusion (MacMullin 2012, p. 33). According to Mitton (2010), "reintegration should not be judged by the absence of renewed violence (...) rather it must also appreciate the extent to which combatants hold faith in the political system, and peace generally, to deliver solutions to problems of social and economic disparity" (Mitton 2010, p. 173). In this sense, political

reintegration of children cannot be equated to the creation of political parties or electoral representation, rather it requires finding other forms of participation in which children can get involved. In doing so not only long term commitment is needed but also the alternative channels in which children and youth find the opportunities to express their concerns. The Department for International Development DFID (2009) in a report of youth exclusion in fragile state highlights the importance of giving them a voice planning and assessing programs in which they are the main participants (McLean, Hilker and Fraser 2009, p.40). As it was explained at the beginning of this section in the 2006 a growing literature in children DDR emerged, questioning the effectiveness of DDR programs. Indeed, the IDDRS, challenge the previous approaches and reconciled the minimalist (security) and the maximalist (developmental) approaches, recognizing the need to look in a more comprehensive context analysis where economic, political, social and cultural factors matters (Muggah 2006, p.14). This guide made a call to the governments, civil organizations and international agencies to analyse in their policies and programmes the interaction between the structures, children agency in a broader societal process.

For instance, IDDRS advocates for a detailed analysis of situation in which root causes of conflict must be examined, the circumstances, patterns, causes and conditions of child recruitment, the living experiences of children, the recognition of their resilience and their capacities (IDDRS 2006, p.6). However, it is worth to mention that despite the integrity of the IDDRS, children inclusion remain a subject to critics and questions when it is assessed in the ground.

3.2 CHILDREN DDR: ENHANCING RESILIENCE, MOVING FURTHER INVISIBILITY?

This section will review the literature about children agency within DDR and the extent in which it have been taken in consideration in the design and implementation stages. Understanding this inclusion or marginalization could lead us to understand the failure or achievement in accomplishing the expected outcomes of children DDR.

Children, far from the vulnerable image, they respond (actively or passively) in a conflict affected context, and navigate (Annan, Brier, and Aryemo 2009, pp.653-656), children's roles are in constant transformation that drive adopting new behaviours and attitudes, redefining themselves. Vigh (2009) define navigation as the mobility of individuals in a context that is in constant change, where obstacles forced to re shaped new trajectories and tactics (2009, p.420), In the same way, Denov (2011) quotes "young people assess the changes within their socio-political environment, evaluate the emerging possibilities within this environment and, accordingly, direct their lives in the most beneficial and advantageous ways" (Denov 2011, p 192).. This interaction makes children and youth exploit the opportunities and possibilities that the context offers, renegotiating or just resisting which in a peacebuilding context can create a situation of conflict calming or conflict provoking.

However, the academy agree about the complexity of children agency and the dichotomies that the international community, specially donors have drawn about them; For instance, as we review in the first and second part of this chapter, children have been portrayed as economical actors, security threats, victims in need of protection and assistance (Watson 2015, McMullin 2011, Smith and Ellison 2012, Lopes Cardozo, M.T.A., Higgins, S., Maber, E., Brandt, C.O., Kusmallah, N., Le Mat, M.L.J 2015). In practice, this was evident in the early DDR programmes, when ex combatants were considered a static population.

Although, the ICCR stablished children's and youth rights of and IDDRS have revised and deconstruct these paradigms, recognizing children resilience, and the importance of children participation. In the meanwhile, the legal framework has not been coupled with the realities that have shown the exclusion of children in the DDR programming and in the peace agreements (Del Felice and Wissler 2007, Wessels 2006, McMullin 2011, Jennings 2008). Indeed it has caused more harm than good, because in the political sphere they have been treated as security threats (Watson 2006, p.57).

Jennings (2008), has questioned the extent that DDR, especially reintegration is achieving transformation or expedience. The first one recognize ex combatants as non-static population, agents of change and social capital, where responses are adequately

funding and granted. The latter emphasize children soldiers as instruments, where measures are commonly short term responses with an unclear purpose (Jennings 2008, pp.331-336). Under a transformative approach, DDR must assess not only the capacity of mobilization of children but also the environment in which they will be reintegrated.

According to Lederach (1997) peacebuilding is a dynamic process which does not have a clear starting point, it involves activities before and after signing a formal agreement, hence it involves a transformation from negative to positive relations and structures (1997,p. 20). This transformation could be achieved engaging, children and youth in the peacebuilding process means to give them a room of social and political manoeuvre.

Maclay and Zerdem (2010) argue that this integration is complete when it is possible a horizontal and vertical integration. The former one refers to the closest networks "through friendship, engagement in organizations or interconnectedness" (Maclay et al 2010, p.348). While vertical reintegration refers to the engagement with most visible and formal institutions of local and national level of decision making. Thus, addressing economic issues through DDR is appropriate, What this reveals is that children effectively play a role within the peacebuilding environment and reintegration could be "successful" if there is a profound examination in the daily social interactions (O'Kane, Feinstein and Giertsen 2009, p.264). Children have shown a greater resilience, and a capacity to adapt and adjust to adversity, and contribute to their own protection (Boyden and Mann 2005, p. 12).

Consequently, children that have participated in conflicts navigate within their closest spaces such as school, family, vocational associations. These micro levels were they build relationships, is the opportunity to constitute a source of social capital (Hart 2008). With this review, this study does not pretend to romanticized children and youth. However, it is stressed the importance to incorporate this capacity when programming DDR, for this it is necessary to enhance trust and reciprocity, involve children through participation as a social capital asset, exploring the daily spaces in which children interact, cope and response to an armed conflict environment. These responses do not obey to a twofold coin (spoilers or victims), they obey to a context in

which as the rest of the civil society, they look and implemented solutions to survive, satisfy needs and rebuild their identities.

The next chapter will examine how these approaches have been incorporated in practice and the extent that this processes has enable children enhance their resilience and agency in a transformative way towards peacebuilding.

3.3 PRACTICAL CASE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC APPROACH

In the last 25 years, DDR have played a critical role in facilitating the volatile transition from conflict to a transforming societal process of peacebuilding. An ample body of scholars and practitioners have contributed to improve the state of art, breaking down paradigms and paving the way to new concepts and practices. This evolution has been coupled with the growing global attention towards children and youth protection in conflict settings, which in turn have led to develop a vast literature in children DDR. However, it is also necessary to point out that children DDR in practice have had several difficulties attributed not only to the "technics" of DDR, such as time, funding, coordination and programing stage but also because of the different approaches and rationales that underpin DDR.

Having examined broadly, on the one hand, the different theories about children soldiering and their influence in DDR and on the other hand the different approaches of DDR and the inclusion of children as active agents within this process. This part will provide an analysis of the implementation and outcomes of previous DDR processes that started before 2006 in Liberia. This case illustrates the role that children have played within DDR and show how outcomes are blurred when processes are tailored under narrow conceptions and unidimensional readings of contexts such as economic approaches. In doing so, it is necessary to examine the context in which DDR emerged, the rationales and objectives of the DDR. This analysis could provide an answer of how these DDR have enabled children to exercise their resilience and participated in a more transformative way in the peacebuilding project.

3.3.1 LIBERIA: AN ECONOMIC APPROACH OF DDR

Liberia has also endured a long and protracted conflict which traced back even before its independence and was followed by two civil wars between 1989-1999 and 2001-2003. In 2003, a ceasefire took place between the Government of Liberia and the two main warring rebel groups (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, LURD, and Movement for Democracy in Liberia, MODEL) the warring parties signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in which Charles Taylor renounced to the presidency of Liberia (Jennings 2008).
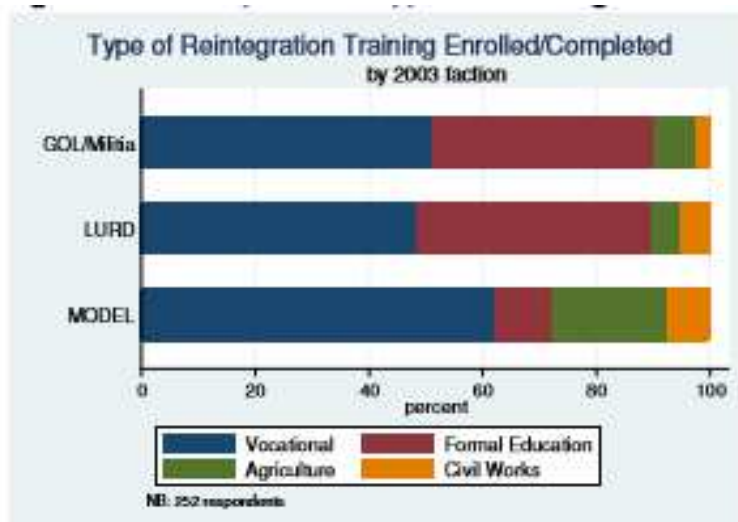
This analysis will focus on the last DDRR which was implemented in 2003 under the Resolution 1509 of the Security Council that authorized the deployment of the UNMIL (UN Mission in Liberia). Although Liberia's DDRR was before the IDDRS, it compiled most of the principles and guidelines that were latter stipulated in the IDDRS. For instance, the process in Liberia were developed by experts in children protection (IDDRS 2006, p. 5), this process was led by multiple agencies such as UNICEF, USAID and the UNDP. In addition, the DDRRS integrated the Cape Town principles8 and recognized the need to incorporate gender -specific needs of female ex-combatants (USAID 2003, pp. 27-36). In this sense, women and girls were considered vulnerable groups and their access to DDR were not tied to handling any weapon, but recognized the other part of youth and children that fought with armed groups not as combatants but in other supportive role.

Furthermore, it was structured from a multidimensional approach that recognized the importance to link security with more long term development goals. For instance, UNICEF, the agency in charge of the youth and children reintegration process provided basic primary education, vocational training, and employment counselling and psychological counselling.

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[8] According to the Cape Town Principles" a CAAF person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed forces or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes or for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms" (Unicef, 2007). In this sense, the concept of child soldier was broad including not only the children that ported a gun but also considered those children who were serving in a supportive role.

Graph nº 1: Participation in Types of Reintegration Intervention Programs, by Major Faction

Type of Reintegration Training Enrolled/Completed
by 2003 faction

Source: Pugel, J. What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Excombatants in Liberia, New York: UNDP, 2007, pp.46.

Although Liberia's DDR was ideally designed and was built upon the failures of the past DDR, its implementation resulted challenging and reintegration outcomes were not completely fulfilled, showing a disconnection between the activities and the objectives of the program (Jennings 2008, p. 331) .

Reintegration in Liberia was highly drawn upon an economic approach that aimed combatants acquired productive skills and gain employment and sustainable livelihood. This focus seems reasonable with 15.000 CAFF (Children Associated with Fighting Forces) waiting for reintegration into civilian life (ILO 2005, p.XII). The premise that if CAFF did not have education or training they could not be able to get a formal job imposed a big challenge considering the economic situation in in Liberia with 80% of the economic active population unemployed and with the economy based on informal employments (ILO 2005).

However, one major drawback of this approach was the assumption that reintegration and post conflict stabilisation would be achieved only through economic ways (Munive

& Jakobsen2012, p. 374, UN final report 2006, p.10). In the case of Liberia, all the efforts put in the vocational skills training[9], and education did not necessarily result in more employment. In contrast, children trained could not be absorbed by the labour market and were left aside in an environment of marginalization and exclusion.

As explained in the second chapter, when DDR is focused on an economic basis, on the one hand it entails the risk of minimizing the complexities of the conflict and the recruitment dynamics. On the other hand it reduced an inextricably link between unemployment and security threats, which labelled children as spoilers and neglected their agency and their capacity to transform themselves in a positive and constructive way.

Traditionally, the conflict in Liberia has been linked with the theory of "greed", in which the drivers of combatants joining armed groups were explained by the opportunity to profit from the access and control over resources (Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003, p. 2). In the case of Liberia, it was assumed that young people joined armed groups ensuring a profit from the lootable resources (Munive & Jakobsen 2012, pp. 375-376). This approximation according to Kemper (2005), transform the understanding of conflicts and put a value on children in a post conflict setting "which force them to decide between working for war or for living" (2005, p. 29). In addition, it overlooked other push and pull factors that motivated children to join armed groups, undermining their agency and the multiple complexities embedded in the recruitment dynamics.

Surveys such as that conducted by Pugel 2007 have shown that recruitment in Liberia varied through armed groups.

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[9] According to the UN Final Report in 2006, the vocational training failed due to the fragile network of the institutions, the poor quality of the program, the lack of accreditation and the lack of standard package of skill. (2006, p 33-34)

Graph nº 2: Reasons for joining

Source: Pugel, J. What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Liberia, New York: UNDP, 2007, pp. 36

As is exemplified in the graph, non-pecuniary incentives played an important role in persuading children to join the warring parties. This is the case of MODEL, where fighters primarily joined to protect their families, while LURD used coercion as the predominant method of recruitment (Pugel 2007, p. 42). Similar patterns were shown in a survey made to girl combatants and non-combatants that argued that some of the reasons that motivated them to enlist were the need of protection and the willingness to form relationships with male combatants (Specht, 2006)

Conditioning the success of reintegration on the employment of combatants could fail by contrast in the understanding that unemployment could drive back combatants to conflict. This assumption is based on the theory of "Youth bulge" and aim to turn youth into productive and self-reliant citizens, otherwise the idleness and dissatisfaction can turn them into threats to the security. In the case of Liberia, youth were seen as a potential threat to peace. This is evident in Munive and Jakobsen (2012) research in which they quoted the opinion of a UNDP policy advisor who affirmed that the program

kept busy ex-combatants providing them vocational training in order to ensure stability, while he recognized that he could not ensure the effectiveness of the training (2012, p. 373).

This assumption was later confirmed by the assessment report made by the ILO (2005), in which it recognized the loopholes existing in the transition from the training programmes and finding an employment. These gaps were explained in part because of the lack of capacity of the government in creating the conditions and the adequate infrastructure that could absorb the population but also because in the programming, the donors and the international agencies overlooked the context of the country in which the programme was designed (ILO 2005, pp. 26-30). Indeed, Pugel (2009) questioned the extent in which International Donors and Government planned a long term reintegration programme without considering the security conditions and the availability to services and infrastructure (Pugel 2009, p 76)

These findings reflect that the measures of vocational training and educational programs were means to remove the idleness and dissatisfaction of youth combatants and ensure the security in Liberia. Consequently, development goals such as employment and sustainable livelihoods were blurred and subtracted in the securitization of the reintegration (Jennings2009, p. 478). According to the Copenhagen School, "securitization occurs when an issue becomes linked to security and is promoted beyond the realm of normal politics through the 'speech acts' made by significant 'securitizing' actors" (MacMillan 2015, p. 64), in the case of Liberia youth combatants, they were presented as an existential threat requiring special measures, leaving aside the social reintegration that could achieve in an effective manner the sustainable livelihoods. However, this securitization of youth in Liberia was vaguely justified, as a matter of fact a survey in a county of Liberia led by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), founded that about 68% of children interview would not consider to join armed groups because for them "fighting brings lot of destruction" (Hill, Taylor and Temin 2008, p.3).

Reintegration as is mentioned in the second chapter could raise a transformative or expedience dilemma. In the case of Liberia, it seems that expedience prevailed upon

transformation, considering the general dissatisfaction and frustration produced by the unfulfilled promises of employment and "sustainable livelihoods" (Sommers 2007).

Nonetheless, when children and youth have participated in conflicts and more specifically in protracted conflicts they acquired identities that led them to exercise their agency and power. DDR cannot remain unaccounted for these dynamics. However, in Liberia, DDR instead of promoting a transformational environment it reinforced the marginalization among the young and children through different means; one of them was the transfer of economic allowances for children channelled through their parents, undermining their capacity to manage an income. This is an important fact considering that most of the armed groups in order to ensure their compliance offered economic incentives. (Kemper 2005, p.346).

DDR in Liberia also stipulated the importance of the family reunification, however, according to Podder (2012) this "return" to family tends to re- marginalise, if it is not developed with complementary facts. For instance, youth that left their families in rural areas, did not want to return to agricultural activities driven under the patriarchal system in Liberia which entailed a return to pre-war status surrounded by poverty, unemployment and deprivation.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In sum, this case has shown that although DDR processes were based the implementation did not result in a positive transformation in which children and youth could enhance and promote their agency. There was no room for participation and a real assessment of their needs. However, it is shown that DDR in Liberia missed a conflict sensitivity approach, Under this lens programs, would reconsider the economic rationale and the minimalist perception of children and could be oriented towards a transformational approach in which children and youth engage positively, moved not by the economic incentives but moved by the desire of building peace.

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In sum, this case has shown the limitations of focusing DDR in a narrow concept. These cases are important because they constitute an important material and feedback for the IDDRS. In addition they showed the importance of analysing the context and its dynamics when designing a DDR, considering the rigidity of the international regime, where youth and children cannot be perceived as recipients of universalism prescriptions. By contrast it brings to the fore the importance of analysing the complexity of the interactions between the agency and the structures which in turn give insights not only to the real needs of the combatant but also the challenges embedded in the society during the peacebuilding process.

4. IDDRS A HOLISTIC AND COMPREHENSIVE FRAME OF CHILDREN DDR?

Given the number of children engaged in armed groups, there has been a growing recognition of children as important agents in armed conflicts. Consequently, this recognition has served to develop a vast literature about child soldiering but also it has increased the bias of including children in DDR programs. However, neither DDR implementation in general nor DDR with children have been an easy task. This led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG) in which more than 16 agencies of the UN based on the past experiences brought together the lessons learned in an attempt to bridge the gap between the rhetoric and its implementation. The IDDRS represented a shift on thinking and doing DDR. Nonetheless, it is worth to mention that DDR is not a "magic bullet" and has been hardly replicated from one context to another due to the unique dynamics of each conflict, the nature of the actors involved and the volatility of the peace agreements in which they have been performed.

Having examined, in the third chapter two prior experiences related to DDR with children carried out with an unidimensional approach, this chapter aims to analyse a DDR process in light of IDRRS, which incorporates a multidimensional approach that recognize the importance to integrated political, military, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic dimensions and recognize children and youth as social and political agents. Through the experience of DDR in Colombia, this study will examine the role of children in the process with the paramilitary group AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) and the extent that it has enabled children to be active agents in a peacebuilding environment. Drawing upon that, this could led us to understand some lessons learned that might be consider as opportunities of children inclusion and empowerment under the ongoing peace process in Colombia with the largest guerrilla group FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). Thus, the first part will analyse the dynamics of children recruitment in Colombia, the rational embedded in the DDR process and the role given to children within the AUC process. The last part will analyse the peace negotiations and the opportunities of children DDR in light of the ongoing peace process with the FARC.

4.1 DYNAMICS OF CHILDREN RECRUITMENT IN COLOMBIA

According to UNICEF, in Colombia there are between 11.000 and 14.000 children involve in armed conflict (UNICEF 2006). In a study done by the Specht and Brett (2004) it is shown that the 80% of children have joined armed groups in a voluntary basis and only the 10% were forcibly recruited. However, the authors argue that this "voluntary" decision, most of the times influenced by push factors rather than a real desire to get involved with conflict. Studies have demonstrated that conflict itself has the likelihood to move children to get involved with armed groups, it "becomes the normal everyday background to their lives" (Specht and Brett 2004, p. 10). According to Gutierrez (2007), there is a range of factors such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment, family and political ideology, proximity, fear that increased the likelihood of becoming involved with armed groups (2007, p.140). Hence, it has been notable that forced displacement and domestic violence have constituted some other reasons that push children to associate with armed groups (Specht 2006, pp. 8-10). For instance, it is demonstrated that in Colombia, children who have been recruited have been forcibly displaced fourth times (Springer 2012, p. 21). Nonetheless, as is explained in the second chapter, these push and pull factors cannot explain by themselves why children get involved into armed conflicts, it is also necessary to understand the agency that children exert and the capacity of organizations in transform motivations through indoctrination and socialization.

Although the paramilitary forces in their internal codes sets out that recruitment of underage is prohibit, nonetheless, they used to enlist children in their forces. Unlike, the guerrilla's recruitment patterns, paramilitaries offer and pay a salary which ranks between US$ 366 to $488[10] and children can award bonuses for special missions (Brett 2003, p 42). According to Human Rights Watch, the structural conditions of deprivation and poverty accompanied with a fix income have pushed children to join paramilitary forces (2003, 42). Dynamics of recruitment are explained in the following table:

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[10] The AUC derives the 70% of their incomes from drugs trafficking and other illegal and criminal activities

Graph nº 3: FARC, ELN and Paramilitaries patterns of recruitment

Criterion	FARC	ELN	Paramilitaries
Structure	Centralized	Federalized	Localistic

Incentives
    Pay
    Access to
        individual
        benefits
    Relation with
        civil society
	Very seldom
	No
	
	Low
		Very seldom
		No
		
		Medium
			Yes
			Yes
			
			Strongly integrated

External risk	High	High	Low to medium
Recruitment	Mainly but not only voluntary, provision of both genuine and false information	Mostly voluntary	Voluntary and forced, depending on region
Exit	Death or desertion	Death, desertion, negotiation	Death, desertion, negotiation
Discipline	Very severe	Medium-low	Medium-low, but with high internal risk
Ideology	Organizational culture	Christian militancy	Self-defense

Source: Gutierrez Sanin (2010 p. 132) Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States. University of Pittsburgh Press.

4.2 CHILDREN AND YOUTH DD THROUGH THE IDDRS LENS
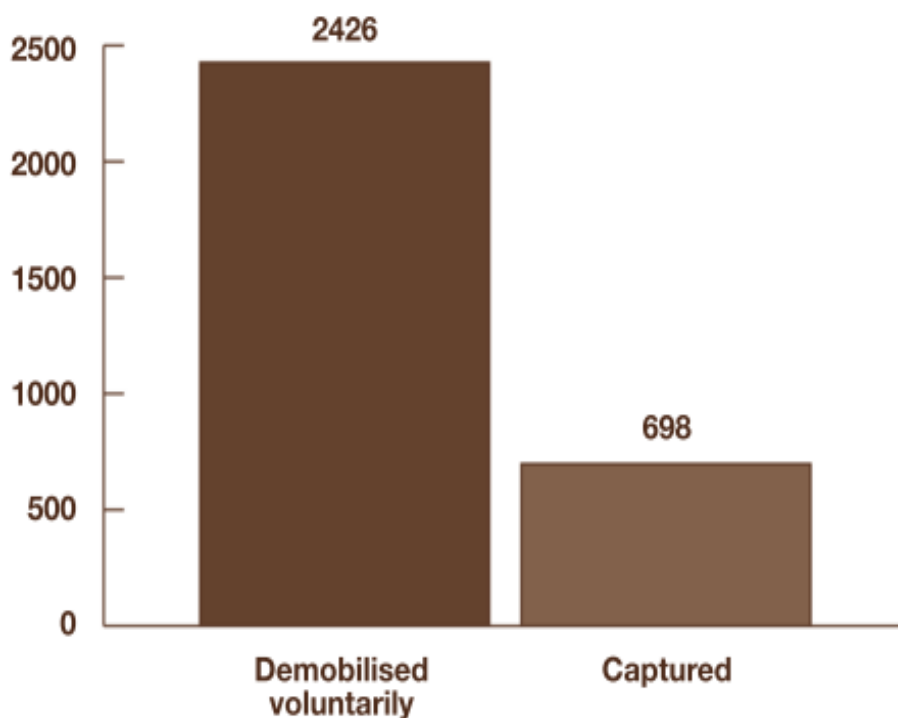
4.2.1 UNDERAGE 18 DDR

IDDRS points out the importance to distinct needs of children and youth because of their in-between status, thus it is required to separate those under 18 whose are treated as children and those over 18 whose are treated as adults (UN 2006). In Colombia, this view introduced a change considering that before 2006 those who turned 18 did not receive any other assistance leaving them in an incomplete process of rights restoration. In this study we will examine some of the issues that have emerged in the two processes.

Traditionally, children DDR is based in three modalities: institutional, family reunification and juvenile referral centres (CROJ). Regarding the institutional DDR, this process has been carried out by a specialized child protection agency ICBF, which offer a specific program that encompass a set of measures focused on: psychosocial attention, health care, nutrition, education, culture and social harmony. According to the Governmental Agency all these measures must ensure children participation and guarantee children's rights restoration (ICBF 2010, p. 17).

According to Y Care International (2008) an international NGO with experience working with children and young people in conflict affected areas have demonstrated that children have mostly participated in DDR under a voluntary basis and a small percentage have been captured as the graph shows:

Graph nº 4: Number of voluntary demobilisations versus youth captured

Source: YCare International (2008 p 16).Overcoming Lost Childhoods Lessons Learned from the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of former child soldiers in Colombia.

Although IDDRS has emphasized the need of strengthen family reunification, while avoiding institutionalization. Experience in Colombia showed that approximately 60% of children and young in DDR have participated in institutional program (YCare International 2008, p.19). The main critic of this approach is that rights restoration and reintegration into the civil society are limited and conditioned to an effective participation in the institutional programs provided by the state. Thus, outside institutional architecture children will barely have an actual chance to be reintegrated.

This situation have led not only to increase the high rates of desertion of children from the institutional programs but also led to question the extent in which expectations and promises were managed within DDR process. According to an assessment done by USAID, IOM and the ICBF, they found that the highest rates of desertion are from the children that demobilise from the AUC, whose ages range among 15-17 years (USAID 2004, p.9), which was more evident with those children that were captured and put into the programs. A likely explanation is that children are sceptical about the political system, distrust in the government and they feel frustrated about the expectations when they entered to the institutional programs (Derks, Rouw and Briscoe 2011, Mago 2011).

This situation reveals the relation among DDR and recruitment dynamics, in the case of the AUC recruitment were driven by push and pull factors in which economic incentives as salaries, played an important role. Furthermore, most of the children that were recruited in earlier ages were indoctrinated against the government and the state, thus when they were captured or inserted in institutional programs they simply distrust from governmental measures[11] (Mago 2011, p 50). These situation, suggest that DDR was concentrate on a view from the state as a service provider which remain unaccounted the structural conditions that surrounded conflict and the way in which children agency shaped by the conflict itself.

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[11] Although the IDDRS, sate that payments and economic incentives might be avoided because it can led children to be objects of manipulation from commanders or other illegal networks expecting to get the demobilisation allowances (IDDRS 2006 p 8.5), creating a market of ex-combatants. Instead it is necessary to create alternatives where children can find sustainable livelihoods. However, the Colombian case have offered limited alternatives such as vocational training in bakery, mechanics and carpentry that most of the times do not correspond to the realities of the market and the context (Watchlist 2012, p 20).

4.2.2 ABOVE 18 YEARS DDR

Once underage turned 18, the ICBF transferred children to the adults program under the base that their rights as children are fulfilled. Adults program which is run by the ACR (Alta Consejería para la Reintegración) Presidential High Council for Reintegration, theoretically aims to be more comprehensive and long term program, focusing on health care, education, psychosocial attention, social and community reintegration and economic reintegration which is divided by professional training and income generation.

One of the main limitations is that this process "fit the same size for all" without considering the special needs that youth has "not only because they may become a security threat, but also due to youth's resilience and ability to play meaningful roles in reconciliation and recovery efforts" (IDDRS 2009, p 206). In the same way IDDRS, has emphasized that a successful reintegration of youth will depend on the transition to productive activities (2009, p 208). Despite these recommendations, some of the paradoxes are related with the outcomes of social and economic reintegration. According to Villarraga (2013) stronger attention is has been put in the psychosocial reintegration, rather than the economic one, emphasizing the balance that is required among the two measures Indeed, a recent study that analysed the perceptions of youth about reintegration programs have showed that after 5 or 8 years of enrolment to the DDR program they do not fully understand their rights and the benefits that they are entitled (Mago 2011). For instance according to Denissen, ex combatants have felt that economic reintegration is not providing them livelihood security considering that the productive projects most of the times resulted economically unsustainable and the training is being limited to certain activities that discard the labour market (Denissen 2011, p 337) This have led demobilised to be involved part time in illegal activities (Munevar and Nussio 2009) In general, therefore, it seems that outcomes of DDR based on IDDRS are blurred in the implementation and children and youth are still enduring marginalization and exclusion. Children and youth are seen as passive actors and recipients of the protection of the state. The highest rates of desertion and failures in reintegration are partly explained because children and youth agency is overlooked. These processes have undermined recruitment dynamics where children attained power, control, and leadership and acquired different roles and responsibilities in their organizations.

Similarly to the situation of Liberia, in Colombia DDR process has neglected the participation of children and youth in the designing and implementation stages. Mago (2011) has argued that within the ICBF, officials have recognized that children participation is denied because they are consider threats and can affect negatively the development of the program. On the other hand, under the DDR run by the ACR, political rights are limited to a lecture in which youth are taught theoretically about their rights but there is no certainty about how these rights can become visible and how they become effective. Furthermore youth participation and decision making process are restricted to socialise with youth about their entitlements and obligations within a frame that is previously determined and where youth have small room of manoeuvre in influencing the decisions (Henao and Pinilla 2009).

This reflected children and youth as powerless and voiceless, as it was pointed out in the second chapter, DDR is mainly a political process but also a social engineering (Rufer 2005, p 21). In this sense children might be considered important actors in the peacebuilding process, thus they must be included in peace agreements or in any negotiation within a peacebuilding project.

Unfortunately, Colombia cannot show this inclusion. According to, when the High Commissioner for Peace was asked about the exclusion of children from the negotiation agenda with the paramilitaries, he answered saying that "that issue was not within his functions" (COALICO 2013, p.11p?). This reflect an evident lack of political will in recognizing children as important actors in the peacebuilding project and as is demonstrated in the case of the paramilitaries the lack of consistence in DDR, have led children to join emerging criminal gangs blaming them as perpetrators.

What this case reflects, is that despite the efforts in developing a sophisticated legal framework, which addresses children's "best interest", DDR programs have overlooked children as agents with identities, experiences and with the capacity to cope with adversities and transform into important actors in a peacebuilding project (Higgings, Maber, Brandt et al, 2015 p 15). Drawing upon this lessons learned the next section will examine some of the opportunities that the Government of Colombia might consider under the ongoing peace talks with the guerrilla group FARC.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The daunting numbers of children involved in armed conflict have called the attention of the international community, local governments, policy makers, and different organizations to advocate for children protection and the need to include them in DDR as important actors in armed conflicts. Considering DDR as a precondition in the transition from war to peace, necessary to guarantee stability and security and contribute to recovery and peacebuilding, a big emphasise has been put in the role of children DDR in ensuring security and stability but little attention has been paid to the role that children can play in building peace within DDR.

By drawing upon a set of theoretical literature and practical cases based on secondary data, this paper has attempted to answer the question posed in the beginning, whether children DDR has enable children and youth enhance their resilience and exert their agency in a transformative way within the peacebuilding project.

Founded in a social constructivism approach, this paper called to reconsider the different constructions and narratives that societies build of conflict and post conflict dynamics in order to be assertive and effective.

This paper brought to the fore the discussion of how the different rationales embedded in DDR have determine the inclusion or marginalization of children as social actors in the peacebuilding process. Through the case of Liberia, it was shown that unidimensional approaches failed shortly in considering the context and assessing the real needs of children and youth. However, in Colombia the scenario was not different despite the efforts of programming DDR under the light of IDDRS.

As Lederach (1997) stated, peacebuilding goes beyond formalities and is long term process that underlie the transformation of relationships "in the personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of conflict that have affected the different systems levels"

(Paffenholz 2014, p.15). In this sense the participation of civil society is crucial in the peacebuilding process and so the inclusion of children and youth became recognized.

How to integrate civil society and youth and children in the peacebuilding and more specifically in DDR is an ambiguous and unclear task. In attempting to clarify this matter, this study has identified the importance of understanding children recruitment considering the relationship between agency and structures. As it is seen children not only are forcibly recruited but there are also push and pull factors that motivated them to join to armed groups. Thus in programming DDR, there is a need to assert the origins and motivations of children involvement in armed groups, the conflict dynamics and the political, economic, and cultural context that determine the real needs of children and youth. In this sense this study challenges the traditional understanding of children as victims, powerless or as violent and spoilers that in need to be "put" in programs, rejecting their participation.

If DDR is the starting to point to build peace it is necessary to be founded in the roots of conflict and its dynamics. Along the three cases, it was examined how despite the rationales of children DDR were performed towards an idea of children protection, these approaches failed shortly in understanding the roots of conflict.

The case of Liberia and Colombia reflected several issues: firstly, on one hand the rigidity of the traditional definitions of children have impeded the access to DDR. On the other hand, then inclusion of children seen understood as recipients of a set of benefits, diminishing their capacity and the real needs that they faced in the aftermath of conflict. During conflict, children and youth develop new skills, reshape identities, they create strategies to cope with adversity and navigate into conflict environments. This capacity is needed to be encapsulated in DDR considering that in post conflict affected settings, dynamics change and are different from conflict and pre-war conditions.

In assessing these dynamics DDR could become and opportunity in giving children and youth a political voice. However, this is not confined to be formally mentioned in peace

agreements, this mean to find the channels in which children and youth can participate and enhance positively their agency and resilience. It is recognized that children and youth have the capacity to cope with the adversity, therefore in conflict affected settings there is a need to leverage this capacity in integrated them in DDR. Furthermore, in recognizing that DDR is a political process but also a social engineering is recognized the political agency of children as participants in conflicts and in this sense it is necessary to hear their voices and program and construct DDR through their lens and perceptions.

The IDDRS has claimed the need to consulted children and youth in all the stages of DDR in order to consider how programs affect their "best interest". However, the evidence from this study suggests that the best interest cannot be built from the top-down, instead it is needed to ask them about their need and concerns and understanding the "best interest" through their lens.

Conflicts underlie asymmetries in which combatants exert relations of power, in the same way children that gain positions and power under armed groups exert an everyday power as it is reflected in Liberia. This study has examined how children and youth accommodate their daily lives in hidden spaces while they are seen as victims or spoilers. However, post conflict settings cannot reinforce these asymmetries, and power cannot be rejected. Thus, it is necessary to find the spaces in which children and youth can exercise this power towards more positive and transformative actions. If children and youth can cope with adversity they can also cope with welfare.

DDR as a part of a wider peacebuilding project does not follow steps, it is seen that there is no magic blueprint, instead it need to be customised not only into specific contexts but also to specific agents.in which children and youth experiences play a primordial role an avoid future exclusion or re-marginalization of any political, economy or social order.

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