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DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION
Identifying lessons for Colombia

Ma. Dissertation
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Johannesburg, November, 2017

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Sergio Salazar Pinzón

14 day of November, 2017

Acronyms

ACP	Alternative Career Certification Programmes
ACR	*Alta Consejería para la Reintegración Social y Económica* (High Counselling for Reintegration Office), Later called *Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración* (Colombian Agency for Reintegration)
AI	Amnesty International
ADEMIMO	*Associação de Deficientes Militares de Moçambique* (Mozambique Association for Disabled Soldiers)
AGEMODE	*Agência Moçambicana de Desmovilizados*
AMODEG	*Associação Moçambicana dos desmobilizados da guerra*
ANAPO	*Alianza Nacional Popular* (Popular National Alliance)
APLA	Pan-African Congress People's Liberation Army
AU	African Union
AUC	*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-defences of Colombia)
BCN	*Bloque Cacique Nutibara*
BHG	*Bloque Héroes de Granada*
CNCP	*Centro Nacional de Convivencia y Paz* (National Centre for Coexistence and Peace)
CNRR	*Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación* (National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation)
CODA	*Certificado Operativo de Dejación de Armas* (Operative Certificate for weapons give in)
CRS	*Corriente de Renovación Socialista* (Socialist Renovation Movement)
CSC	Supervising and Monitoring Commission
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CTI	*Cuerpo Técnico de Investigaciones* (Technical Investigations Body)
DAS	*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (Security Administrative Department)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ELN	*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army)
EPL	*Ejército Popular de Liberación* (People's Liberation Army)
ERP	*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army)
EU	European Union

FARC-EP	*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army)
FRELIMO	*Frente para la Liberação de Moçambique* (Liberation Front for Mozambique)
GIAT	*Grupo Interinstitucional Antiterrorismo* (Antiterrorism Inter-institutional Group)
GPA	General Peace Agreement
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICBF	*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Institute for Family Well-being)
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
ILO	International Labour Organization
INTERPOL	International Police
IOM	International Organization for Migrations
M-19	*Movimiento 19 de Abril*
MAPP	*Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz* (Support Mission for the Peace Process)
MK	*Umkhonto We Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation)
MK/SDU	MK Special Duties Unit
MIR-COAR	*Movimiento Independiente Revolucionario – Comandos Armados* (Independent Revolutionary Movement – Armed Comandos)
MPPP	*Milicias Populares del Pueblo y para el Pueblo* (Popular Militias from and for the People)
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
OAS	Organization of American States
ONUMOZ	United Nations' Operation in Mozambique
PAHD	*Programa de Atención Humanitaria al Desmovilizado* (Humanitarian Attention Program for Demobilised People)
PAR	*Programa de Atención al Proceso de Reintegración*
PCC	Communist Colombian Party
PROPAZ	*Associação Instituto de promoção de paz de Moçambique*
PRT	*Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (Workers' Revolutionary Party)
RENAMO	*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Mozambican National Resistance)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANDF	South African National Defence Force

SC	Service Corps
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNHCC	United Nations High Commissioner for Colombia

Abstract

DDR involves three main elements: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration. It supports the transition from war to a peaceful scenario by ensuring a safe environment, supporting the transition of ex-combatants back into civilian life, and enabling people to earn livelihoods through peaceful means instead of war (Fusato, 2003:1). Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-combatants are some of the first steps taken during the transition from war to peace. Demilitarization and civilianization reveal not just the type of citizen which is expected in a democratic society, but also reveal how the process of becoming a citizen entails both satisfactory and traumatic experiences for ex-combatants and communities.

Colombia's DDR process shows how local programmes can be well conceived. But those "well conceived" programmes face difficulties because of the particular conditions of the country. Moreover, challenges such as the presence of *bandas* and *combos* and an ongoing war seem to be unique to the Colombian situation. Nevertheless, some lessons can be learned from international cases. The Mozambican and South African processes are also useful because of their differences and similarities. Their post-conflict processes occurred under different political circumstances and with different practices for reintegrating ex-combatants. The usefulness of the comparison of South Africa and Mozambique will receive due attention.

In most cases application of lessons depends on the political will of governments, institutions, ex-combatants and civil society. All those actors must be involved and have important roles to play. The context can also determine strategies and the way the policies are implemented. The strategic and general approaches outlined in the research report require a practical "operationalization" which will ensure the success of DDR in countries like Colombia.

Acknowledgments

The author wants to acknowledge the assistance and support provided by institutions and individuals without whose help this research would have been impossible.

In Africa Professor Philip Frankel from the University of the Witwatersrand was particularly helpful, and I thank him for his support as supervisor and for his confidence in me. Also, on the last stage of the writing, Professor Daryl Glaser was very helpful pointing out some important aspects to improve the final version of the dissertation, and Thandeka Ndebele, at the Department of Political Studies, was very supportive in order to overcome the administrative procedures required by the university. The University of the Witwatersrand, through the Postgraduate Merit Award, was especially helpful too.

I would also like to also thank the following people for their insights and generosity: Richard Smith and Hugo van der Merwe from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively, Salomão Mungoi and Jacinta Jorge from PROPAZ in Maputo, and Ana Leão from the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria. Samuel Tafula from *Asociação de Desmovilizados de Guerra* AMODEG in Maputo, Taciana Lopes, Armando Fulane, and all the participants in the regional conference *"O papel do Ex combatente Na Construção da Paz em Países de Pos Conflito – África Austral".* Hilton W. E. Johnson and Jeremy Jung for their careful reading and editing which was very supportive during the writing of this paper. Anthony Prangley and the guests of the 42 A house in Johannesburg, for their illuminating words and the countless conversations that opened up a wider picture of South Africa.

In Colombia Gustavo Villegas Restrepo, Silvia Montañés and Mario Velásquez from the Peace and Reconciliation Programme, for their confidence in me and the institutional support which played an important role in the first and last stages of this research. Mariano Humberto Zea for showing a decisive point of view on the processes of DDR and the conflict in Colombia, and with him all the ex-combatants I talked to either in Colombia, South Africa and Mozambique. At the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* professor Gisela Vanegas was enlightening and her insights helped the author to understand the risks of working in peace building in a country like Colombia. In Bogotá, Darío Villamizar and his team at the Reintegration Programme of the District were most supportive in helping me to understand the different challenges faced by Colombia regarding the demobilisation and reintegration of former guerrilla fighters.

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Introduction

DDR

For those who have been interested in processes of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR), the political and social relevance of such processes may be self-evident. However this is not the case for the majority of people, including some of those who work in the implementation of policies and programmes related to DDR. The first question I had to face when I proposed to undertake research on the issue was: Why are DDR processes important? A first argument comes from the fact that, in general, post-conflict societies experience considerable increases in crime and violence, which can contribute to the breaking of peace agreements or generate new types of armed confrontations. There are three possible origins of this violence: sectors that are adverse to the peace process, dissatisfied ex-combatants, or networks of organized crime, warlords or terrorist groups. Some authors point out the importance of reinforcing and resuming disarmament processes to prevent these sectors from accessing small arms (Ugarriza, 2010: 144). DDR address some of these issues. But, in order to give a proper answer to this question we first have to explain what we mean by DDR.

Although DDR may be seen as an integral and indivisible process which is part of post-conflict peace-making and peace building, it is more complex and it involves three main elements: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, all of which are related to the concept of demilitarisation. DDR supports the transition from war to a peaceful scenario by ensuring a safe environment, supporting the transition of ex-combatants back into civilian life, and enabling people to earn livelihoods through peaceful means instead of war (Fusato, 2003:1). Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-combatants are some of the first steps taken during the complex transition from war to peace. According to Uppsala University's database regarding armed conflicts, 37% of the peace accords reached from 1975 to 2011 included dispositions related to DDR processes (Fundación Ideas para la Paz, 2014: 2). It is also important to underline that demilitarization can be used during peaceful times to reduce the size of armed forces and redistribute public spending.

As Meek and Malan pointed out, "in the past few years we have witnessed an evolution in the conceptualization and implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes by the wide range of actors who are drawn into such activities: broadly speaking the United Nations (UN) and its agencies, donors, technical assistance organizations and non-governmental organizations" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 1). In fact, the general issues of DDR have been raised by some researchers, and one can find some publications about the "lessons" from experiences in Africa, Central America and some others. Nevertheless, these types of publications tend to focus their attention on the lessons around specific case studies and their contribution to general DDR issues and not the way in which those particular lessons could be applied to solve specific problems in particular cases.

Given the need to unify the criteria for the implementation of DDR programs, about fifteen agencies attached to United Nations met and formed the Inter Agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG-DDR), which created what is known as the UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS / 2004) which is the roadmap under which programs of DDR should ideally be designed, implemented and evaluated. The

document is based in the lessons (mistakes and successes) and good practices derived from the experiences of each agency in this field, which after being socialized were translated into a large collection of policies, guidelines and procedures for the planning, implementation and monitoring of programs of DDR emphasizing key issues such as awareness raising, food security, gender equity, "child combatants", health and serious illness (Fundación Ideas para la Paz, 2014: 2). Nonetheless, the IDDRS are just guidelines that should be evaluated for their applicability in every context.

In addition to UN efforts, the Government of Sweden led the Stockholm Initiative on DDR (SIDDR / 2004-2006) to identify the errors and weaknesses of DDR processes and to contribute to the creation of a reference framework for the planning and effective implementation of these programs. One of the main contributions of the initiative in this regard is the adoption of a more "holistic vision of reintegration", oriented not only to address the immediate needs of the demobilized but also their expectations and aspirations for the future (idem: 3).

In the case of Colombia, the First International Congress on DDR was organized through the High Council for Reintegration (ACR), based on its own recent experience and with the aim of improving its strategies in DDR processes, and the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR), which operated until 2010. This event was held in the city of Cartagena in 2009 and one of its main results was the publication of The Cartagena Contribution to DDR (Cartagena Contribution), a broad document whose purpose was to strengthen and expand what has been done with SIDDR and IDDRS, especially with regard to the adoption of a maximalist approach in which DDR processes understood not so much from the technical and traditional militarist point of view, but as integral processes that are articulated to more ambitious and long-term goals of social and economic development, social governance, reform of the security system, institutional strengthening, justice and reconciliation (idem: 3).

For analytical purposes it is useful to distinguish between the three phases of DDR. Even though each phase is characterized by different goals, and different actors are involved, these phases should not be considered in isolation or ordered in a chronological sequence. In a more realistic sense, there are different stages in a DDR Program which overlap and are implemented in parallel, in different locations, and targeting different groups (Fusato, 2003: 4). "Disarming and the control of weapons is often the first and most symbolic step in the transformation from a military to a civilian life" (Cilliers, 1995: 5). It is also often the first step in demobilisation. As Fusato points out, disarmament is important not only for the material improvement of security conditions, but also for its psychological impact. There are added psychological benefits when ex-combatants physically disable their own weapons and are led by their commanders upon entering the disarmament site. Symbolically, the process underscores the transition from military to civilian life. Additionally, public destruction of weapons is an important tool in sensitizing the population and promoting the DDR program (Fusato, 2003: 5).

Demobilisation, the second component of DDR, can be defined as "the process through which armed forces of a government and [or] opposition parties shed themselves of excess personnel" (Cilliers, 1995: 5), usually after an armed conflict. It includes the dismantling of military units and the transition from military to civilian life. It involves the cantonment, disarmament, pre discharge orientation, discharge, transportation, post discharge orientation of former combatants, usually linked with some type of compensation package and/or assistance programme including cash payments, housing assistance, health support, and education support (Cilliers, 1995; Colletta et al, 1996). Demobilisation

often includes short term social reintegration assistance and is normally executed by the military, frequently in co-operation with the donor community, the larger international community or development agencies and non-government organisations (Cilliers, 1995: 5). Following on from this process, there is a longer term social reintegration, which is "a typically civilian activity [that] attempts to wean the combatant from the military" (idem: 5). During this stage the state, the community, the family and the ex-combatant are involved in the process.

For ex-combatants, families and communities alike, "reintegration is a continuous, long-term process that takes place on social, political and economic levels. Social and political reintegration is broadly defined as the acceptance of an ex-combatant and his or her family by the host community and its leaders. Economic reintegration implies the financial independence of an ex-combatant's household through productive and gainful employment" (Colletta et al, 1996: 18). This process is necessary to prevent a new escalation of the conflict. In the short term, ex-combatants who do not find peaceful ways of making a living are likely to return to conflict or to join criminal organizations. In the longer term, disaffected veterans can play an important role in destabilizing the social order and polarizing the political debate, becoming easy targets of populist, reactionary, and extremist movements (Fusato, 2003: 6).

Demilitarization is the process of dismantling the physical instruments of conflict, namely the military and its weaponry (Alden, 2000:1). According to Jakkie Cilliers, "the assembly, disarmament, demobilisation and integration of combatants into either civilian society or a single military or police force, inevitably forms part of peace negotiations" (1995: 4). In a post conflict environment, demilitarization represents the clearest expression of opposing parties' desire to resolve their dispute through peaceful means. Nevertheless, recent works argue that demilitarisation, and subsequently DDR, is also an alternative way of achieving security vis-a-vis the conventional military, pointing out that, after September 11, 2001 the military response "has in fact made the world less secure rather than more secure" (Geoff, 2004: vii). As Geoff pointed out, demilitarisation "first means a significant and sustained reduction in the power and influence of the military indicated by reductions in military expenditure, military personnel and force protection. Force protection refers to the effectiveness or capacity of a military which, it should be noted, could increase at the same time as personnel numbers fall if men are replaced by heavy weapons. Second, demilitarisation is a process of working towards a society which emphasizes the nonviolent resolution of conflicts and personal and social justice" (Geoff, 2004: 3). Once again, demilitarisation is not an option exclusively for post-conflict societies, but also for peaceful societies which want to implement a security strategy beyond the military.

There is an important connection between DDR and democracy, especially in terms of democracy-building and democracy-strengthening. This is true even if we consider conservative (or classic) definitions of democracy. Regarding the principal "ingredients of democracy" for Africa, Busia (1967) noted that democracy implies: universal adult suffrage in periodical elections, a recognized opposition, the Rule of Law, and the enforcement of fundamental Human Rights. Nevertheless, these elements also implicate another set of principles. "Democracy is founded on respect for the human being -every human being". And he adds:

> "Respect for the dignity of man carries other implications besides the principle that the dignity of all men should be equally respected. Democracy has other values which derive from the same source. Every man, according to democratic belief, should have certain civil

> liberties without which no social order can be characterized as democratic. Within broad limits, every man should have a say in how he is governed; he should be free to criticize his government, and be protected from arbitrary action against him by his government [...] A citizen in a democratic system must at least be assured of his freedom of speech, of assembly, of conscience and of the person" (Busia, 1967: 94)

Briefly, the liberties of citizens in a democratic society are expressed in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. It is also assumed that democracy implies the regulation of conflict in a non-violent way. In this context, we can see the necessity of improving democracy in Colombia (or, as some Colombian analysts have proposed "democratise democracy"), and DDR processes seem to be a key element in this quest. Besides, the immediate causes of continued organized violence in Colombia cannot be explained just by the illegal economy and the availability of resources. The weaknesses of the political system to represent some social sectors, and its inability to meet their demands, are in turn proximate / institutional causes and systemic / structural causes. In addition to the obvious connection between the availability of illegal funding resources and the persistence of armed groups in the country, we also find a connection between weak democracy and violence: the historical disconnection of the political system by important sectors of the Colombian population - or their relationships and clientelistic and co-opting networks, and the inability to promote well-being and material security contribute to the continuation of the armed conflict (González; Leal and Dávila; Martz; quoted by Ugarriza, Martínez and Gutiérrez, 2014: 16).

Although Colombia is not facing a typical process of democratisation, it seems clear that the country is going through a process of improving the already existing democracy. This is happening through efforts to include opposition (armed) groups, negotiations and implementing the peace accords. All this can be seen as a process of transition and even democratisation. According to Liebenberg, the route to democratisation can face some important challenges:

> "The opening up of **public space**, i.e. the rise of civil society and its manifest, presumably non-violent activities, is not an irreversible phenomenon. In terms of the pervading **uncertainty** surrounding the transition to democracy an attempted return to the authoritarian 'old order' can take place. [...It] could also simply be acts of co-ordinated or diffused armed activities or terrorism." (Liebenberg, 1994: 118. Emphasis in the original)

This is why some scholars suggest that democratic development is not a uniform, linear process: even in democratic countries, transitions unfold with occasional steps back (Bratton, 1997: 67 – 68).

Nevertheless, as the Cartagena Contribution points out, democratization alone may not be enough. While the transitions from war to peace take place under the auspices of the United Nations, often offer challenges to rebuild or build democratic institutions. Although they are important for inclusion policies and good governance in the long term, the influences of electoral competition, triggered by the early democratization can create dangerous social pressures. What matters is that ordinary citizens are released through "public management" at the political centre, as well as that they have have significant participation and commitments. The fundamental objective of such efforts is to foster a shared and active identity as citizens, within democratic structures that promote participation and ensure the protection of the rights of minorities (Colletta, Nat J. et al, 2009: 57).

Demilitarisation and civilianisation, in the context of transition to democracy, are sensible issues that reveal not just the type of citizen which is expected in a democratic society, but also reveal how the process of becoming a citizen is a difficult one, which entails both rewarding and traumatic experiences for ex-combatants and communities. In this regard, the criminalization of ex-combatants can be explained, to some extent, as a weak process of civilianisation. As the World Bank recognises, "failure to achieve reintegration can lead to considerable insecurity at the societal and individual levels, including rent-seeking through the barrel of a gun" (Colletta et al., 1996: 18). For a society in transition, and one which is moving towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts, high levels of crime represent a real challenge for the state, since the state is expected to protect the integrity and property of the citizens. Therefore, if a state is supposed to be or to become democratic, it should be capable of assuring certain levels of stability, safety and basic services. These kinds of problems, related to security issues and the well-being of ex-combatants and communities, while also closely linked to the improvement of democracy, could be avoided through an appropriate implementation of DDR. Furthermore, they can be solved, at least partially, if the policymakers take into account previous experiences which are related to the particular issues in case.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration pose different challenges: "it has been extremely hard to collect all the weapons [in most of the processes], even at the end of an armed struggle, when the remaining conditions of societal insecurity create high incentives for the maintenance and acquisition of small arms and light weapons by former combatants and the community at large [...] demobilisation and reintegration [...] pose [...] both quantitative and qualitative [challenges]. The quantitative dimension is the tangible side of the process and can be measured by counting the number of soldiers reporting to assembly areas, turning in weapons and being relocated. [...] The qualitative dimension is harder to grasp and has to do with reversing the indoctrination of militaristic ideologies and values, including violence as a means of conflict resolution." (Meek and Malan, 2004: 2 – 3). Nonetheless, an adequate process of reintegration may be seen as an opportunity to build conditions for peaceful conflict resolution, due to the fact that institutions and civil society may join ex-combatants who know many hidden factors of community conflicts that must be addressed in order to prevent violence.

Finally, as Frankel pointed out "as with democracy-building in general, much depends on the extent to which civil leadership regards demilitarization and civilianization as political imperatives in the vast constellation of public policy issues", and "civilianization ultimately requires a strong civil society working through institutional channels" (Frankel, 2000: 140). This is why this dissertation focuses not just on the existence or absence of political will, but also on the dynamics of the processes involved, which includes the involvement of communities and the society at large.

The research

The idea of developing this paper and of presenting research on this topic was not something planned and the initial intention was never to systematise or write about the experience the author gained while working for the Colombian government. However, the valuable first hand experiences in Colombia helped to understand DDR processes and generated an increasing interest around the possibilities and challenges offered by this type of process. The first approach to this kind of work took place through

the *"Programa para la Reincorporación a la Civilidad"*[1] managed by the Municipality of Medellín - one of the areas where the conflict is more active, as will be explained later. The Programme has developed a qualitative proposal for monitoring the impact of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants to the city. During the first weeks after the Programme was created, in October 2003, the concerns were especially directed at the communities rather than to the ex-combatants themselves. At the time, one of the greatest issues and fears in the minds and hearts of the population in Medellín was the impact that the demobilisation process was going to have on their communities involved. The Programme began just before the disarmament and demobilisation of the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* (BCN), the branch of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC)[2] in Medellín. The Programme was meant to implement DDR strategies for the BCN.

Even though the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was in charge of an external monitoring programme for the reintegration of the AUC in Colombia, including Medellín, the municipality decided to have its own monitoring system, mainly based on ethnographic research. The questions that were to be answered through the monitoring system were aimed at detecting and understanding the urban impact and the socio-political effects of the process of reintegration. Variables like changes in the situation of the communities, the levels of pacification and security, the responses of armed groups in the city, the dynamics of *bandas* and *combos*[3], ceasefire verification, implementation of the "democratic security" policies[4] in the areas left by the AUC, the degree to which the ex-combatants' demands were being satisfied according to governmental expectations, and others. The sources expected to give information on these issues included NGOs, community based organisations, armed actors (including guerrillas, paramilitaries, police and the National Army), universities, research centres, governmental institutions and public servants.

During this time at work, the author gained access to a broad range of information sources. The work implied direct contact with ex-combatants and communities, members of gangs, non-demobilised paramilitaries, demobilised and non-demobilised guerrilla members, personnel working in the DDR process and officials from various departments. Similarly, it required close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace in Colombia, the Organisation of American States (OAS), which was in charge of the verification of the implementation of the peace accords, the IOM and some scholars. Valuable media reports were also accessible to the author. At a later stage two things became clear: that the information and experience gained through the work in Colombia could and should be systematised and analysed; and that, by understanding other DDR processes the strategies in Colombia could be significantly improved. Therefore, the question of this research experience is to find differences and similarities, and based on these, to identify lessons that may be applied in order to solve

1 Reintegration to Civilian Life Programme, later transformed to the Peace and Reconciliation Programme. This Programme is part of the Municipality of Medellín, but also takes orders from the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, who is the body in charge of negotiations between the Colombian Government and the "illegal armed groups" (FARC – EP, ELN, AUC).

2 United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia, a paramilitary army seeking contra-insurgence political status.

3 *Bandas* and *combos* are, in Medellín, used to refer to different kinds of gangs. To see the characterization of these gangs, see chapter 1.

4 Álvaro Uribe Vélez, current president of Colombia, is implementing his programme called "Democratic Security" which was his compromise during his electoral campaign.

some of the challenges that the Colombian process is facing today[5] and hopefully build broader lessons that could be useful in other conflict resolution efforts.

The limited access to information was the first challenge faced when trying to determine which DDR processes should be explored in this research. It became one of the criteria to choose some certain cases while discarding others. It was clear that access to the same kind of information available in Colombia was not possible in other countries, and the methodology was going to limit the validity of the research, or at least limit, to some extent, the conclusions. Therefore, the methodological approach adopted should allow access both to a broad range of case studies as well as to go deeper and study other cases in more detail. The first and last stages of this research, therefore, took place in Colombia. Meanwhile, the second stage was developed in Africa through an approach that combined literature review and fieldwork. The fieldwork was planned in order to look in more detail at what was being discovered during the 'academic' stage, when extensive documentary research took place. Fieldwork, due to time and budgetary constraints, was limited to the case of Mozambique, with a few interviews also taking place in South Africa. However, it is important to note that during an international conference[6] in Maringué district in Mozambique information about experiences of DDR was obtained through ex-combatants from Angola, Zambia, Swaziland, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi and Bosnia & Herzegovina, who were discussing the issues of reintegration and their role in peace building. Some of the impressions gathered will be discussed later on.

In South Africa valuable data was collected from researchers at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) and from the University of South Africa (UNISA), both in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In Mozambique the fieldwork was more intense, and some time was spent talking to academics, ex-combatants, "experts" and researchers. Also institutions such as the *Associação Instituto de Promoção da Paz* (PROPAZ), *Associação Moçambicana de Desmovilizados de Guerra* (AMODEG), *Agencia Moçambicana de Desmovilizados* (AGEMODE), *Associação de Deficientes Militares de Moçambique* (ADEMIMO), were contacted as well as Mozambican citizens. The fieldwork took place in Maputo and in the Nhamatanda and Maringué districts in Sofala province. Although the perspectives and viewpoints of politicians could be seen as something very relevant in understanding the topic under discussion, these were not deeply explored because this dissertation focuses mainly on the experiences and challenges as expressed by the ex-combatants themselves and academics who have done research in the topic. However, these perspectives are touched upon within the research through interviews with individuals who have a deep understanding of the political issues concerned.

Finally, it is important to note that given the sensitivity of the issues discussed, some names of the people who openly and generously offered their time and information are not disclosed.

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5 A first unpublished draft of this paper was prepared in 2006, when the process of DDR of paramilitaries was still at its first stages. Nonetheless, the paper remained unfinished until this last version in 2017, when the process with paramilitaries is considered almost finished but the process with FARC-EP is at its first stage (assembly of combatants in the so called *Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización* - Transitional Normalization Village Areas). The process with FARC-EP is even more propitious for this kind of analysis, as the peace accord calls for adjustments in the DDR strategy.

6 *"Conférencia regional O papel do ex combatente na construção da paz em países de pós conflito – Africa Austral"* Nhamatanda and Maringué, Mozambique, December 14 – 16, 2005.

The chapters

The first chapter presents the context of DDR in Colombia, focusing on the general history of the armed conflict, the emergence of the "illegal armed groups"[7] and the case of the DDR programmes in Medellín and Bogotá. It also presents some of the challenges raised by this process. At the end of the chapter some of the issues and challenges raised by the Colombian process are highlighted in order to have them in mind when the international experiences are referred to.

The second chapter presents the political economy of DDR in Colombia. The last process of DDR of the AUC which took place from 2003 to 2017 is explored, as well as some aspects of the process of FARC and ELN that did not respond to a negotiation but to individual desertions. Those two processes were parallel and in political terms had very different implications. After the recent peace agreement between FARC and the Colombian government DDR have new political implications for Colombia. Some aspects of this new-born process are highlighted. The political economy is understood here to mean the study of the social relations within the economic structure; or as Isaak Illich Rubin pointed out, "the relation between *people to people* in the productive process" (Rubin, quoted by Ohrstedt, 2006: 9. Emphasis in the original).

Third chapter focuses on international experiences of DDR, paying special attention to what has been called the "lessons". Emphasis is placed on the Mozambican process, and to some extent, the South African experience. The Mozambican and South African processes are useful because of their differences and similarities. Their post-conflict processes occurred under different circumstances both, at the political level and regarding the practices for reintegration of ex-combatants at the social level. This is not to say that the circumstances of every single case will be explored in depth or that other process in Africa and overseas have been forgotten. The aim is not to know entirely the issues and lessons of DDR, or to give an exhaustive account of challenges, difficulties, successes and failures, but rather to find out some particular experiences that can add to the design and implementation of the DDR processes in Colombia. In this sense, the discussion is not just about looking for successful experiences or at "what is to be done", but also at the problems that other processes have suffered and how they can be avoided.

In most cases, the possible application of the lessons depends on the political will of governments, institutions, ex-combatants and civil society. The context can also condition strategies and the way the policies are implemented. Every case is different from the others, and those differences may shape the results of a particular strategy. What worked in a place may be problematic in other place. The fourth chapter will discuss the possible applicability of the lessons to the Colombian case. Finally, I will present some conclusions, discussing the value of these types of analyses.

7 Guerrillas and paramilitaries are called "illegal armed groups" by the government. They are groups with an identifiable structure with different levels of command. This definition gives them a political status and the possibility of negotiate vis-a-vis the government. It also makes them able to access the benefits offered by law, like special legal treatment and the reintegration programmes.

Chapter 1
Colombia's DDR process

This chapter will discuss the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants that is currently taking place in Colombia. It will focus specifically on the DDR process of the AUC and present the case of Medellín. It will discuss the general issues that are occurring in Colombia including a brief contextualisation of the Colombian armed conflict followed by a discussion of the DDR processes in Medellín and Bogotá. At the end of the chapter some of the issues and challenges raised by the Colombian process are highlighted in order to have them in mind when the international experiences are referred to.

The Colombian conflict

After about than 60 years of armed conflict, Colombia has had several peace agreements between the government and guerrillas. All of them have been partial and have taken place during conflict circumstances. None of them have been the result of an entire post conflict situation. To understand this, and the current process of DDR, which is the first such process between the government and paramilitary forces, it is necessary to contextualise the Colombian conflict[8].

In general terms, the modern political history of Colombia can be characterized by a succession of wars. In between periods of war, the country has experienced short, relatively peaceful periods. As a national phenomenon the succession of wars began at the same moment as the definition of the territory as a free independent nation. From 1810, the official beginning of the independence struggle, the country has known the tragedy of civil wars or "domestic conflicts" as manifestations of political, economic and social interests confronting different groups. The contemporary conflict in Colombia is deeply marked by the emergence of guerrilla groups such as the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)*[9] and others like *Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19)*[10], *Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL)*[11], *Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)*[12], *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame*[13] and others.

After the many civil wars during the 19th century, the two traditional political parties (liberal and conservative) waged their last armed confrontation during the period of *La Violencia* (1946 to 1965,

8 Although the process with FARC-EP is about to begin while this paper is written, we refer to the process with paramilitaries and individual guerrilla men, because the process with FARC is not yet clear and combatants are just arriving to assembly areas.

9 Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia – People's Army. FARC – EP or simply FARC.

10 19th April Movement.

11 People's Liberation Army.

12 National Liberation Army.

13 Armed Movement Quintín Lame.

although authors disagree about both dates) which caused approximately 180,000 deaths in a country of some 13 million citizens (UNDP, 2004: 25). The end of inter-party violence came about in three stages. First, the amnesty of Rojas Pinilla (1953) which demobilized the guerrillas in the Eastern Plains. Secondly, the National Front, a 1957 pact which established parity between both parties, leading to the demobilisation of the remaining Liberal Party guerrillas and bands of Conservative killers ("*pájaros*" or "birds"). Finally, there came some years of transition from organised war to "social violence" which implies social and cultural decomposition leading to banditry - a phenomenon which endured until halfway through the government of Valencia (1962 to 1966) (idem: 26).

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia FARC-EP[14]

The "reinvention" of the war was notable especially in the case of the FARC, which emerged out of the marriage between those peasant guerrillas who were not demobilized by the National Front, and the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) which did not find a space for itself in the "centre" of the political system (UNDP, 2004: 28). By 1961 the PCC had declared that "the revolutionary path in Colombia could require a combination of all forms of struggle". After the violent occupation of Marquetalia and other "independent republics" by the National Army (1964), the self-defence groups were converted into a revolutionary army. That same year they set up the Southern Block which, in 1966, would be rechristened as FARC, ushering in what they called "a prolonged war for the taking of power". While the FARC was forming in the periphery, the PCC was being further excluded from the political system. After supporting the so-called "Revolution on the March", and having participated in peasant and trade union movements in the thirties and forties, the PCC was repressed during the time of *La Violencia* and declared illegal in 1954. The National Front prohibited members of third parties from participating in electoral campaigns and gaining access to government posts. This meant that a lot of urban cadres from the PCC joined the FARC. This new political vision took a clear form in the "8th Conference" (1982) when the FARC declared itself to be a Popular Army at the service of the socialist revolution: a project for conquering the centre of political power, while nonetheless acting from the periphery (UNDP, 2004: 28).

From November 4, 2012 to November 24, 2016 the Colombian government officially conducted negotiations with FARC in order to end the conflict. This is the most important advance to peace in the last 60 years, and negotiations ended with the signature of a peace agreement in Bogotá. The implementation of the agreement will define the political future of the country, and the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration is in its first stages while this paper is written.

Other guerrillas

The *Ejército de Liberación Nacional ELN* did not come into being as a peasant self-defence group but rather as a decidedly revolutionary guerrilla movement. In 1964, inspired by Cuba and the theories of Che Guevara, liberation theology and trade unionism, a group of activists from the PCC - the left wing of the Liberal Party - created a guerrilla "focus" in a rural area of Santander. Despite a certain

14 This section, as well as "other guerrillas" and "paramilitaries" is mainly based on the chapter 1 of UNDP (2004) *"El Conflicto, callejón con salida" Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, Colombia – 2003.* Editorial El Malpensante. Bogotá.

degree of infighting, purges and summary executions, this "focus" managed to take hold, penetrate the workers' struggles (especially among petrol workers) and enjoy a moment of glory when the priest Camilo Torres joined their ranks (1965). But the ELN did not prosper in the cities in part because of doctrinal reasons, because of power struggles within the movement, and because the State destroyed their urban network when they struck them a severe military blow in Anorí (1973), where they were practically annihilated. The movement remained basically a rural guerrilla group. This tendency became stronger in the mid-seventies when military pressure and the need for funds led the ELN to centre their efforts in bonanza areas (oil in the Magdalena River valley, North of Santander, Arauca and Casanare; bananas in Urabá; gold in the eastern part of Antioquia and the south of Bolívar) (UNDP, 2004: 28 – 29).

The ELN is at the present the major guerrilla group in Colombia after the peace agreement between FARC and the national government. Talks have been taking place between the government and the ELN in Ecuador during the last few months, but substantial advances have not been released and a ceasefire has not been reached yet.

The *Ejército Popular de Liberación EPL*, which was important in its time, was created when the general assembly of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party ordered the transfer of its leading cadres to the countryside. Created in 1967 and demobilized in 1991, the EPL, of Maoist orientation, managed to penetrate the peasant movement and had a significant presence in regions of Córdoba and Urabá. Various internal disagreements, clashes with members of the FARC and the dispute over territorial control with the emerging Self-Defence Forces led to a decrease in the number of troops, which led to their acceptance of the peace process and the creation of the political party called Hope, Peace and Freedom (*Esperanza, Paz y Libertad*).

The Government granted amnesty to the members of this organization, which ceased to exist since then as an armed group. The process with this movement was relatively successful, the great majority of the members reinserted themselves and they became part of a legal political organization; Others were marginalized from politics and returned to their places of origin (Herrera Berbel, 2013: 24). Nonetheless, a group called Libardo Mora Toro Front remained in the fight and even to this day they survive as a revolutionary organization that operates in a sector of the Catatumbo region, dedicated to drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping and other common criminal actions (Ibid.: 25).

A very different type of guerrilla organisation was the *Movimiento 19 de Abril M-19*. So different was it that, while the FARC and the ELN have never registered more than 2 or 3 percentage points in popularity polls, M-19 actually won 15% of public approval in surveys. In origin, it was more urban than the ELN. In 1970, as a result of the doubtful electoral defeat of General Rojas Pinilla, cadres from the traditional left joined activists from ANAPO – the general's populist-nationalist movement – to "recover power" by force. The M-19 specialized not so much in military actions but in opinion-winning strikes. These gave them a certain aura as a kind of "Robin Hood" like organisation. However, urban guerrillas were not destined to prosper in Colombia, due to strong police control in the cities. M-19 opted finally for rural struggle and began operations in the south. Their military project did not take root, firstly because of attacks by the Colombian army, secondly because they ran afoul of the Medellín Cartel, and thirdly, because their leaders perceived that they would gain more public support, and an excellent chance in politics if they gave up violent methods. Therefore, M-19 voluntarily demobilised in 1990. In the following elections for the Constituent Assembly, their list of candidates took first

place, with 27% of the vote; but by that time their movement as a guerrilla force no longer existed (UNDP, 2004: 29).

It can be affirmed that both the disarmament and the demobilization of the M-19 were to a certain point, successful processes, because the great majority of its members welcomed them. However, two factions remained as dissidents: the first, called the Jaime Bateman Cayón Movement, and the other, called the Omaira Montoya Front, which over time disintegrated or joined the FARC or the ELN in their areas of action, as well as the armed group JEGA (Jorge Eliécer Gaitán) (Herrera Berbel, 2013: 23).

The M-19 as well as EPL and other small groups like *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo ERP, Milicias Populares del Pueblo y para el Pueblo MPPP, Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame, Corriente de Renovación Socialista CRS, Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores PRT* and *Movimiento Independiente Revolucionario – Comandos Armados MIR-COAR,* and others, were demobilised between 1990 and 1998[15], while the war was still being waged against the FARC.

The paramilitaries

Irregular armed groups fighting against the guerrillas prefer to call themselves "self-defence" groups, while they are normally referred to as "paramilitaries". These two expressions differ in that the first indicates a spontaneous phenomenon of citizens' self-protection in the absence of the state, whereas the second suggests a combat corps parallel to the armed forces and to some degree in connivance with state agents. In Colombia, in fact, there has been a mixture of both, and therefore this paper – except where the context indicates the contrary – uses both terms interchangeably. Forms of paramilitarism go back to the 19th century. In the mid-20th century the "*chulavitas*"[16] and "*pájaros*" were also considered paramilitary groups[17]. Following this, self-defence movements came into legal (though disputed) existence in 1965, during the counterinsurgency strategy of the Cold War. These movements were the predecessors of the current form of paramilitarism in Colombia.

In the early eighties, however, a different type of paramilitarism arose that was neither "self-defence" nor state-controlled. These were private armies which owners of illegal industries (such as drug traffickers and emerald dealers) sponsored out of necessity. Having bought up large tracts of land, these "entrepreneurs of coercion" set about "cleaning out the guerrillas" in the Magdalena valley, and their example was followed by property-holders in Córdoba, Urabá and the Orinoco region. From local

15 See: *Acuerdo Político entre el Gobierno Nacional, los Partidos Políticos, el M-19 y la Iglesia Católica en Calidad de Tutora Moral y Espiritual del Proceso* (1990). Bogotá. Colombia; *Acuerdo Final entre el Gobierno Nacional y el Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* (1991). Caldono, Cauca. Colombia; *Acuerdo Final entre el Gobierno Nacional y el Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (1991). Ovas, Sucre. Colombia; *Acuerdo Final Gobierno Nacional – Ejército Popular de Liberación* (1991). Bogotá. Colombia; *Acuerdo entre los Comandos Ernesto Rojas y el Gobierno Nacional* (1992). Bogotá. Colombia; *Acuerdo Político Final Gobierno Nacional – Corriente de Renovación Socialista* (1994). Flor del Monte. Colombia; *Acuerdo Final Gobierno Nacional – Frente Francisco Garnica de la Coordinadora Guerrillera* (1994). Cañaveral. Colombia; *Acuerdo Final Gobierno Nacional – Movimiento Independiente Revolucionario – Comandos Armados* (1998). Medellín. Colombia.

16 The *chulavitas* were probably the first manifestation of modern self-defense groups encouraged by the Colombian government during the early stages of *La Violencia.*

17 See: Chapter 1 of UNDP (2004). *"El Conflicto, callejón con salida" Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, Colombia – 2003.* Editorial El Malpensante. Bogotá.

beginnings, some of these groups joined forces to become The United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia (AUC). However, the best that can be said of them is that they came about as a national project, from the grassroots upwards, and subject to intense internal tensions. In other words, although they adopted a "political" discourse of national ambitions, the paramilitaries are a local response to the guerrillas and, like them, belong mainly to the rural areas. Nevertheless, since 1999 the paramilitaries "colonized" urban areas, especially in Montería, Medellín, Bogotá, Cali, Santa Marta and Cartagena. Actually, in the last eight years before their demobilisation the country has suffered a transformation that is called the "narco-paramilitarization" of society and politics[18].

Armed conflict in Medellín

As mentioned above, the Colombian armed conflict was a predominantly rural phenomenon. However, this does not mean that the cities have been unaffected by the dynamics of the war. The guerrillas have always aimed to increase their power and control over the main cities, namely Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Santa Marta, Riohacha, Cúcuta, Pereira and Cartagena. Other minor cities have also had their presence but to a lesser degree. Although paramilitaries grew out of a response to guerrillas in the countryside, they have also gained some control and influence over the cities. Medellín is an important example of urban, armed conflict because of its complexity and levels of violence.

During the decade of the 70s, Medellín had become the second most important city in Colombia with the highest rate of economic growth and remarkable industrial development, especially in textiles. This fact made the city particularly attractive for peasants who had been displaced from the countryside, either for economic reasons or because of the impact of the armed conflict. This population settled on the outskirts of the city, creating new neighbourhoods of working class, but also informal settlements. These areas of Medellín became known as *"comunas"*[19]- an equivalent to the famous Brazilian *favelas*. The *comunas* had, for a long time, a lack of proper infrastructure and the presence of the state was and still is precarious to say the least.

The problems and social contradictions in the city were manifested in the *comunas* in many different ways. Unemployment and poverty were the first symptoms. While the guerrillas found fertile soil for the propagation of their ideology and for the consolidation of groups for subversive resistance, the drug trade was becoming the better economic option for the youth of the *comunas*. Drug trafficking implied the emergence of clandestine networks created to protect the drug trade and money laundering. The illegal economy required armed means to protect the business. Furthermore, at the end of the Cold War the FARC and other guerrilla groups saw the end of international economic support. Because of this, some armed groups decided to get involved in the drug business in order to sustain their armies.

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18 The narco-paramilitarization of society and politics has been colloquially understood as a way of thinking or a logic justifying through discourse the acts of paramilitaries and the use of money coming from drug trafficking related activities. It is the normalization of extreme violence as a way to "protect" the country and the cities from the communists.

19 The term, "*comuna*" is applied, by the local government, to indicate an administrative division. Technically a *comuna* is a group of neighbourhoods, and all the city is divided in *comunas*. Nevertheless, the term is used by the population in order to indicate the poorest neighbourhoods where the social conflicts have been more notorious: unemployment, poverty, armed conflict, violence.

Trafficking encouraged the emergence and strengthening of *bandas* and *combos*, who were usually hired to work for the drug lords. *Bandas* and *combos* are different kinds of gangs. The *combos* are groups without a defined structure in terms of command, and their members are placed in a horizontal structure, at the same level; meanwhile, the term *bandas* applies to those gangs with a clear structure, levels of command, a leader and subordinates. A third term is used in Medellín in order to describe another form of criminalisation: *parches*. The *parche* is a group of friends, especially children. It is a social space and becomes the door for delinquency and criminality. It is from within the *parche* that many children have their first contact with drugs and arms.

The struggles between *bandas, combos,* guerrillas and paramilitaries for territorial control made it difficult to distinguish and characterise the nature of the groups (narco-guerrillas, narco-paramilitaries, organised crime, etc.). In fact, since the early stages of the urban conflict, there was a certain degree of mobility of individuals from one group to another. People changed from a group to the opposite if it was seen as convenient in order to achieve personal interests.

In the late 1990s, the war against drugs, lead by the Colombian and United States governments, resulted in the dismantling of the Medellín Cartel and the military (transitory) defeat of the drug lords. By this time the guerrillas, including the FARC, controlled most of the *comunas* in Medellín, although the FARC was negotiating peace with the government of Andrés Pastrana in the Caguán region. With the breakdown of the negotiations on February 20, 2002, the reaction of the Colombian Armed Forces included the recovery of certain zones, including the *comunas* of Medellín. In 2002, two important military operations lead to the retaking of the *comunas* in the city: the Mariscal Operation, in the North-West Zone, and the Orion Operation in the Central-West Zone. These zones were strategically important for the trade of arms, drugs, ammunition and other supplies.

Both, the Orion and Mariscal operations demonstrated efficiency in debilitating the guerrillas in Medellín, but, during the following months, this permitted the consolidation and strengthening of the paramilitary groups, who took control of the territory formerly occupied by the guerrillas. Since 2000, and more rapidly since 2002, the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN),* the armed block of the AUC in Medellín, has gained territory and power through the incorporation of *bandas* and *combos*. In late 2002 the BCN controlled around 90% of the territory in Medellín, regulating all kinds of activities, from public transport to criminality[20].

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process

The process of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of AUC members represents the most important antecedent for future DDR processes in Colombia. And not only because it is the most recent and involves the largest number of ex-combatants, but because it is the first that takes place in a new international context that points out criteria and minimum standards that are impossible to ignore, as in

20 This does not mean that the Armed Forces of Colombia and the police did not have control over the same territory. The police and Armed Forces have avoided confrontation against paramilitaries, and if the BCN does not commit strong abuses against the population -at least strong enough to call the attention of the mass media or international organizations, combats were not suitable to take place. In fact, "this organization [AUC] defines itself as a "politico-military movement of an anti-subversive nature exercising the use of its right to legitimate defense and claiming transformations within the State, but *without attacking the State*""(AUC, 1997, quoted in UNDP, 2004: 42. Emphasis is mine).

the past. This process has resulted in a reintegration phase that also involves individual demobilised guerrilla combatants (Herrera Berbel, 2013: 49).

On august 7th, 2002, Alvaro Uribe Velez assumed the presidency of Colombia. His campaign's slogan was *"mano dura y corazón grande"* (hard hand and big heart), suggesting a strong military offensive against illegal armed forces, but also the will of negotiating peace and reintegrating those combatants who wish to leave the illegal armies (guerrillas and paramilitaries). Uribe was seen by the paramilitaries who will decisively fight against guerrillas. Officially, years ago his father was kidnapped and killed by FARC. Many thought this was one of the reasons why the AUC showed a willingness to negotiate peace with Uribe's government. Soon after assuming power Uribe appointed Luis Carlos Restrepo as High Commissioner for Peace, in charge of peace talks and negotiations with either guerrillas or paramilitaries who wished to do so.

In 2003 the intentions of the AUC were formalized. On the 23rd of July, the National Government and the AUC signed the first peace accord in Santa Fe de Ralito, Córdoba, agreeing to the total demobilisation of the AUC's troops before the 31st of December, 2005[21]. This was the beginning of the first negotiations between the Colombian government and a right wing army in the history of the country. Since the AUC have never aimed to confront the State and its structure, the negotiations focused mainly on the conditions of demobilisation, reintegration, political inclusion, amnesty and legal and economic benefits for the ex-combatants and commanders. As a first step, the accord established the guidelines for the first demobilisation ceremony which was to be held by the end of 2003.

The process of DDR that was about to take place had to be based on previous experiences and models implemented in the country, but those models had to be modified in order to fit the special conditions of the process. The general model, established by the law 418/1997, modified by the law 782/2002 and regulated by the decree 128/2003, is as follows:

1. The paramilitary group proceeds to the place chosen as a concentration zone (assembly area), where it is met by the delegates of the OAS' Mission and functionaries from the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace.

2. The combatants are divided into groups, and a kit for personal hygiene is handed over while measurements are taken for a later delivery of clothes. Everyone's documents and IDs are checked.

3. The combatants attend workshops directed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Justice about the benefits they'll receive in healthcare, education, humanitarian help, psycho-social assistance and legal issues.

4. Psychologists and social workers will provide workshops to generate confidence towards government, family and the environment the ex-combatants will live in. The workshops also aims to emphasise the importance and responsibility of the commitment taken.

21 This was the first deadline proposed, but since the process has had some crises during the last two and a half years, the deadline was postponed to the 15th of February, 2006.

5. The CTI[22] of the National Prosecutor Bureau identifies each person, including fingerprints and photographic register and analysis.

6. The National Authority for Registers issues ID cards for those who don't have them. The DAS[23] takes the necessary legal steps to issue the "judicial record" for those who don't have criminal records, and the Army provides the military cards[24].

7. The Antiterrorism Inter institutional Group (Giat), made up of members from the Army, the Police and DAS, collects and counts arms, ammunition, communication equipment and uniforms handed in by the group. All the material is kept in a safe place until the demobilisation ceremony.

8. The ceremony of disarmament takes place and every demobilised combatant goes to his/her zone of origin. Those who have criminal records related with war crimes and/or other atrocities go to Santa Fe de Ralito (zone for the peace negotiations between the government and the AUC) to await trial under the Peace and Justice Law. The arms are taken to the closest army base.

9. Those without pending trial enter the programme of productive projects managed by the High Counselling for Reintegration Office (ACR for its acronym in Spanish). They receive training and technical advice and credits to begin productive activity.

There is also the possibility to demobilise individuals who decide to leave their armies. The model has some differences:

1. The combatant (guerrilla or paramilitary) presents him/herself to any military or civilian authority.

2. He/she hands over any combat gear and equipment he/she might have, and receives a reward (money) from the Ministry of Defence.

3. The "voluntary surrender act" includes the recording of name, ID if he/she has one, place of hand over, and armed group of origin.

4. Right from the start the ex-combatant has the right to food and accommodation. He/she stays in the closest military base or police station, hopefully for not more than 8 days, and then He/she is taken to a final or transitory place of residence.

5. During their time at the military base or police station adult ex-combatants are interrogated by a sub official, in order to confirm his/her membership in the group he/she is claiming to be part of.

6. The PAHD[25] places him/her in a temporary home while the CODA[26] verifies if can access the benefits of the Reintegration Programme. Ex-combatants must fulfil three requirements: have been a

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22 *Cuerpo Técnico de Investigación* (Technical Investigation Body)

23 *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (Administrative Department for Security)

24 In Colombia the military service is compulsory for all men over the age of 18. After the military service, or to those who don't match the requirements for military service, the Army issues "military cards", establishing the military status of the person.

member of a guerrilla or paramilitary group; have the will of reintegration to civilian life; and not have committed war crimes and/or atrocities.

7. He/she receives clothes, a health insurance card to be used at any hospital and a stipend for transportation. If He/she asks to meet his/her family, the family have the right to clothes, food and accommodation and health care.

8. If the ex-combatant is certified by the CODA, He/she enters the Reintegration Programme.

9. He/she gets amnesty, except for war crimes and/or atrocities, terrorism or non-combat murders.

10. He/she gets permanent health care assistance, psychological attention, ID card, "judicial record", military card and training. He/she is taught about project design.

11. He/she receives professional assistance for his/her productive project and seed capital (+/- USD. 3600).

Finally there is a special group that is taken into account by the decree 128/2003: Child combatants. The procedure for them is different: those children demobilised from the armed groups should be presented to the ICBF[27] in the 36 hours after his/her hand over in order to give him/her the protection and integral specialized attention necessary. Once the ICBF receives the child, they should inform the Ministry of Defence in order to verify his/her membership in the armed group, and to the Ministry of Home Affairs in order to provide the necessary care. Child soldiers will not be used in intelligence activities. The benefits of the reintegration programme are oriented according to the special conditions of the child. The ICBF should emphasise the protection, education and health care of the child ex-combatant.

This research is focused especially on the collective process of DDR. Although the individual process has benefited thousands of ex-combatants, the collective process has a stronger political impact and the complexities of reintegrating masses of combatants are higher. Nevertheless, some attention is given to the process in Bogotá, where most of the ex-combatants come from the guerrillas through individual demobilisation. Child soldiers are however, a special group, and although we will consider them as part of the DDR issues, their specificity deserves another kind of research and therefore will not be touched upon.

The above mentioned process of DDR is the theoretical procedure that should be implemented according to the decree 128/2003. However, the general model is applied differently depending on the region and the local infrastructure. Although, as we mentioned before, the collective DDR process with FARC will have some differences, the model applied by February 2017 was still the same.

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25 *Programa de Atención Humanitaria al Desmovilizado* (Programme for Humanitarian Attention for Demobilised People)

26 *Comité Operativo de Dejación de Armas* (Operative Committee for Weapons Give in)

27 *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Institute for Familiar Well-being)

DDR in Medellín

The demobilisation of the BCN meant not just the beginning of the national process, it was also seen as the pilot project to show the public and the international community a serious commitment to peace from the AUC. The AUC also saw this process as a way to determine the commitment of the government in delivering the benefits accorded in Santa Fe de Ralito. This meant that the process received special attention from the armed actors and from those interested in peace building in Colombia. The international community has provided its support through the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), who monitors the process in Colombia; and the MAPP[28] of the Organisation of American States (OAS), who verifies the implementation of the peace accords.

The process was to follow the general lines of the national model but the implementation varied from region to region. In the case of Medellín, the Municipality was put in the charge of the process. For this reason the Municipality created the Reintegration to Civilian Life Programme, which latter became the Peace and Reconciliation Programme. The first steps, namely disarmament, demobilisation and pre discharge orientation, were managed by the Reintegration to Civilian Life Programme. Soon after the return of the ex-combatants to their communities the Programme changed into the Peace and Reconciliation Programme.

The disarmament of the BCN began some days before its demobilisation. Small arms and light weapons were handed over to the IV Brigade of the Army. A total of 587 arms were handed over. Soon after that, the demobilisation ceremony took place. On 25th November, 2003, in the *Palacio de Exposiciones'* buildings, 868 combatants began the demobilisation of the AUC in Colombia. At around 2:00 a.m. The armament was carried to the place of demobilisation, counted in presence of witnesses from the government (the High Commissioner for Peace), civil society *(Comisión Facilitadora de Paz de Antioquia,* Municipality of Medellín*),* police (DAS) and the army (IV Brigade and B-2 (the intelligence service of the Colombian Army)), as well as two commanders of the BCN. After verifying the material handed over, which included not just weapons but also uniforms and communication technology, the combatants arrived at the *Palacio de Exposiciones* where the ceremony took place. At 5:00 a.m. all the combatants had arrived to the site. After receiving instructions from their commanders, they put on their uniforms. The ceremony began at 9:00 a.m. in the presence of the national media, the High Commissioner for Peace, the City Mayor and religious, military and civil authorities.

After the ceremony all the demobilised combatants were taken to a nearby town -La Ceja-, to the headquarters of the *Centro Nacional de Convivencia y Paz* CNCP[29]. At the CNCP the ex-combatants received workshops on democracy, income generation and orientation on the benefits they could access. Personal information was collected by the Municipality and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the DAS, and the National Prosecutor. They were identified, and a psychological profile of every ex-combatant was taken.

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28 *Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz* (Support Mission for the Peace Process).

29 National Centre for Coexistence and Peace.

Among the information collected was:

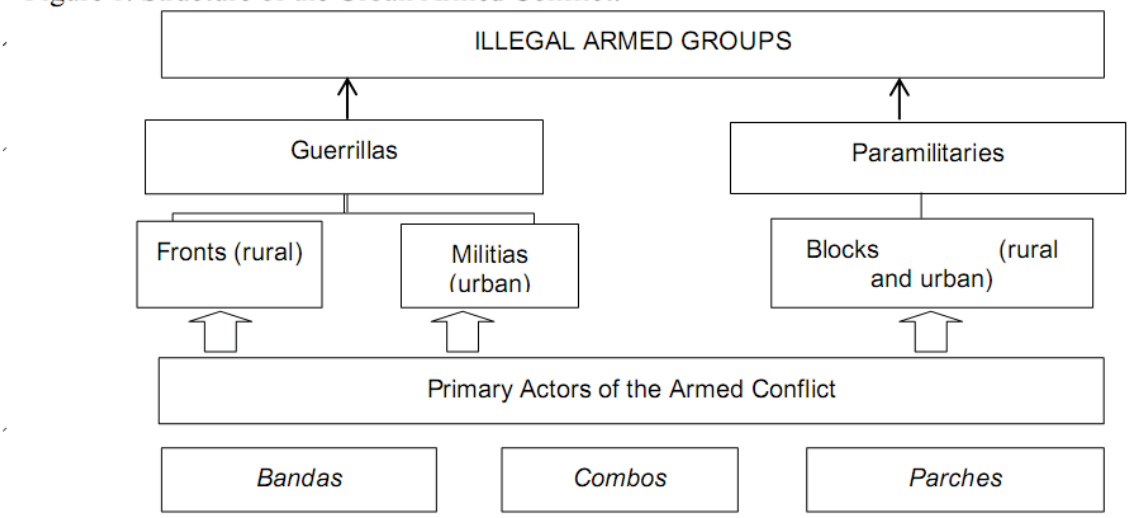
1. The motives for joining the BCN were: economic reasons 23 %, conflicts with neighbours, family and friends 7 %, threats to be killed 25%, personal revenge 25%, other reasons 20%.

2. Previous militancy before BCN: FARC 1%, National Armed Forces 9%, *Bandas* and/or *combos* 37%, Other AUC groups 5%, none 48%.

3. Motives to demobilise: amnesty 6,14%, benefits 34,58%, AUC orders 5,47%, Family 18,56%, necessity of change 35,25%.

Based on this information, and with a new mayor assuming the municipal administration, the Reintegration Programme became the Peace and Reconciliation Programme. The new Programme recognized that the conflict in Medellín was more complex than just the reintegration of the BCN, and that, if the reintegration was to be successful, the Municipality should adopt a more comprehensive strategy. Then, the Municipality re-thought the structure of the urban armed conflict in Medellín. In this model, the conflict includes not just the politically recognized armed groups, but also the participation of "primary armed actors" (*bandas*, *combos* and *parches*). Figure 1 shows the model of the urban armed conflict considered by the Municipality of Medellín.

Figure 1. Structure of the Urban Armed Conflict.



Source: Peace and Reconciliation Programme - Municipality of Medellín

The Peace and Reconciliation Programme aims to generate alternatives for democracy-building through a peace and social reconciliation process, developing actions towards prevention of civil population participation in the armed conflict; support for communities who suffer the consequences of the armed conflict; and support for the "return to legality" processes of the armed actors. This is hopefully achieved through the implementation of the "return to legality" model, which includes areas

like: education, psycho-social support, income generation, healthcare, security, and legal support. In other words, the Peace and Reconciliation Programme aimed "to break the cultural cycle of violence in Medellín" and to create cultural changes in order to prevent children and youth from seeing violence and crime as life alternatives. Although the experience of Medellín is not the mirror of the whole Colombian experience, it is the model and, until now, it is considered a success. But, why?

Some months before the demobilisation of the BCN, the conditions of violence in Medellín began a transformation. The reported number of common homicides in the city, which had reached a peak of 3.721 homicides per year in 2002, decreased to 2013 in 2003 and then to 1.177 in 2004. This phenomenon began in February 2003, when the AUC announced their intention for peace. In figure 2 we can see the annual variation in the reported number of common homicides in Medellín between 1990 and 2016. The homicide rates and numbers show how, at the beginning of the process, homicides decreased. Later on, homicides increased due to organized criminality vendettas triggered by some serious problems in the peace process. During the first stages of the process, there was also a decrease in the number of armed actors in the city, as well as homicides. In July 2005, before the demobilisation of the *Bloque Héroes de Granada* BHG (who appeared in Medellín soon after the demobilisation of the BCN and had its own demobilisation on August 1, 2005), the estimate of armed actors decreased from 6.991 in 2003 to 5.937 in 2005 (see table 1).

The contribution of the ex-combatants had an important impact for a number of reasons. On the one hand, Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano alias "Don Berna", the leader of the BCN, was part of the Negotiation Commission[30] of the AUC. "Don Berna" was leading other Blocks of the AUC, and his demobilisation took place more than a year after the demobilisation of the BCN. During the most critical year, from Santa Fe de Ralito, "Don Berna" remained as an authoritative figure who maintained the will of ex-combatants to complete the peace process. This fact was a strong motivation factor for the demobilisation of ex-combatants in Medellín. On the other hand, the Peace and Reconciliation Programme efficiently provided benefits for the ex-combatants. The benefits included: a monthly stipend in cash; a wide educational offer at all levels, from primary education to university studies; psycho-social assistance, including social work in the communities and with the families of the ex-combatants; training, workshops in democracy, legal and security assistance; income generation orientation; and healthcare assistance. This motivated the ex-combatants to complete the process of reintegration and to embrace a functional role in society. A third factor is that most of the ex-combatants are associated in the Democracy Association[31]. This association developed social work in the communities and maintained a sense of unity among the ex-combatants[32]. Needless to say, the presence of the BHG, also lead by "Don Berna", played a role in the protection of the BCN ex-combatants during the first stages of the process. Finally, a fourth important factor is that the BCN prepared the communities that it occupied for the DDR process, months before the demobilisation.

However, due to the complex involvement of paramilitaries with drugs trafficking and drugs cartels, the process began to suffer from the reorganization of criminality few years after the demobilisations.

30 The Negotiation Commission is known as *Estado Mayor Negociador.*

31 *Corporación Democracia.*

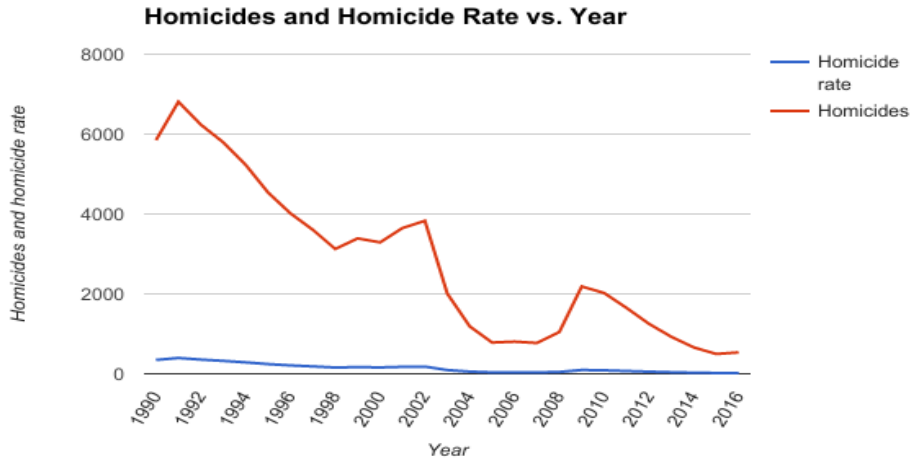
32 Even though *Corporación Democracia* played an important social and political role during the first years after demobilisation, its efforts were undermined and its image discredited by accusations to many of its leaders of using it as a facade to hide illegal activities and to capture State resources that were used in shady ways. After having more than 4.500 associated ex-combatants in 2008, by 2011 *Corporación Democracia* existed just in paper.

By 2008, the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* ACG -a dissident group of the AUC- engaged in their own intense war that expanded in several regions with 'Paisas'; collided in Urabá, Córdoba and Medellín and extended disputes to Bajo Cauca and several areas of the Caribbean region. The same year, when the transfer of Don Berna to the High Security Penitentiary of Cómbita occurred, the armed networks that controlled Medellín immediately paralyzed the public transport of the city and staged a protest of national repercussion. Subsequently, as a demonstration of strength and a search for political positioning, the AGC decreed an 'armed strike', in October 2008, with repercussions in Puerto Libertador and Tierralta, Córdoba, several municipalities of Urabá, Bajo Cauca in Antioquia and in several places of the Caribbean Coast, so they distributed threatening pamphlets and managed to paralyze the commerce in different places (CNRR, 2010: 65).

In May 13, 2008, Don Berna was extradited to the United States by the Colombian government, claiming that he was still involved in criminal activities and coordinating drug trafficking operations. This situation triggered a vendetta inside the criminal structures of Medellín, and alias Sebastián and alias Valenciano, formerly demobilized, fought in a war to dominate the drug trafficking in Medellín, for which they recruited combatants from the *bandas* and *combos* of the city, and recruited demobilized ex-combatants who were part of the DDR process. Homicides increased immediately and stability was recovered by 2012 when the both Valenciano and Sebastián were caught by the police.

At the national level the facts were showing that it was not just a matter of disputes between 'middle managers' but rather more general confrontations and with the commitment of the majority of the main leaders. Unfortunately for the DDR process undertaken, it was revealed that a significant number of the former paramilitary leaders led recidivism processes and rearmament of these illegal armed groups. They were therefore in violation of the same agreements signed and against the reintegration process. At times statements by the former paramilitary leaders themselves practically publicly acknowledged the existence of such a situation, which was hailed as a way of exerting pressure on the government in the bid to retain or demand guarantees derived from the process. Thus, in February 2007, all the former paramilitary leaders detained in the Itagüí prison were issued with a public press release, with Carlos Mario Jiménez being their spokesman, in which they stated that 300 mid level ranking commanders were reassembled and warned that collective demobilised personnel abandoned by the state could return to arms (CNRR, 2010: 69).

Figure 2. Annual Number of Homicides and Homicides Rate in Medellín 1990 - 2016



Source: *Sistema de Información para la Seguridad y la Convivencia SISC, Alcaldía de Medellín.*

Table 1. Armed Actors in Medellín[33].

Bandas				***Combos***				**Paramilitaries**				**Militias**				**Total**			
2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
250	150	72	297	6355	5970	5520	3219	225	120	245	0	161	100	100	0	6991	6340	5937	3516

Source: Peace and Reconciliation Programme – Alcaldía de Medellín. Estimate at December, 2006.

The impact of the process within the communities had visible manifestations: on the one hand, the fear of reoccupation of the territory by guerrilla groups has decreased due to an increase in the police force in the neighbourhoods. Similarly, the ex-combatants had kept their networks of information, preventing the emergence of new armed actors. They had also sustained their pressure to control violence between *bandas* and *combos* when they fight for territory or illegal rents, and, to a certain extent, preventing some types of criminality. Beyond that, in some *comunas* the people recognised the ex-combatants as legitimate mediators in everyday conflicts among neighbours and even relatives. In this sense, the ex-combatants still have some power to control or regulate the social life in their communities.

But although in DDR process in Medellín has been seen as a successful one, it faces significant challenges and difficulties. For example, the BCN handed over 587 arms, while 868 ex-combatants were demobilised. This discrepancy is of concern. Although the AUC argued that their military power is based mainly on communications instead of a large arsenal, it is highly unlikely that 23% of their troops did not have arms. Experience in other countries has shown that even the formula "one soldier –

33 After 2006 the data do not seem to be reliable, since the mayor and the national government do not recognize the existence of paramilitarism, and the estimates of bandas, combos and militias differ so much from one source to another that it is not possible to make comparisons. The municipality of Medellín stopped keeping this statistic, and by 2016 did not have a calculation of the armed actors in the city, nor even those agencies that are working in prevention of recruitment in the city.

one gun", is an underestimate of the real arsenal of the armies[34]. The rumour in Medellín was that the weapons were with relatives and friends of the ex-combatants and that there were hidden weapons in the *comunas*. This version was denied by the AUC. I am, however, not suggesting that the formula "one soldier-one gun" is the most applicable for Colombia or other processes of DDR. In fact, some experiences show that this formula can leave out vulnerable groups (such as children, slaves, abducted citizens and prisoners of war) which puts them at risk of remaining invisible to the DDR programmes or even in the informal/remaining command structure of the demobilised army (Meek and Malan, 2004: 38). Nevertheless, a better understanding of the proportion of combatants/guns is needed in order to improve the real impact of disarmament of belligerent or illegal armies in Colombia.

A second issue (as evident in table 1), is the fact that most of the armed actors in Medellín and presumably in most of the cities in Colombia are not part of the guerrillas or paramilitary groups. They are "primary actors of the conflict", members of *bandas* and *combos* that are hired by drug lords, paramilitaries or guerrillas in order to do specific "jobs" (kidnappings, killings, etc.). An integral strategy of DDR in Colombia needs to take into account this reality. Currently, there is no legal framework that facilitates the demobilisation and reintegration of these groups, although the recent peace accord between the government and FARC opens a window for those groups. Such possibility is being explored by some NGOs, senators and the Municipality of Medellin, among others.

Thirdly, the Municipality of Medellín has managed to attend to, not just the demobilised combatants, but also their families and communities. Nevertheless, during the first years of the process this was not the position of the national model of DDR, which was centred on the individuals and not on their families and/or communities. It is understandable that budgetary constraints make it difficult to implement a more integral model, but the lack of attention to communities and families may undermine the process of social reintegration of ex-combatants. That is why, in 2008, the ACR launched the "communities area" which is leading projects with the participation of ex-combatants, communities and even victims.

Another challenge is related with the complex social and economic reality of Colombia. The implementers of the Peace and Reconciliation Programme in Medellín often complain about the insufficient time used for the economic reintegration. According to them, 18 months (the initial period during which the ex-combatants receive a cash stipend) is not enough for their reintegration. This argument is based on two main circumstances: firstly, the rate of unemployment in Colombia has consistently fluctuated around 10% and is higher for some vulnerable groups[35], making it difficult for the ex-combatants to find gainful employment. Secondly, conflicts generate illegal markets and underground economies that in post-conflict can damage the strengthening of a legal and transparent economy (Ugarriza, 2010: 145), the dynamics of drug trafficking open an illegal market which needs personnel with experience and training in military tactics and strategy. Facing difficulties to find employment, it is tempting for some ex-combatants to access the market opened by drug traffickers. This situation is aggravated by the fact that paramilitaries sustained their armies through the drug

34 In Colombia, the AUC demobilised 31.671 combatants and handed 18.051 small arms and light weapons over. This means 0.57 weapons per combatant.

35 This rate was 18% by 2006, and decreased to 10,2% for metropolitan areas by 2016 (source: DANE). Nonetheless, the rate is higher for specific groups such as ex-combatants. In fact, by 2008 the unemployment rate for ex-combatants in Colombia was 40% (source: Ugarriza and Mesias, 2008: 13)

business, and some of the mid level ranking commanders are, or have been, involved in this practice. Some of these commanders have gained a considerable degree of power and refuse to leave the drug business. In such cases, their knowledge and infrastructure allow them to continue their empowerment and enrichment through drug trafficking, even after the armed conflict. Therefore, it is difficult and not realistic to motivate them to relinquish a $ 500 USD per day income and return to civilian life which offers less than $ 300 USD income per month.

At the community level there are some indicators that show advances in the process of reintegration, but others that suggest challenges. According to a survey conducted by the monitoring system of the IOM in January 2005, 88% of respondents perceived, as positive, the presence of demobilised ex-combatants in their communities; 81% do not have problems accepting the ex-combatants; and 93% understood that the Peace and Reconciliation Programme was facilitating the process of DDR. Community development projects such as *Cerro de los Valores* (Hill of Values), where ex-combatants have resignified territories of fear and turned them into gardens and spaces for environmental education have been an example for their neighbours and for the entire country.

In contrast, the survey also revealed that 41% of the respondents thought that some demobilised soldiers may be involved in illegal activities. When asked why they had difficulties accepting the ex-combatants, the main reasons given were fear (33%), resentment (43%), or distrust (30%). What this demonstrates is a necessity for social work at the community level, and through mass media, in order to decrease the resistance in accepting the ex-combatants. This situation did not changed during the last years, and although some communities have accepted and integrated ex-combatants from the AUC, their fears and resistance has moved towards ex-combatants from guerrilla groups.

But what may be the greatest challenge facing, not just by the process in Medellín, but also by the general DDR process in Colombia, is the extent of violent threats to the ex-combatants. This is evident by the fact that one of the Peace Homes in Bogotá, the temporary shelters for ex-combatants, suffered a bomb attack in July 15, 2005. After this attack the government changed its strategy for the Peace Homes, but the communities still feared that the presence of ex-combatants posed a risk to their neighbourhood. Just in Medellín, over the first 22 months of reintegration, 27 ex-combatants of the BCN were murdered. It is difficult to determine whether these crimes were related to revenge due to war activities, but the number of deaths is meaningful in itself. And this happened before the extradition of Don Berna and the following war between Valenciano and Sebastián.

DDR in Bogotá[36]

Bogotá shows a different dimension of the DDR process in Colombia. Although demobilisations increased with the "democratic security policy" of president Uribe, in the context of the accords with the AUC, most of the ex-combatants who live in Bogotá come from the guerrillas (82% of around

36 The first draft of this paper, written in 2006, did not include specific information on Bogotá; but during 2008 – 2009 the author got first hand information on the Bogotá DDR process and considered useful to include some insight on this paper.

4.500 people). They demobilised themselves individually and are deserters, mainly from FARC and ELN groups.

Bogotá has two governmental institutions at both the district level and the national level working around the issues of DDR. From the national level, the ACR[37] takes care of the typical issues, based on the Medellín model (education, psycho-social support, income generation, healthcare, security, and legal support). From the district level, the *Programa de Atención al Proceso de Reintegración* (PAR) was created in order to oversee those issues that concern the district and are not attended to by the ACR, as they are specific to Bogotá and do not exist in other cities or towns. The main specific issues around Bogotá are: the increasing recruitment of ex-combatants by *Águilas Negras*[38], the living conditions of deserters as opposed to the groups of demobilised ex-combatants in Medellín, individual demobilisations, increasing number of individual demobilisations, threats by ELN, the army and Ministry of Defence's use of demobilised personnel and information, and the dynamics of the conflict before and after the demobilisations.

The dynamics of the conflict in Bogotá, before and after the demobilisations were quite different from those in Medellín. First of all, the armed conflict in Bogotá has always been considered peripheral, and despite some symbolic war and terrorist actions that have happened, the main security threats are not associated by the population with the armed conflict. Gangsterism, thievery, and hijacking, are perceived as more prevalent, and although some peripheral neighbourhoods and *localidades*[39] like Ciudad Bolívar, Usme or San Cristóbal have also had experiences of ELN, FARC or AUC, most of the city's population consider the armed conflict something associated with the "provinces" and the countryside. After the demobilisation of the AUC, the city has experienced no meaningful difference in terms of homicides, kidnappings or criminality. Very few inhabitants are aware of the presence of ex-combatants, although in the past some ex-combatants have gone through difficult situations mainly due to stigmatisation.

In 2006 elections, the majority of Bogotá's inhabitants decided to vote for Álvaro Uribe as President (associated with the right wing) and for Samuel Moreno as Mayor (associated with the left). In the political arena, there was collaboration, but also a "hidden"[40] power struggle between the district and presidential levels. Regarding DDR, this struggle represents at the very least a different understanding of what DDR is about and what it should be. The national ACR emphasises social and economic

37 Created in 2002, the ACR (*Alta Consejería para la Reintegración* -High Counseling for Reintegration) became *Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración* -Colombian Agency for Reintegration- in 2006 with a long-term approach that included not only ex-combatants but their families and communities, and established more flexible terms of the individual development of each participant and their commitment to the programme.

38 *Águilas Negras* or Black Eagles is the name given to the new "emergent groups", the remains of the AUC who decided not to demobilise and that are not a confederation, but many smaller groups linked to drug-trafficking. They may control territories but don`t have national unity or command. Nevertheless, these groups could be the seed of a new generation of paramilitarism or mercenarism in Colombia, and similar groups like the abovementioned AGC already have regional command in Antioquia and Córdova.

39 *Localidades* are, like the *comunas* in Medellín, an administrative division of the territory inside the city. The differences rest in the fact that the *localidades* have a higher degree of autonomy and even have a local mayor and a bureaucracy. Bogotá has 20 *localidades*: Ciudad Bolívar, Bosa, Usme, Chapinero, Rafael Uribe Uribe, Tunjuelito, Engativá, Suba, San Cristóbal, Usaquén, Teusaquillo, Kennedy, Barrios Unidos, Sumapaz, Santafé, Fontibón, Los Mártires, Antonio Nariño, Puente Aranda, La Candelaria.

40 "everybody knows it, but nobody declares it".

reintegration, while the PAR lends more importance to political and social reintegration. On the other hand, as we will explain when describing the political economy of DDR, the national government has used demobilisation of former guerrillas as instrument of war. The Ministry of Defence has promoted the use of demobilised people in order to provide information and to participate in military operatives against the groups they come from. The PAR however implores ex-combatants not to participate in military actions and alleges that this practice is contravening International Humanitarian Law.

Seeing as the national government uses DDR as a war weapon, FARC and ELN attacked the process in various ways. Although there is not official information to confirm this, many ex-combatants say that guerrillas have informers and soldiers who pretend to demobilise in order to infiltrate the programmes and the city. Even if that information is nothing more than rumours it does call into question, to some degree, the confidence and trust in the process and thus undermines it. Another way of undermining the process is through death threats aimed at those who leave their ranks. They consider deserters to be traitors, and if the ex-combatants help the army with relevant information or/and in military operations their vulnerability (both perceived and real) increases. Again, we have to mention the fact that in 2005 one of the Peace Homes in Bogotá was bombed.

Be that as it may, the number of combatants that are handing over their weapons and willing to reintegrate increased every day. The PAR registers between 80 and 100 people demobilising every month. Since 2006, after the last official demobilisation of the AUC the government closed the doors of DDR to the former paramilitary groups, so the latest demobilisations are individuals and from the guerrillas. This dynamic makes it compulsory for the government to maintain the Peace Homes, and shelters where the combatants, who are in the process of demobilisation, are received while the CODA is submitted to them. After receiving of the CODA the ex-combatants can leave the shelters and settle either in Bogotá or outside the capital. The individual nature of these demobilisations implies that those who decide to hand their weapons over and reintegrate are less prone to return to the illegal armed groups. As mentioned above, they are considered traitors by guerrillas and they don't normally want to be a part of *Águilas Negras* or any other right wing group. Individual demobilisation is not an easy choice to make and those who choose it have decided to become a part of civilian life. But individual demobilisations also have their disadvantages for ex-combatants, seeing as they don't have a group who can support them, or social networks that they can trust or rely on when reintegrating to communities.

Finally, regarding particular conditions of reintegration in Bogotá one has to note that recruitment of ex-combatants by *Águilas Negras* is stronger in Bogotá than in any other city. In 2008, some groups were offering the ex-combatants between 700 to 1700 US dollars a month if they join them[41]. This was more than double the amount an ex-combatant received as stipend for their demobilisation. Recruitment by *Águilas Negras*, FARC and ELN is still an issue all over the country, but according to ex-combatants and experts, the situation in Bogotá seemed to be more critical at least for ex-combatants[42].

41 Particularly alias "Cuchillo" offered 700 USD to former members of the AUC which were soldiers and much more if they were between the ranks. His group seem to have information from inside the ACR or other institutions and organisations involved in the DDR process, and know phone numbers, addresses and working places of ex-combatants. Some former guerrilla members also join *Águilas Negras* but ex-combatants say that most of those who are recruited are ex-AUC members.

42 It is difficult to prove this statement as there are no trusting registers of illegal recruitment in Colombia. The statement is based entirely on the perception of ex-combatants and experts.

Once one has considered the particular conditions of reintegration in Bogotá it is easy to understand the emphasis given by the PAR to its role in the process. The PAR was created by the district after the bombing of the Peace Home in the *Localidad* of Teusaquillo. When it happened, the neighbours of many other Peace Homes were protesting against these kinds of shelters. They didn't want to have ex-combatants in their neighbourhoods because ex-combatants were seen as threats to security, killers and were associated with crime and violence. The PAR had to implement actions to improve the knowledge of citizens about ex-combatants, their realities and challenges. The PAR also worked towards the involvement of the population in projects and actions of reconciliation and collective reparations. The action of PAR has changed the image of the ex-combatants for most of the population of Bogotá. Indeed, in 2008 the PAR achieved one of its main objectives, namely the support of all *localidades* and the local Mayors, as well as the involvement of at least 8 different communities in reconciliation projects. What is more, the PAR has been working in the empowerment of the ex-combatants as citizens with the same rights as all other members of society. It promotes the organisation of ex-combatants, community projects, participation and reclamation of rights to the State. The differences in perception of DDR process by the PAR and the ACR can be better understood paying some attention to the political economy of reintegration in Colombia.

Chapter 2
The Political Economy of DDR in Colombia[43]

According to Ohrstedt (2006: 8), a growing body of academic and technical literature has described, analysed and compared different DDR processes, abstracting lessons learnt and defining guidelines for implementation. While this literature is rich in practical information, it fails to provide a sufficient framework for the analysis of the broader political and economic dynamics of war-peace transitions. In an internal armed conflict as is the case in Colombia, the goal of warring parties is not necessarily victory over the opponent, but to create or maintain systems of political and economic benefits (Keen, quoted by Ohrstedt, 2006). This is particularly true in the case of paramilitarism, but also applies to a long term war such as the war being waged by the guerrillas in Colombia. In this sense, armed conflict represents a particular social order or political economy. The political economy is understood here to mean the study of the social relations within the economic structure; or as Isaak Illich Rubin pointed out, "the relation between *people to people* in the productive process" (Rubin, quoted by Ohrstedt, 2006: 9. Emphasis in the original). This section aims to provide elements for analysing DDR in Colombia taking into account its political dimensions. As the DDR of AUC and guerrillas seem to serve different interests, we will analyse them relatively independently.

It is clear that armed conflict has economic and political incentives for soldiers and armed groups to continue fighting. Control of legal and illegal markets, exploitation of resources, and land expropriation constitute the main economic incentives, while control of client-networks, government and institutions at the local level are political incentives. Armed groups control order, stability and organise or modify the structure of society in the occupied territories. These kinds of factors affect the will to demobilise in different ways, as well as the way in which the post-conflict could be managed. Seeing as the economy and social order do not change automatically after peace accords or demobilisation, the politics of transition should consider the interests of different actors and how to deal with the transformation of power and economy towards a democratic order. "While the DDR process is theoretically designed to support the transition to 'peace', its functions within the political economy of war are not always straight forward" (Ohrstedt, 2006: 10).

Besides the parts involved in negotiations and DDR, the peace building processes, including reintegration of ex-combatants, involve multiple actors. Some of them are not directly involved in conflict, but are victims of conflict consequences and stakeholders of a stable solution beyond the battlefield. The most significant of these actors is the civil society, which includes national and international non-governmental organizations and non-organized organic citizens. Civil society has become the more frequently named non-armed ally in the efforts for peace building, both for its possible victimization by some armed actors and because it is hoped that its endorsement and response to strategies of overcoming the Conflicts gives legitimacy and a healthy examination of social relevance and accountability to the adopted strategies. As a result, efforts have been multiplied and resources have been organized and empowered by organizations from sectors including women, the private sector, ethnic and political minorities, as a bid to legitimize and strengthen the stability of peace

43 This chapter was not included in the first draft of this paper, and was written in a later date.

building strategies. Groups such as victims, for example, invisible in the peace and conflict resolution processes of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, thus gained an unprecedented presence in public debate, legislation and research (Rettberg, 2013: 23 - 24).

DDR and paramilitarism in Colombia

There are meaningful differences between the demobilisation of regular armies or insurgent groups and paramilitary groups due to the nature of paramilitarism. To understand the challenges of demobilisation of the paramilitaries in Colombia it is necessary to clarify the complex relationship between these groups and the State. As Ohrstedt points out, despite their formal independence, paramilitary forces maintain a functional and covert relationship with the State. Normally, the salient feature of para-institutional violence is the mix between public and private interests, and participation. Paramilitary groups operate with the support, complicity or acquiescence of governments, but at the same time involve participation of non-governmental elements that may, overtime, develop considerable independence from their initial supporters (Campbell quoted by Ohrstedt, 2006: 12). In this sense, paramilitaries can be defined as "armed groups that are directly or indirectly with the State and their local agents, created by the State or tolerated by it, but existing outside its formal structure" (Ohrstedt, 2006: 13).

An approximation to the AUC's DDR process implies understanding traits of the complex paramilitary phenomenon, since it contains elements in the political, counter-insurgent, drug-trafficking, mafia and merely delinquency, as an articulating conjunction of referents. Paramilitarism represented the more or less fluid aggregation of multiple, diverse and localized wars of specific local actors. From this perspective, the actions of the AUC were related to local and private conflicts, complex and specific. This situation explains the alliances, integrations, grey areas and networks of cooperation of its structures with diverse delinquency groups, among them the drug trafficking, organized crime and the local gangs. A very meaningful case turned out to be that of Medellín, with the network of associates after the leadership of 'Don Berna' that articulated *Oficina de Envigado* (a mafia organization), *La Terraza* gang, the BCN, the BHG and gangs from the *comunas* (what we described before as *bandas* and *combos*). The profile of the actions of drug traffickers, through their mafia networks, is integrated to the phenomenon and contributed to the stamp of the paramilitary leaders, including ex-military, ex-police, ex-guerrillas, and ex-bosses of criminal gangs who had their own networks (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2010: 25 - 26).

Although paramilitarism could permit governments to maintain "plausible deniability" for repression deemed necessary to keep social control (Campbell quoted by Ohrstedt, 2006: 13), deniability of human rights violations requires denial to be built into the structures of violence in advance, as is the case with paramilitarism. This is particularly important in the context of modern States, since its legitimacy, both domestically and internationally, depends on the maintenance of the rule of law, democracy, and the minimum required respect for international human rights (Taylor, 1999). Nevertheless, paramilitarism is counterproductive for the State, as it precludes the State from establishing the monopoly on legitimate violence. Thus, paramilitarism undermines State legitimacy in its intent to maintain the *status quo.*

As of 2002, paramilitarism has come to constitute the primary international human rights problem for the Colombian government. Ohrstedt suggests that "for the government, [the] primary function [of demobilising paramilitaries] is to distance itself from a counterinsurgency strategy relying on para-institutional violence, resolving an increasingly complicated human rights liability" (Ohrstedt, 2006: 5). This hypothesis seems to be plausible since there have subsequently emerged additional factors and motivations in support of the government's interests in distancing itself from paramilitarism.

Firstly, Álvaro Uribe's campaign for presidency was based on the "Democratic Security" proposal: a response to the failure of the Caguán negotiations between Andrés Pastrana's government and FARC. Uribe proposed the subjugation of FARC through military action, capitalising on the will of the United States in strengthening the Colombian Army. Only in 2002, the United States government donated 1,6 billion USD to the Colombian government to be invested in *Plan Colombia*, mainly for military requirements. But the US government was also fighting the War on Drugs, and had focussed its attention on various AUC leaders, who used drug trafficking as their main income to sustain the war and their personal businesses. Thus, Uribe was under immense pressure from the United States government to resolve the paramilitary problem. Using extradition as a mechanism of pressure and negotiation, Uribe gained the attention and support of the main leaders of AUC in order to achieve demobilisation. AUC leaders, in this context, were interested mainly in judicial benefits for themselves and reintegration benefits for their combatants.

Seeing as holding perpetrators accountable for past violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses has become a primary concern for the international community, one of the major issues during the Santa Fe de Ralito negotiations was the "Justice and Peace Law", and this despite the fact that it was not part of the original negotiations. This was a result of it forming an important part of the political context during the negotiations. The "Justice and Peace Law" (*Ley de justicia y paz* or law 975 of 2005) promoted judicial benefits for those members of paramilitary (and eventually guerrilla) groups who have collaborated by telling the truth and who have decided to contribute to reconciliation and reparation actions and processes. They also were required to stop contravening the law, and had to spend between 5 to 8 years imprisoned for human rights violations[44].

Transitional justice facilitates that beyond the criminal justice system the DDR process is articulated with the commitment to the rights to truth, justice, integral reparation of victims and guarantees of non-repetition. The Constitutional Court, regarding the revision of Law 975 of 2005, sought to harmonize the rights to justice and peace after recognizing its possibilities and admitting prioritization. The achievement of a stable and lasting peace that overcomes the armed conflict makes possible the demobilisation of irregular armed groups with some restrictions on justice, but demands the rights of the victims and the recovery of the essential content of justice as a condition of possibility to advance to an end to the armed conflict. However, the open-hearings intended to provide truth in the judicial sphere showed, especially in the initial phase, marked deficiencies that affected the realization of its purpose, which gave rise to critical indications: 1) the Justice and Peace Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor was not in a position to handle so many cases; 2) free versions were not public; 3) few

44 Most of the AUC leaders negotiated the demobilisation in exchange for judicial benefits and reintegration benefits for the troops, but after some years the government argued that many of the leaders were coordinating drug trafficking from Colombian prisons and decided to extradite them. 14 members of the *Estado Mayor Negociador* of the AUC were extradited on May 13, 2008.

prosecutors successfully conducted the free versions; 4) the victims were not dignified in the free versions; 5) the protagonists of the justice and peace process were the paramilitaries; 6) the paramilitaries were not committed to the process; 7) the paramilitaries were not making full or truthful confessions; 8) the paramilitaries did not help to clarify crimes such as enforced disappearance, sexual violence and the recruitment of children; and 9) the confessions related to links with political, economic and ties with the Public Force and other agents of the State were minimal (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2010: 29).

Beyond both the judicial benefits and the public discourse which claimed that demobilisation forms part of a sincere commitment to peace in Colombia, there exists other reasons to explain the will of the paramilitaries to demobilise their troops. First and foremost, and as said above, is their desire to avoid possible extradition; second, there exists a favourable domestic political environment represented by the Uribe government; and, third, the deepening internal rifts within the paramilitary structure.

The avoidance of extradition as a primary reason was clearly evident during negotiations. After exploratory talks had commenced, the extradition question took on further importance as several drug-barons allegedly "bought" commanding positions within paramilitary structures in order to take advantage of the judicial benefits included in the demobilisation process (Ohrstedt, 2006: 20).

The second reason leading to negotiations and demobilisation was the changes brought about by the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez. After the failure of talks with FARC leaders by President Andrés Pastrana, the position of Uribe against guerrillas showed that the government had decided to firmly fight the guerrillas. This presented the paramilitaries with an opportunity of 'friendly' negotiations, including expectations of far reaching judicial benefits from demobilisation and, importantly, the official recognition of the paramilitary groups as political actors. Although a certain level of trust existed between the Uribe government and paramilitary commanders, as negotiations progressed, the government used threats of extradition and military action to make demobilisation the "only option". Military action against reticent paramilitary groups increased between 2002 and 2004. In this light, the paramilitary demobilisation is better described as a 'favourable rendition', than as an outcome of a peace negotiation (Ohrstedt, 2006: 21).

The third motivating factor behind the demobilisation of paramilitaries was their lack of internal cohesion. When negotiations began, the AUC was made up of five competing sub-groups, involved in three internal wars over territory. Internal wars raged between *Bloque Metro* and *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* in Medellín; between *Bloque Centauros* and *Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare* in the *Llanos Orientales* region; and between *Bloque Norte* and the group under Hernán Giraldo in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The most important and serious dispute raged over the degree of involvement by paramilitary groups in the narco-business. The assassination of top commanders during the course of the negotiations reflected the depth of the internal divisions within the paramilitaries (Ohrstedt, 2006: 22). Thus, one of the central functions of the demobilisation has been to establish a 'peace pact' of sorts, producing a new equilibrium and temporary stability within a significant part of the political economy of war in Colombia (idem: 22).

Now, on the design of the reintegration programme, it is meaningful the fact that political reintegration was never considered. Although some frameworks like the IDDRS and the SIDDR point at the importance of political reintegration, the ACR in Colombia have not included this component to

the “reintegration route”. Even more, the Cartagena Contribution does not consider this dimension of reintegration. It seems that, in an environment where the political discourse is fuelled by fear to “Castro-Chavism” and communism, the government refuses to mention the need to realise ex-combatants’ political participation. And the AUC leaders never asked for it. Nonetheless, the recent negotiations with FARC included this topic, and the reintegration programme design will have to include political reintegration as part of the intervention model.

On the local level, some actors felt they were not taken into account or at least not in some important decisions that affected them. The National Government issued a resolution in the case of each paramilitary block to install a Temporary Location Zone of the contingents under the process. In the first phase, the government informed and coordinated matters with local and regional authorities, but it was a criticism that they did not do the same with the communities. This was also argued by communities in Bogotá where the shelters for demobilised paramilitaries and guerrilla combatants settled in some neighbourhoods without asking or informing the communities. In the second phase of collective demobilisation, the government enabled acts of demobilisation and collective disarmament, although their progressive nature gave rise to confusion because, in parallel with the demobilisation, other AUC contingents were involved and the continued ceasefire violations resulted in numerous civilian casualties. And the third phase led to the preparation and initiation of the reintegration program, which raised questions about the composition of the lists of demobilized troops and indications of deficiencies in the initiation of the program (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2010: 18).

On the international arena, the first support to the process came from the OAS, through the MAPP (Support Mission for the Peace Process) presence in charge of monitoring and evaluating the DDR process. The MAPP was financed not just by the OAS, but also by the United States Agency for International Development -USAID. The European Union only gave its support from 2005, when recommendations of UN and the EU made adjustments to the Justice and Peace Law. The recommendations had been expressed in the London Declaration in 2003, while support was made explicit in the 2005 Cartagena Declaration. Following the Cartagena Declaration, the DDR programme began to receive some funds from the European Union and created the Quick Reaction Mechanism in order to help during critical situations that could affect or victimize civilians (Chica, 2007: 52 - 62).

By governmental decision and state action a process of disarticulation of the AUC and similar groups was undertaken, so that the irregular armed group that was decisive in the context of the internal armed conflict that affected Colombia in the last three decades disappeared. The Justice and Peace Law provided a legal framework for deactivating irregular armed actors based on criminal benefits and addressing the rights of victims. There was a demobilisation of the AUC, but a diaspora of illegal armed groups followed, ranging from dissident and reassembled expressions with several features similar to paramilitarism to numerous criminal gangs. These emerging armed groups assumed a new and intense dispute for the control of the drug traffic, other forms of illegality, control of territories, allies and supports, so that bloody confrontations unleashed in several regions and in some cities. There is a greater persecution of the state forces against this type of new illegal armed groups and criminal gangs, while, in taking advantage of the drug trafficking, there are alliances and agreements between guerrilla fronts and rearmed groups with the presence of ex-paramilitaries (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2010: 26).

DDR and guerrillas in Colombia's current process

The demobilisation of guerrillas during the last sixteen years in Colombia seems to conform to a different logic. While AUC have demobilised as the result of negotiations with the State, FARC and ELN had not negotiated their demobilisation[45]. Combatants demobilised from FARC and ELN have done it individually and as deserters of their groups. In this context, demobilisation has a different political and military meaning both for guerrillas and the State. It also has different implications for ex-combatants during their process of reintegration. The government is using the demobilisation as an instrument of war, thereby undermining the strength of guerrillas' forces, diminishing the number of combatants and getting valuable information from ex-combatants. The guerrillas were attacking the process in various ways, and also using it as a way to introduce guerrilla members to the main cities. The ex-combatants have higher security risks than paramilitaries, fewer social support networks and their decision to maintain their status as civilians is stronger[46].

Firstly, for the government the demobilisation of guerrillas forms part of the strategy of "hard hand and big heart" originally proposed by Uribe as part of the "democratic security policy". According to this policy, the government offers benefits to those who decide to hand their weapons over and demobilise, while strengthening the army and increasing the offensive against the guerrillas. The estimate of FARC's troops for 2002, when Álvaro Uribe became president, was around 40.000 combatants. By July 2008, the estimate was 16.000. By February 2017, between 6.900 and 7.000 combatants were concentrated in the Transitional Normalization Village Areas (Assembly Areas). The combined strategy of stick and carrot seems to have yielded rich rewards for the government. According to the Ministry of Defence, 22.539 combatants from FARC and ELN demobilised during the Uribe's government, and around 100 combatants were arriving every month in Bogotá. Before the peace process between the Colombian government and FARC there is a significant fact: from 2002 to 2011 the ACR registered 55.932 demobilised ex-combatants (ODDR, 2011: 1).

Secondly, the government is also taking advantage of the information provided by the ex-combatants. The ex-combatants are incentivised, through rewards, to hand over relevant information that the army can use to achieve important targets. Some of the ex-combatants are told that giving information is the quickest way to receive the CODA and begin their process of reintegration with full benefits. Others are asked to participate in military operations. This use of the demobilisation of FARC and ELN by the government has resulted in some of the army's best achievements. Examples include the killing of alias "Raúl Reyes" on March 1, 2008, and alias "Mono Jojoy" on September 23, 2010, and alias "Alfonso

45 The peace agreement between FARC and the Colombian government was signed on November 24, 2016; but the reintegration process had just begun at the time this dissertation was being written. Thus, the demobilisation of FARC and ELN analysed in this paper corresponds mainly to the conditions before the peace agreement. Besides, the practical conditions of reintegration for FARC combatants are not completely clear yet.

46 There are few publications about the political economy of DDR regarding the demobilisation of guerrillas during the Uribe and Santos' governments. This analysis is based on few publications and various conversations with ex-combatants and functionaries of the DDR programmes in Bogotá (ACR and PAR), the CNRR, MAPP-OAS, ICTJ, and academics.

Cano" on November 4, 2011 They were some of the most important members of the Secretariat of FARC.

This is why FARC and ELN tried to undermine the process of DDR, and declared the Peace Homes and the DDR programmes as military targets. As mentioned above, in 2005 one of the Peace Homes in Bogotá was bombed, but moreover, the ex-combatants of ELN -and before the peace agreement those of FARC- always live with the fear of being punished by their former groups. Distrust amongst ex-combatants is also an everyday concern. It is said that both FARC and ELN have sent spies to infiltrate the process, concealed under the demobilisation umbrella. This information is difficult to confirm, but the fact that the statement has been made, obviously results in far reaching effects amongst ex-combatants. They prefer instead, not to associate with other ex-combatants, while trying to maintain "invisible" to other former combatants and to their communities who frequently don't know that their neighbours are former guerrillas. There are also rumours that FARC and ELN were taking advantage of the DDR programmes in order to achieve their aim of bringing the war to Bogotá.

Since the failure of the Caguán talks in 2002, the military began a meaningful offensive all around the country, and it has motivated many combatants to demobilise. When asked, most of the ex-combatants say that the motivations for their demobilisation are the wish to live with their families, that they are tired of the war, and the fact that narco-business has became the main activity of guerrillas, thereby precipitating the loss of their ideology and increasing the wealth of the commanders, while combatants don't receive any benefits. But, as some emblematic demobilisations have shown, the pressure of the army has caused distrust amongst guerrillas[47], and has cut the supplies of food, weapons and ammunition causing desperation amongst FARC and ELN soldiers and ranks[48].

Finally, it is important to note the special conditions of demobilisation for guerrillas, and remarkably the fact that it is usually an individual decision. This implies that ex-combatants are deserters and therefore cannot return to the guerrillas, thereby resulting in the risk of their rearmament being lower. Normally, *Águilas Negras* try to recruit former paramilitaries, while ex-guerrilla members prefer not to join these groups as they see them as the remains of paramilitaries, their enemies. While the process with paramilitaries is put at risk every time the commanders have political problems with the government, this situation never happens with former guerrilla members.

Now, parallel to these individual demobilisations, negotiations between Juan Manuel Santos' government and FARC took place from October 2012 to November 2016. Some of the main chapters of the agreement are about reintegration of FARC, especially regarding political participation and disarmament. On the one hand, chapter two of the agreement, called "Political participation: democratic opening to build peace", recognizes the need to "a democratic expansion that will allow new forces to emerge on the political scene to enrich debate and deliberation around major national problems and thereby strengthen pluralism and thus representation of the different visions and interests of society, with due guarantees for participation and political inclusion" (Acuerdo final para la

47 The case of Rojas who in march 8, 2008, killed his commander alias Iván Ríos, member of the Secretariat of FARC, and kept his hand to give it to the army and claim for the reward offered by the government is a clear evidence of the situation.

48 Alias Karina, one of the best known warrior women in FARC, argued that her demobilisation was a way to accept defeat and avoid being killed by the army.

terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera, 2016: 35). The translation is mine). On the other hand, chapter three "End of the conflict" is an agreement on bilateral ceasefire and end of hostilities and arms abandonment between the National Government and the FARC-EP. Although the political economy of the negotiations is not the aim of this paper, some insights to the process may be relevant to DDR.

The parties agreed on a Mechanism of Monitoring and Verification to oversee the implementation of the peace accord. This mechanism is integrated by UN members and members of the National Government and FARC. The mission began to operate just after the signing of the agreement, on November 26, 2016. It is deeply involved in the disarmament and the control of the Transitional Normalization Village Areas (Assembly Areas). The international involvement has been crucial to legitimize the process and, in contrast to the process with AUC, the UN has given its support from the very beginning of this process.

Since 2015, some experts advised on the need to consider disarmament as a process that takes place in at least two levels. One of a technical-operative nature, due to processes and activities, usually standardized and sequential, and carried out by national and international experts (international organizations, active or retired members of the Armed Forces, tanks of thought). Another level is the high political and symbolic content that requires a careful and strategic management of the negotiating parties' perceptions regarding the process, the expectations of society in general, as well as those who will leave the arms, of their historical trajectory in the conflict and, therefore, the meaning and emotional charge of the act of self-abandonment (Aguirre, Álvarez and Pardo, 2015: 14). The agreement and design of the disarmament process seems to have considered these two levels. In fact, besides the involvement of international experts in the verification process, FARC refused to talk about handing over the weapons, and preferred to talk about arms abandonment[49]. It has been agreed that after a progressive abandonment of arms, collected by the Mechanism of Monitoring and Verification, all the weapons will be destroyed. Three monuments will be made using the steel of the destroyed weapons: one in the UN headquarters, one in La Habana, Cuba, and a third one in Colombia (Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera, 2016: 67).

A second insight regarding disarmament is the definition of the assembly areas, called Transitional Normalization Village Areas. In order to determine the areas the parties had to consider the multiple armed actors in the country, apart from the FARC (ELN, EPL, criminal gangs, new paramilitary groups). These actors can carry out actions against the process, putting at risk the safety of the demobilized, of those who execute and verify the process and also of the arms delivered. A preliminary report on areas at high risk of vulnerability due to the presence of other armed actors and institutional failures identified 281 municipalities in departments such as Nariño, Putumayo and Cauca. This information was useful for the planning, design and implementation of both disarmament and demobilization of the guerrillas (Aguirre, Álvarez and Pardo, 2015: 16 - 17).

Finally, the peace process and now the DDR have had some strong opposition. The *Centro Democrático* and the Conservative parties have argued that the process will lead the country to a Castro-chavism dictatorship. On October 2, 2016, a plebiscite took place asking the people whether they supported the peace agreement or not. Conservative and Centro Democrático parties held a

49 The terms discussed in spanish were *entrega de armas* and *dejación de armas.*

campaign against the peace agreement and the results in the polls showed a tight victory against the peace accords. President Juan Manuel Santos recognised his defeat and called the representatives who promoted the vote against the agreement in order to adjust it. Some modifications were made and the agreement was signed between the government and FARC and backed up by the congress. However, the parties against the agreement remained reluctant. They argue that the agreement has three fundamental problems: political participation of FARC in the short term, land redistribution and transitional justice that include some degree of amnesty and alternative criminal convictions for those who tell the truth and commit with reparation. In fact, what Centro Democrático and Conservative parties asked for is for a kind of rendition of FARC which keep the country for fundamental structural changes and from knowing the truth of the conflict. And these parties still have substantial numbers of supporters. Nonetheless, they claim to agree with the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants. It is early to know how different groups of interest are going to define their discourses on this new DDR process, but for now, Centro Democrático and Conservative parties seem to be the official opposition to the process and some of their leader could encourage illegal armed groups to undermine it, probably appealing to plausible deniability.

Colombia is going to have presidential elections in May 2018. It seems that the opposition will exploit the discontent that may arise in the population regarding the implementation of the peace agreement. By now, it is difficult to predict whether the political environment is going to behave. Nonetheless, a recent survey conducted by the Centro Nacional de Consultoría[50] for the NGO Reconciliación Colombia show that: while 28% of the respondents consider that the demobilisation is being well managed, 41% thinks it is being bad managed; 24% consider the condition of ex-combatants in the assembly areas are good, while 41% consider they are bad; 12% thinks the criminal gangs are losing territory and 64% think they are gaining presence in the regions. This is a reflex of the way the opposition is presenting the process and the difficulties that the government has in fulfilling the commitments regarding the assembly areas and the protection of the territories left by FARC. On the other hand, 72% of the respondents agree that their children share a classroom with children of demobilized persons; 13% are neutral and 13% disagree. 88% of the respondents said that, if they owned a business they would hire ex-combatants if they had the chance to do it; 10% would not hire ex-combatants (Centro Nacional de Consultoría, 2017). So, there seems to be a good disposition of the population to embrace the peace process.

50 The survey was conducted in 59 towns and cities of Colombia, to 1.000 people, during the month of February 2017.

Chapter 3
International Experiences of DDR

The aim of this chapter is to present some international experiences of DDR, focusing on what has been called the "lessons". Special emphasis is placed on the Mozambican process, and to some extent, the South African experience. The Mozambican and South African processes are useful because some time has passed and we can see that both countries have not returned to war, although both of them have had some difficulties during their process, and also because of their differences and similarities. Their post-conflict processes occurred under different circumstances both at the political level and regarding the practices for reintegration of ex-combatants at the social level. An example of this is that South Africa created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), while Mozambique adopted local practices of "healing" and conflict resolution as part of the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Although this paper does not specifically discuss the suitability of TRCs, some aspects that follow do touch on the issue. Similarly, South Africa did not have a formal reintegration process (see: Williams, 2005: 9), while Mozambique, after a complex disarmament process, had a formal reintegration programme with the support of the UN and the international community. Both countries are recognised as models of peace. But, facing national situations that are different, why is it useful to compare Mozambique, South Africa, Colombia and other countries? The use of analogy, as a way to compare different things, can be helpful if we have the ability to find out which of the lessons can be applied, which situations have a similar nature, and what kind of achievements or failures respond to specific contexts that cannot be replicated. Also, the fact that we had direct interaction to ex-combatants and researchers from both countries was quite useful to stimulate thinking on the Colombian case.

Colombia, South Africa and Mozambique were all colonies, and this fact makes them share a similar international status. The Spanish, the Dutch and British and the Portuguese ruled their colonies with different approaches, but they all left behind a shade of segregation and discrimination. They all established deeply unequal societies. Even after decades of political independence from Spain, Britain and Portugal, these three countries share legacies of colonialism, the ongoing impact of neo-imperialism, and large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources.

During the last five decades the race-based discourse in Colombia moved to a class-based one. Although divisions are now built on a different basis, the structure of society remains marginalizing, discriminatory and segregationist. Segregation and marginalization have a lot to do with the recent armed conflicts in Colombia, South Africa and Mozambique. In Colombia the most marginalized populations are black, indigenous and peasants' communities. In South Africa apartheid was an institutionalized segregationist regime based on race. In Mozambique, during the Portuguese rule, the black population was maintained in disadvantage and had no real power to decide about their future. Then, the three countries face major challenges to rebuild social and political relationships in order to overcome the causes of their armed conflicts. In other words, armed conflict in these countries was rooted on similar facts, and post conflict means to face similar problems.

Regarding post conflict, the situation of these countries is similar on the eyes of international law. During the last few decades, the international community has raised standards of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition guarantees. This means that, in order to keep a dignified place in the world, these countries have to satisfy certain standards. In this regard, South Africa created the TRC

but had no formal reintegration programme; Mozambique had a reintegration programme but no TRC, and Colombia chose to create both, TRC and a reintegration programme. Comparison is, in this context, relevant and may be productive. In fact, in the framework of South – South cooperation, Colombia has had several experts from South Africa and Mozambique advising on conflict resolution, TRC and reintegration.

This is not to say that the circumstances of every single case will be explored in depth or that other processes in Africa or overseas have been forgotten. The objective is not to know entirely the issues and lessons of DDR, or to give an exhaustive account of challenges, difficulties, successes and failures, but rather to explore some particular experiences that can add to the design, improvement and implementation of the DDR processes in Colombia. In this sense, the discussion does not merely centre around successful experiences or on "what is to be done", but also focuses in problems that other processes have encountered and how they can be avoided[51]. Thus, the questions explored in each process are guided by the challenges raised in the Colombian DDR process.

Processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants have traditionally been seen as national affairs in post-conflict societies. However, if we look at the international experiences, it is clear that the repercussions of DDR "have an impact not only in the country where the programme took place, but also in neighbouring states. The swathe of conflict in West Africa for example, has been exacerbated by the movement of combatants from one conflict to another" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 7). In the era of globalisation, the movement of soldiers often has little regard regional borders. In fact, ex-combatants presently, have the possibility of joining private forces from Colombia to Iraq. Thus, "the lessons of DDR are also being learned by those who can exploit them" (idem). As a first introductory lesson it is important to take into account the fact that national and international actors can use this kind of information in order to exploit the challenges faced by ex-combatants and processes of DDR. The cases presented below can trigger the improvement of DDR practices in Colombia and other countries, but may also help to detect weaknesses that could be used to undermine the same processes.

Some international lessons

This section does not pretend to present national processes of DDR, but instead, the aim is to present some lessons proposed by various authors. It is less occupied with the circumstances of concrete cases, but with issues that have been remarked as important regarding the general guidelines of DDR in the world. Again, the selection of the lessons presented respond to questions and problems found in the current Colombian DDR process. Some of the lessons could be applied on the national context, while others need the commitment of the international community. Although an analysis of the applicability of the lessons will be presented in the next chapter, this section is suggestive of the weaknesses observed in the Colombian experience and expectations.

51 As some of the researchers and experts interviewed pointed out, the South African experience of DDR can be understood as a non-successful one, while the Mozambican process is recognised as a "successful" experience. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that, according to the international standards of DDR, the success of the Mozambican experience is relative. There is not a successful experience in the world, and the standards are ideal situations.

As Colletta et al pointed out, although the dispensation of former combatants after a war has ended is a problem as old as war itself, DDR first emerged as a coherent set of tools for managing war to peace transitions in the closing years of the Cold War. With the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the numerous proxy wars of a bipolar era continued to rage, and a host of other dormant conflicts surfaced as outright civil conflicts challenging various state regimes around the globe. The combination of fading proxy-wars and newly-ignited civil conflicts posed enormous risks to the stability and security of the global system. First employed by the UN to help support and implement negotiated settlements to civil conflicts, DDR rapidly assumed a central role in the management of war to peace transitions under the new founded United Nation's mandate of Peace building (Colletta et al, 2009: 7).

When the United Nations began its work in 1946, some analysts anticipated that disarmament and armament regulation would probably be achieved relatively quickly, whereas decolonization and independence of states would take considerably longer. But matters evolved differently. Decolonization proceeded quickly through the 1960s and 1970s, and the memberships of the United Nations increased from 51 states in 1945 to 189 by 2001, while in the same period progress in disarmament and arms regulation was disappointingly arduous and slow (Boothby, 2002: 1). The involvement of United Nations in this kind of issues has been always clear, since Article 1 of the Charter states that the purpose of UN is the maintenance of international peace and security, and, to that end, to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace (Ibid.: 1 - 2).

But this purpose has never been achieved easily, and, in fact, has never satisfactorily been achieved. With the emergence in the late 1940s of confrontation between the two principal military alliances, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and the ensuing Cold War, which lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Security Council was unable to take any action on contentious issues such as a plan for the regulation of armaments (Ibid.: 2). In 1952, the General assembly created the Disarmament Commission, which combined two former bodies: the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments; with the objective of making proposals for a coordinated, comprehensive program of arms limitations and reductions of armed forces and measures to eliminate all major weapons adaptable to mass destruction (Ibid.: 2 - 4). After that, the UN had the First Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament in 1978 and a second one in 1982. None of these had the expected results. Nonetheless, with the ending of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the threat of a major nuclear exchange receded, and the two major nuclear powers, Russia and the United States, themselves took steps to reduce their nuclear stockpiles, which represented some 98 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons (Ibid.: 6 - 9).

On disarmament, the UN has had many initiatives, such as the Chemical Weapons Conventions, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small and Light Weapons. From this, and regarding DDR, the UN has led initiatives and created mechanisms to support disarmament in the world. As Boothby pointed out, UN peacekeeping operations have become much more complex than they were in the early 1990s. With societies and economies torn apart by savage internal conflicts, peace operations have widened to embrace conflict prevention and peace making, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. In many of the intrastate conflicts, the combatants are often young men, and occasionally young women, who have been recruited or forced into combat service by warlords and factional leaders. Some may be as young as 10 or 11 years old, and many have little or no

education. A large number of combatants have no concept of security except that from the end of a gun, and they do not necessarily view the end of war bringing any benefits if they have no job, no education, and no future (Boothby, 2002: 27).

During the Cold War, security was identified within the framework of post-conflict contexts, mainly with the dismantling of military institutions, the demobilization of the combatants who formed part of them and the reconfiguration of the armed forces, efforts that were fundamentally supported by through bilateral donors. At that time, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants took place mainly through the creation of civilian jobs and the licensing of veterans. It was not until the late 1980s that the United Nations (UN) began to support such processes in countries where armed conflict had taken place. In May 1990, the United Nations Security Council (S / RES / 650) introduced the DDR mandate for the first time as part of a peacekeeping mission implemented by that organization by extending the mandate of the Observer Group (ONUCA), which had been deployed in 1989 in Nicaragua, to allow the voluntary demobilization of members of the Nicaraguan resistance (Zirion Landaluze, 2012: 11).

An optimally implemented disarmament process must provide stored and recorded weapons in a way that allows obtaining information such as serial number, type of weapons or model, with which weapons tracking processes can be carried out. In turn serves to identify patterns of origin and routes of illegal arms trafficking. Disarmament is then one of the main elements of the post-conflict stabilization mechanism, which also includes the demobilization and reintegration of combatants (Aguirre, Alvarez and Pardo, 2013: 24). The rigorous follow-up of these processes is the success of a disarmament that prevents the incomplete delivery of arsenals, the diversion and theft of weapons, as well as the collection of useful information for subsequent tracing (Ibid.: 25).

As Fisas points out, The difference between the new approaches to security and the old schemes followed during the Cold War lies in the analysis of the risks and threats, as well as in differentiating between what is possible and what is likely. A security policy based on all possible threats runs the risk of being paranoid, since it is true that anything can happen, although its probability is infinitesimal. On the other hand, it is much more reasonable to plan based on what is likely, which implies a more realistic calculation. Today, it is unreasonable to think that Russia will invade militarily the countries of Western Europe. Therefore, it is not necessary to plan a defence depending on that hypothesis. On the other hand, there is awareness that there are risks arising from the threats of terrorist groups, but at the same time there is the conviction that only through police and intelligence cooperation can this threat be dealt with. No one would ever think of justifying an increase in nuclear arsenals to combat terrorism. The media would not be justified. It is therefore a question of finding the most appropriate means to deal with the real threats that surround us, and these threats have an ecological, economic, cultural, social and political character. How to combat human trafficking, climate change or extreme poverty? It is not by military means, of course. Hence, security policies have been demilitarized, and the military component is only one of the resources to be used for certain threats, not for all (Fisas, 2012: 10).

Table 2. Recent Disarmament Processes in the World (up to 2012)

Country	Number of Small and Light Weapons	Weapons per combatant (estimate)	Destruction of weapons
Afghanistan	36.571	0.47	Partial
Angola	33000	0.34	Total
Burundi	5.400	1.2	Partial
Colombia	18.051	0.57	Partial
Congo	11.776	0.18	
Ivory Coast	2.121		Total
Eritrea			Cantoned
Filipinas	4.874	0.49	
Indonesia	1.018	0.28	Total
Liberia	30.646	0.28	Total
Nepal	3.475	0.18	
Rwanda	6.000		Total
Sierra Leone	42.300	0.58	
Sudan			Cantoned

Source: Herrera Berbel, 2013: 33.

DDR processes have evolved depending on the complexity of conflict contexts. During the Cold War the DDR processes were conceived from a "minimalist" vision, considering basic approaches such as maintaining stability between parties after a ceasefire or as packages of reforms to military institutions. Since the early 1990s, however, DDR processes have been moving towards a multidimensional or "maximalist" approach combining security and development as necessary conditions to ensure the successful social, political and economic reintegration of ex-combatants into life Civil society and thus move towards a stable and lasting peace (Aguirre, Alvarez and Pardo, 2013: 24).

Table 3. Demobilisation Processes in the World (up to 2012).

Country	Group	Number of combatants
Angola	UNITA	105.000
South Sudan	SPLA	80.000
Liberia	LURD	34.273
Colombia	AUC	31.671
Nepal	Maoists	31.152
Nigeria	MEND	20.192
Ivory Coast	Forces Nouvelles	17.000
Congo	Ninjas	15.000
Liberia	MODEL	13.148
Liberia	AFL	12.254
Uganda	LRA	12.119
Burundi	Gardiens de la Paix	11.733
El Salvador	FMNL	11.000
Filipinas	MNLF	10.000
Burundi	Combatants Militants	9.668
Burundi	FNL	8.500
Uganda	WNBF	4.074
Indonesia	GAM	3.000
Guatemala	URNG	3.000
Nicaragua	Contra	2.300

Source: Fisas Vicenc, 2012: 32.

Table 4. Contextual Factors Shaping DDR Design and Implementation[52]

The nature of the conflict and the peace	-The nature, causes and history of the conflict -The manner in which conflict ended (victory, negotiated settlement, imposed Settlement, etc.) -The security situation -Illicit use of legal and illegal natural resources or other criminal activities to finance violence
The political will and social characteristics of the relevant stakeholders	-The political will, level of political representation, and internal organization of the parties to the conflict (armed groups, state institutions, political parties, communities) -The levels of trust and confidence among and within the parties to conflict -The needs and interests of local, national and regional stakeholders -The degree of social cohesion -The degree of support for transitional justice
Institutional capacity and quality of governance	-The reach and institutional capacity of the State -The condition of formal justice institutions -Extent and equity of local political participation -Bureaucratic integrity and degree of corruption
Economic Conditions	-Logistical, infrastructural and market constraints -Natural resource endowments -The state of the economy, in particular unemployment, currency stability, and the integration of regional and national markets The investment of the domestic and international private sector -The political and financial engagement of donors
Cultural Context	-'Cultural identities' including race; ethnicity; customs, norms and values; language; gender roles, etc.

52 Source: Colletta et al, 2009: 20 - 21.

Besides the contextual factors to take into account for the design of DDR programmes, the Cartagena Contribution also points out that there are a number of critical issues and cross-cutting themes, such as: local ownership, clarity on goals and expectations, addressing the multifaceted capital deficits of former combatants, addressing the needs of groups of special concern, justice and reparations for victims, and State capacity. It means that: 1) DDR must be anchored at the local level, actively involving communities, in order to make a contribution to a real, sustainable and lasting peace; 2) Communities and combatants alike may misunderstand DDR processes, benefits, and limitations. Misunderstandings can raise expectations that will be unmet, and generate anxieties and concerns that could be mitigated; 3) Ex-combatants typically suffer from a variety of capital deficits: lower levels of human capital (formal education, civilian vocational and life skills, and work experience) insufficient productive assets, and eroded social capital and cohesion (broken links between ex-combatants and the broader community and the state). Reintegration programs must address each of these deficits in an integrated manner in order to provide sustainable livelihoods. 4) Groups of special concern remain underserved and under-protected in many contexts. Women, children, the disabled, and internally displaced persons should receive special attention in the design and implementation of DDR programs. 5) The social reintegration of former combatants may be impossible without the individual and communal healing provided by justice and reparation, whether reached through formal or traditional mechanisms. 6) Weak state capacity may lead to increased corruption and financial leakage from DDR programs, while poor governance and weak participation may lead to resentment and alienation, increasing the likelihood of conflict relapse. Where feasible, external actors should seek to build on and strengthen State capacity where it exists (Colletta et al, 2009: 21 - 23).

One of the key lessons found by the UN is the importance of international involvement in DDR processes in the world. According to the UN Security Council, reintegration of ex-combatants “could not be left to just the countries involved. Not only was it financially challenging, it had other dimensions that presented equal difficulties. The international community must seriously assist countries involved in post-conflict peace-building” (UN Security Council Press Release SC/6697, July 8, 1999). Frequently, peace negotiations are accompanied and promoted by foreign countries that act as mediators, observers and facilitators. In most cases, those countries give further support to DDR processes or reconstruction initiatives. Furthermore, the assistance of international organisations such as UN, OAS or AU is important in order to generate an adequate climate for peace-building.

In this sense, among the lessons to be learned from El Salvador's experience was that it was possible to establish cooperation between the United Nations and individual countries. The involvement of the United Nations had come about through a sovereign decision by the Government of El Salvador, in keeping with the wishes of the parties to the conflict. The mission's mandate had been carried out impartially and objectively, so that the parties had faith in the organization as the mediator. Cooperation and international financial assistance were vital for social development programmes. Despite the complexities of the operation in El Salvador, it was clear that once there was political will and agreement on a clear-cut framework, and an established mandate setting out the functions of the operation, the United Nations was able to contribute to resolving a conflict, as exemplified in El Salvador (UN Security Council Press Release SC/6697, July 8, 1999). What the involvement of the international community implies is the participation of multiple parties and actors, both international and local, can increase the possibilities of success.

Linked to the participation of the international community, it is equally important to include various national actors, and to recognise the complexities of such involvement. As Meek and Malan pointed out, "DDR involves a multiplicity of actors -from rebels, government, [...] to non-governmental organizations- making regular communication and coordination critical" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 14). The fact that there are different organisations playing different roles means that the information will be spread and that there is a risk of having a duplication of efforts from one or more of the participants. Indeed, a more effective approach will be to articulate the actions taken by the diverse actors involved. This is why, periodical meetings that include all the actors involved should be held to identify needs and priorities and to articulate efforts.

National groups that are not included in the peace process and DDR initiatives can become serious challenges. Regarding this problem,

> "Militias who are outside the peace process (and therefore generally exempt from UN-mandated [or national] DDR programmes) pose a unique challenge. Sometimes they want to be included in DDR but the UN cannot accommodate them. Other times they can be spoilers of the peace process, raising insecurity among parties to the peace agreement and stalling activities. More space within mandates to accommodate working with these groups may need to be considered" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 15)

It is not easy to open space to accommodate these groups in a context of political uncertainty, but efforts in this direction should be done.

Equally related to the inclusion of multiple actors in the process of DDR is the question of who is eligible for disarmament. This is now being recognized as a key issue by the UN and the countries implementing disarmament strategies. "In this regard, the entire society including ex-combatants and civilians who took up arms for protection should be eligible" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 10). Some initiatives of disarmament of civilian population have taken place in post-conflict situations. Usually DDR processes are focused to address demilitarisation issues, but disarmament can go further when it includes more than the military population. Disarmament of society can prevent, to some extent, the increase of armed violence and crime in a post-conflict situation.

In the political context, which is influenced by national interests and international pressures, the TRC has played an important role in peace building and reconciliation processes. During the past years, the position of the international community is that truth, justice and reparation are the three main bases of peace-building. In this context, TRCs are one of the most promoted strategies to achieve reconciliation, assuming that truth has to be known in order to permit forgiveness. Nevertheless, the position of ex-combatants is different. According to Sasha Gear, "the case of Namibia is held up by one of these correspondents [South African ex-combatants] as having taken a more favourable route to reconciliation. In Namibia, all combatants were granted amnesty and no Truth Commission took place. The effects of this approach, it is claimed, have been more reconciliatory as far as ex-combatants are concerned" (Gear, 2002: 8). This is not to say that TRCs are negative in achieving reconciliation, but there is a need to think of alternative strategies to reconcile society, diminishing the negative effects of the TRCs over the ex-combatants. At least, it is necessary to complement TRCs with actions oriented to

prevent revenge and the perception that violent actions can be taken against perpetrators. The balance between justice and reconciliation has to take into account the position of those who are handing over their weapons.

Another problem that has to do with the implementation of DDR processes is that ex-combatants do not constitute a homogeneous group. The needs of special groups associated with warring factions (particularly women, children and the disabled) should be addressed in the design and planning stages of any DDR effort. As Lamb argues, "demobilisation and peace building efforts should be more participative. The various schemes should allow the former soldiers to participate in their design and implementation, and subsequently, treat demobilised persons as subjects, not as objects" (Lamb, 1997). For instance, commanders and combatants need to go through different reintegration procedures (Meek and Malan, 2004: 35). Even more, the percentage of women in the armed groups is variable, but it is usually between 10 and 30% of the total, the latter figure being closer to their participation in conflicts in Sri Lanka, El Salvador or Nicaragua. Women enter armed groups for different reasons. Some are kidnapped, 19 others voluntarily join political convictions, flee from abuses or repression in the home, follow family members or seek protection from an insecure environment. Likewise, there is a tendency to recruit women and children only to the extent that the possibility of recruiting adult men becomes reduced (Zirion Landaluze, 2012: 17 - 18).

Although it may be paradoxical, conflict often allows women to empower themselves, acquire greater responsibilities or increase their political participation and their ability to intervene in decision-making processes. Indeed, the transformation of conflict into gender roles and identities 20 in the immediately preceding period enables women to play a wide variety of roles in contexts of conflict, including combatants; widows of war; Spies; members of organizations opposed to war and in favour of reconciliation; targets of sexual violence used as a weapon of war, wives of combatants; NGO workers; women in their communities in rural areas; sex slaves, women living in the city away from conflict; etc. (Ibid.: 18). It follows from all of the foregoing that the use of the category of women or even women combatants in a generic way may be useful in making the specificities of these categories visible vis-à-vis others - for example, in relation to men or men combatants - but can not hide the reality of the very different experiences that women - and women combatants - have in contexts of conflict or post conflict (Ibid.).

Not surprising is the fact that, in practically all cases throughout the world, "the lack of clarity in reintegration planning and execution remains the Achilles heel of DDR programmes. For example, market research should be conducted to identify training priorities, job opportunities that exist or can be created, and the specific needs of former combatants" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 12). As we have pointed out, the lack of information goes from the numbers of combatants to be demobilised, their profiles, needs, expectations, and the political, economic and social context they will face once the demobilisation has taken place. Without enough information it is difficult to design, and planning becomes a weak exercise. It also implies unnecessary expenditure, and misuse of time, resources and manpower. But the problem of information should include mechanisms to ensure reliable information. For instance, "lists provided by commanders are often inconsistent and are clearly used to exploit the DDR process. For example, people may agree to pay the commander part of their reintegration benefit if they are put on the list" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 19).

On the level of implementation and design of DDR programmes, the benefits offered should be carefully considered. An appropriate system of information favour actions like training and strategies like Career Certification Programmes (ACP). Some of the advantages of ACPs as a conversion strategy are:

> "a. They would allow military personnel who are about to be demobilised the opportunity to convert their skills to gainful use within the civilian sector."
>
> "b. Given the fact that ACP are not full-time courses, military personnel can complete their certification whilst still in uniform."
>
> "c. ACP provides for the utilisation of the extensive skills which military personnel have acquired within the armed forces for benefit of both the public and private sector."
>
> "d. It would provide a visible demonstration by both government and the armed forces that the welfare of former soldiers is being considered." (Williams, 2005: 12)

On the other hand, "the consequences of not developing a systematic and clear human resource conversion strategy are self-evident and include [...] the ability of former soldiers to use their not inconsiderable skills towards other ends" (Williams, 2005: 14).

As Willet notice, various observers have expressed concerns about the lack of effective economic reintegration programmes. For instance the UN has reported concerns about the numbers of ex-combatants that have joined the army of young men seeking gainful employment. Disaffected youth with few economic prospects, offer ample opportunities for peace spoilers to incite violence. The continued failure to address the exclusion of young men from economic activity is likely to create the conditions for a conflict to reignite (Willett, 2005: 583).

Similarly, the benefits should include psychosocial support. Many soldiers are traumatised by war and suffer psychosocial problems. Sandler describes how the psychological complex of "war trauma" (post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD) seems to centre specifically on the following features:

> "severe survival guilt and self punishment; episodes of severe rage and violent impulses toward what may be indiscriminate targets; psychic numbing; alienation from one's own feelings; doubts about whether one can ever love or trust someone else again; and pessimism about the very nature of love and life itself (Sandler, cited in Cock, 1993). The reintegration of ex-combatants into society has to address these psychological needs as soldiers suffering from PTSD are a potential threat to their families and to society" (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 5-6)

Finally, there is a fact that cannot be forgotten when implementing DDR programmes. Reintegration means reconciling combatants with communities which were victims of atrocities. Reintegration had to be such that former combatants would identify more with the community than with their former roles as fighters. (UN Security Council Press Release SC/6697, July 8, 1999). That is why "reintegration should not be understood as an individual process, but rather as a community orientated process, as the respective host communities are playing an important role in the reintegration of returning ex-combatants" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 33). In this sense, another lesson that has been identified is that "the functional element of DDR should be conceptually joined, with the reintegration phase also

incorporating other "Rs" such as repatriation, reconciliation, rehabilitation and relocation. Also the conceptual shift should extend to talking about DDR, and not DD&R, where reintegration is viewed as an additional component done by others and outside the key focus of disarmament and demobilisation" (Meek and Malan, 2004: 7).

DDR in Mozambique

Briefly, the actors involved in the Mozambican conflict were the national government, leading a characteristic one-party state made up of members from the *Frente para la Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo),* and the opposition *Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo).* Frelimo was formed in 1962, under colonial rule, in an attempt to achieve independence from Portugal. The movement was born in a foreign country (Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania) as an initiative of Mozambican students and intellectuals forced into exile. Frelimo was originally a Marxist party. In 1964, Frelimo's armed struggle began in Mozambique. Before independence, it established alternative social and political structures based on a subsistence economy which sustained not only the civilians, but the guerrillas as well (Opello, 1980: 276). In September 1974, Frelimo and the Portuguese government signed the peace accord and Frelimo was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of Mozambican people. After independence, Frelimo implemented "a highly centralized party-state characterized by nationalization of the means of production and political unification under 'proletariat dictature' [...] of the party" (Virtanen, 2003: 246).

On the other hand, Renamo's roots can be traced back to 1974 when it was formed with the support of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization and the Portuguese. "Renamo was formed [...] from personnel of the elite black units of the Portuguese colonial forces, [...] who fled Mozambique before or immediately after independence" (Hall & Young, 1997: 117). Other members of Renamo were "former Frelimo soldiers imprisoned for corruption that [sic] also possessed military and guerrilla skills as ground for personal resentment against the Frelimo government" (Hall & Young, 1997: 117). Renamo was, politically, an anti communist movement and the only significant national opposition to Frelimo's government.

Soon after the peace agreement between Portugal and Frelimo, Renamo began its armed opposition[53]. The civil war in Mozambique came to an end with the signing of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) in 1992 followed by a United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) until the end of 1994 (Leão, 2004: 2). The UN involvement in Mozambique, between July 1991 and October 1992, grew directly out of the GPA negotiated under the auspices of the Saint Egidio's Community, a Catholic charity organization. The agreement, reached in Rome, called for UN monitoring of the ceasefire and elections, as well as calling upon it to provide humanitarian assistance to bolster the reconstruction of the economy. It established a timetable for the implementation of the major components of the peace agreement; *inter alia*, full demobilisation of both armies by April 1993 and the elections in October 1993. The mandate of ONUMOZ included a specific component to carry out a comprehensive

53 Different authors attribute different dates for Renamo's incursions: some mention 1976 while others 1978. Following Leão (2004) we use 1978 as a reference date "since it was from 1978 on that Renamo's incursion took the systematised character of a civil war" (Leão, 2004; 5).

disarmament and demobilization process that included a ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign troops, separation and concentration of forces, dismantling paramilitary groups and the collection, storage and destruction of weapons. It also included incentives such as seeds, food and agricultural tools in exchange for weapons. After a debate by the Security Council and the passing of Resolution 797 (1992) in October, the United Nations Operation for Mozambique was officially launched (Alden, 2000: 2).

In cooperation with the western powers which had been party to the Rome agreement, the UN, the Government and Renamo formally established the Supervising and Monitoring Commission (CSC) as the central authority overseeing the implementation of the GPA. Chaired by the UN's Special Representative, Aldo Ajello, the CSC was composed of representatives from the government, Renamo, Italy, Portugal, France, Great Britain and the United States (Alden, 2000: 2). ONUMOZ was charged with the structuring and implementation of the demilitarization scheme for the estimated 63,000 government troops and 20,000 Renamo troops (idem), and although it achieved moderate success in relation to demobilisation, in the field of disarmament the process had serious failures. To achieve the demilitarization of Mozambique, the Technical Unit proposed the establishment of a team of three UN military officers and one civilian officer in each of the 49 Assembly Areas for the demobilizing Mozambican troops. This group was to organize - in conjunction with the local camp commander in charge of the troops - everything from the registration of soldiers, their disarmament and storage of their weaponry, logistics for the maintenance of the camps themselves, the monitoring of disputes, assisting in the processing of selected soldiers for the new national army and, finally, in the formal demobilisation and transport of ex-soldiers (Alden, 2000: 4).

As Vines pointed out, the failure of ONUMOZ to effect meaningful disarmament during peacekeeping operations has had serious consequences for both Mozambique and its neighbouring South Africa. While completely disarming all individuals would have been an impossible task, the mission failed even to accomplish the more modest goal of destroying the weapons it had collected and earmarked for decommissioning. As a result, since the conflict ended, weapons have continued to circulate and armed crime has risen sharply (Vines, 1998). A measure of the failure of disarmament comes from the contrast between what was handed over, and the data coming from the former providers of weapons. Russia supplied the majority of weapons to the ruling Frelimo, and China also provided some weaponry[54]. In early 1992, as part of the planning process for demobilisation, Russia provided details of what it had shipped to Mozambique. However, these details remain confidential. In 1995, INTERPOL reported that some 1.5 million AK-47s had been distributed to the civilian population during the course of the war in Mozambique. The government distributed tens of thousands of AK-47s to civilian militia units in 1982. Few of these were ever returned.

Similarly, Renamo received weapons from Rhodesia and later from South Africa. Kenya provided ammunition in the late 1980s, and Portuguese, German, American and Gulf sources also provided weaponry. Much of Renamo's weaponry consisted of re-circulated Chinese and Russian light weapons (Vines, 1998). In contrast, the total number of weapons recovered during the demobilisation stood at 150,000, including arms found at declared government and Renamo caches (Alden, 2000:9).

54 As a former combatant said, Frelimo, during the early years of the independence struggle, used to exchange handicrafts for weapons.

Following Vines, ONUMOZ's failure stemmed, in large part, from its weak mandate regarding disarmament. The operation's mandate failed to provide a clear definition of what disarmament should entail or the criteria for its success. In addition, it failed to address the distinctions between disarmament and demobilisation. Disarmament was implicit in ONUMOZ's mandate as part of demobilisation. A demobilised soldier was defined as an individual who "subsequent to E-Day was demobilised at the decision of the relevant command, and handed over the weapons, ammunition, equipment, uniform and documentation in his possession" (Vines, 1998). The difference between the formal definitions during the process of DDR and the practical situations caused a gap that left not just weapons, but also ex-combatants out of the process. Regarding this problem, Anselmo Victor, General Secretary of Renamo in 2001, declared that some combatants did not present themselves in the Assembly Areas because before the establishment of these areas they returned to the regions of origin. In this way they were left out of the registers of the process (Victor, 2001). With the assembly phase completed on 15 August, 1994, the final total of registered soldiers was 64,130 (Government) and 22,637 (Renamo). At the same time, the UN mission privately acknowledged that both sides retained forces and weaponry outside of the demobilisation process, approximately 5,000 Government troops and 2,000 Renamo troops, as a hedge against post-electoral crises (Alden, 2000: 9).

After more than ten years of peace and the implementation of the demobilisation process, there continued to be problems with the reintegration of those troops that were left out of the 1994 process. An example of this is that, according to an ex-combatant and a researcher, in Inhaminga district a Renamo unit of women soldiers still remains armed by 2005[55]. However, the political implications of recognizing these facts are in themselves obstacles for their demobilisation. In contrast, post-UN disarmament (although not demobilisation) in Mozambique has had greater success, and reflects a growing confidence in peace at the local level as well as in senior policy-making circles (Vines, 1998).

The benefits for ex-combatants consists of six months severance pay from the government and, following concern about the potential threat to peace and law and order posed by the demobilized soldiers, eighteen months of subsidies in the form of cash disbursements handed out at local branches of the *Banco Popular de Desenvolvimento*. The last eighteen months of subsidies were paid by international funds through UNDP as part of a Reintegration Support Scheme (Maslen, 1997). By providing a reasonable assurance of financial support for an extended period of time, it was hoped that the former combatants would find employment in their districts, while simultaneously, integrating into the local community. The end result would be to cement the transition from the life of a soldier to that of a civilian. To assist in this process, vocational kits consisting of agricultural tools, seeds, and food rations for up to three months were given to demobilized soldiers upon departure from the Assembly Areas by the International Labour Organisation (Alden, 2000: 10). Nevertheless, a misconception amongst international donors has been that small-scale agriculture could facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants in Mozambique. For several decades, small-scale agriculture has not had the capacity to, by itself; guarantee the subsistence of the rural family (Vines, 1998).

Under Decree No. 3/88 of July 1988, Frelimo soldiers of the armed liberation struggle and soldiers of the Mozambican Government army were entitled to a veteran's severance pension. This pension was also provided after the demobilisation process of 1994. This was, however, limited to demobilized

55 We have no information after that date on this statement, but there have not been news or official statements neither recognising this nor refusing it.

soldiers from the government side who were drafted at the age of 18 or older and who had completed at least ten years of military service, thereby excluding *all* Renamo soldiers and those Frelimo soldiers recruited below the age of 18. This imbalance continues to trigger complaints (Maslen, 1997). According to Ana Leão[56] the reason for this imbalance is that Frelimo soldiers saved part of their salaries, during their service in the army, for pensions. Additionally, the handicapped and the landmine-injured also had special pensions and, in this case, Frelimo and Renamo soldiers enjoyed equal benefits. As a political strategy, Alfonso Dakhlama, leader of Renamo, promised the Renamo soldiers that if he were to win the elections, Renamo ex-combatants would have the same pension that the Frelimo demobilised combatants had and that this would be applied retroactively[57] at the beginning of the demobilisation process.

Evaluating the Mozambican DDR process

More than ten years after the end of the DDR process several researchers, experts and ex-combatants were asked about their perceptions of the process, especially regarding the final element: reintegration. According to Salomão Mungoi[58], from PROPAZ, the training component of the process was not properly conceived. This component was created in offices and mainly by the international community. The training plan was rigid, without any kind of flexibility, and did not fit the necessities and expectations of the ex-combatants nor the need or demands of the national economy. For instance, some demobilized soldiers were trained to be electricians but were returning to areas without electricity; others were trained to be car mechanics and returned to areas where there were few if any cars.

Similarly, the demobilisation implied the separation of "partners", resulting in the dispersion and the loss of teamwork. An interesting avenue for future processes would be to think of ways to dismantle the structure of the armies while still maintaining some kind of link between the ex-combatants in order to promote their already entrenched team work ethic. In the same breath, Salomão Mungoi pointed out that subsequent to the GPA, there has not been rearmament or war. Society has not had major problems accepting the political change, and there is competing between the political parties. He also argues that there is a general commitment for peace by society as a whole, and a vision of reconciliation. The sense of reconciliation comes from the fact that, through associations of ex-combatants, many demobilised soldiers from opposite parties are working together. An example is AMODEG, and even PROPAZ, who work for non-violent conflict resolution in six of the ten provinces in the country.

A *Study of demobilized soldiers facing difficulties in the reintegration process* prepared by the International Organization of Migration in September 1996 found that: In no cases did [demobilized soldiers] show disposition towards violence or social disruption. The importance of military structures has clearly waned and community structures (family, traditional authority, community organizations) seem to have replaced military structures in assisting with conflict resolution, problem solving, and social support. Community leaders drew no links between [demobilized soldiers] and crime or conflict.

56 Ana Leão was a researcher for the Institute for Security Studies, and was interviewed in Pretoria, November 23, 2005.

57 Interview to Ana Leão, November 23, 2005; confirmed by a conversation with a Renamo ex-soldier in Beira, December 18, 2005.

58 Interview with Salomão Mungoi, Maputo, September 3, 2005.

In some cases, community leaders stated that they even depend on certain [demobilized soldiers] to assist them in resolving community problems to avoid conflict (*Study of demobilized soldiers facing difficulties in the reintegration process*, final report prepared for the International Organization for Migration, quoted in Malsen, 1997).

An interesting point of view was expressed by Ana Leão[59]. According to her, one of the failures of the reintegration process is that there was no differentiation between officials and soldiers or between the educated soldiers and those who lacked formal education when the benefits were given. Because of this, some of the educated ex-combatants got the same tool kits as those who were going to cultivate their lands. Similarly, Jacinta Jorge, director of PROPAZ,[60] complains about the lack of differentiation between women and men. This shows, not just a lack of planning but also a lack of information and databases about the profiles of the ex-combatants. The preponderance of inaccurate information is a complaint raised, not only by researchers like Ana Leão, but by all the actors involved in the process.

Asked about the main achievements of the Mozambican DDR process, Ana Leão pointed out that: 1) after eleven years, the differentiation between the former combatants and the rest of the community has all but dissipated. They are no longer identified as a separate group and now share in the same problems and difficulties as the rest of the population; 2) there is reconciliation between the people of Mozambique. Although there is a lack of political reconciliation at the leadership level, at the grass root level the people are reconciled. Most of the soldiers have taken part in some kind of traditional ritual of healing and reconciliation with their communities. The international community put a great deal of pressure on Mozambique to have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but civil society did not want a TRC. The notion of justice in Mozambique, for cultural reasons, is very different and the people felt that the traditional mechanisms were sufficient enough to achieve justice and reconciliation; 3) the two-year subsidy, and the way it was handed out, was adequate to achieve reinsertion into society. The ex-combatants received their first months of payment during the cantonment period, and thereafter received the payments in the branch of the bank closest to their community. One stipulation was that if the participants went two months without collecting the subsidy he or she would not receive any future financial support. This encouraged the ex-combatants to remain in their communities for at least the entire two years of the programme - a fact that helped in the social reintegration process.

With regard to the achievements pointed out by Leão, it can be surmised that the process of reintegration, at least the social reintegration, has been successful in Mozambique, due to the fact that there is no differentiation between former combatants and their communities today. Although Samuel Tafula[61], director of AMODEG, complained that just 25% of the 75.000 ex-combatants associated in AMODEG are effectively reintegrated, he admitted that he was referring only to economic reintegration and that, in terms of social and political reintegration, the ex-combatants have no complaints. This reinforces the perception that the causal link from "economic reintegration" to "social reintegration" is not necessarily a balanced equation. This is not to say that economic reintegration is not important for the social and political phase of the process, but rather that failures in achieving economic reintegration do not necessarily imply the automatic failure of achieving the acceptance of the ex-combatants by their communities.

59 Interview with Ana Leão, Pretoria, November 23, 2005.
60 Interview with Jacinta Jorge, Maputo, September 3, 2005.
61 Interview with Samuel Tafula, Maputo, December 28, 2005.

The second point raised by Ana Leão – regarding the reconciliation in Mozambique - is significant not just because of what has been done to end the war, but also because the process of reconciliation has developed into an exemplary experience of peace building in Mozambique. For instance, initiatives such as the *Associação Instituto de Promoçião da Paz* (PROPAZ) are directly born out of the context of DDR. According to Jacinta Jorge[62], director of PROPAZ, the organisation was created in 1996 as a response to the levels of conflict during the first years following the peace accords, especially conflict among the ex-combatants. Initially PROPAZ, created by ex-combatants from Renamo and Frelimo, was specifically focussed on the conflict caused by former soldiers. The original idea was to work, through education, on the individual level and from there, on community situations. Today, PROPAZ has peace promoters in six provinces of Mozambique. The individuals working for PROPAZ -former combatants- are not merely working with ex-combatants but also with communities in nonviolent conflict resolution. This experience has contributed to reconciliation not just by promoting local healing rituals, but also by mediating in conflicts and in showing that it is possible to unite the efforts of ex-combatants coming from opposite parties. They have also contributed to processes of disarmament that followed the demobilisation of 1994, with tasks as important as the identification of arms caches. Now, PROPAZ is helping to reproduce its experience in Southern Africa, and has supported the creation of a similar institute in Angola (Procopaz).

The third achievement pointed out by Leão can be considered a lesson in itself. The two years subsidy proved to be a balance between a support for reinsertion in the families and communities of the ex-combatants while in the long term also preventing the perception that, in a country where internally displaced people, former exiles, victims and war affected communities need to be assisted, the resources are not unfairly used to benefit the ex-combatants as a special group. The way the subsidies were paid, can be successfully implemented in other rural contexts around the world.

The Declaration of Maringué

With the intention of generating processes with regional impact, PROPAZ led the initiative of the first regional conference regarding the role of the ex-combatant in peace building in Southern Africa. The conference took place in Nhamatanda and Maringué districts in Sofala province, Mozambique, from December 14 to 16, 2005. During the conference, which had the participation of ex-combatants, academics and experts regarding the issues of peace building and DDR processes from Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Angola, Bosnia & Herzegovina, South Africa, Colombia and Mozambique; the participants discussed the concept of ex-combatant, the implications of reintegration and the role of the ex-combatants in peace building. At the end of the conference the participants signed the Declaration of Maringué, which contains the main conclusions of the discussions. Maringué was one of the most affected districts during the war, a former Renamo campsite, and is a symbol of the recent political history of Mozambique.

The Declaration of Maringué reflects the worries of ex-combatants and associations of former combatants from Southern Africa. It has three parts: preamble, commitments, and demands. The preamble defines the ex-combatant as: Every man or women, who had been part of armed military

62 Interview with Jacinta Jorge, Maputo, September 3, 2005.

forces and, after any means of demobilisation, have become civilians; including all of them who had developed activities related with national ideology in or outside the country; all the women that have been directly or indirectly involved in combat, regardless of its regularity; every child that, forced by circumstances, has participated in combat; prisoners of war and political inmates; independently of the nature of the conflict, the way of recruitment, time of permanence in the armed forces, or political affiliation.

The commitments declared are:

- to continue strengthening the work of the ex-combatants in the region;
- to get involved in humanitarian and development affairs;
- to recognise and empower women ex-combatants;
- to be non-partisans in the work with ex-combatants;
- to be transparent in the execution of their duties;
- To improve the programmes that promote education for peace.
- To be available to contribute in peace negotiations in the grass root level.
- To avoid and prevent conflicts.
- To offer their knowledge for demining.

The declaration demands are:

- That governments recognise ex-combatants as key partners in pacification processes;
- That decision-making institutions such as: governments, SADC and AU, recognise the declaration;
- That these institutions ensure the effective reintegration of ex-combatants in social, economic, cultural and psychological terms, with particular focus on women, children and handicapped;
- That the governments adopt policies of reintegration;
- That governments avoid and prevent violence.

The Declaration of Maringué deserves some comments. Through it, the ex-combatants recognise a series of challenges. Inadequate definitions used by policy makers have caused exclusion of some categories of ex-combatants from DDR programmes. The Declaration, in this sense, is an effort by ex-combatants to include individuals that are frequently ignored in the definitions. Similarly, the definition

of ex-combatants wants to raise the issues of women[63] and children[64] combatants, who are frequently disadvantaged or discriminated[65]. Secondly, the commitments are directly related to the skills and knowledge of the ex-combatants, which they perceive are seldom taken into account. Those skills can be better used once they are recognised. Demining, for instance, is a task that is substantially more effective with the knowledge of ex-combatants. Finally, the demands raised by the Declaration show the position of ex-combatants towards reintegration: the perceived need of effective programmes and policies of reintegration in the national and international frameworks.

Lessons from South Africa

The process of DDR in South Africa has been considered by researchers and ex-combatants as an unsuccessful one. Or, as Williams pointed out, "the "lessons learned" from this process [...] provide [...] more of a series of examples of what "not to do" when attempting to demobilise large numbers of people" (Williams, 2005: 2). Lessons are not always related to what should be done, and we can learn from unsuccessful experiences as well. On the other hand, although the process is not considered successful, most of the ex-combatants have found their way back to their communities and now have a "normal life". Even though, the ex-combatants who did not have an adequate reintegration process constitute an especially vulnerable group. The failure of this process was, over all, related to a lack of information, planning and the dissatisfaction of former combatants about the way the institutional process was managed. Needless to say, the way the process was implemented had serious repercussions, not just on the ex-combatants, but also on the perception of society towards them.

Briefly, as part of the transition process, negotiations were held for the integration of ex-combatants into the armed forces, whose agreements included a DDR process in which amnesties were exchanged for information. This allowed locating and destroying 120 caches with armament and ammunition that remained under the control of the armed forces until they were robbed of the military deposits. Due to the refusal of some members of the ANC to hand their weapons over and to the recirculation of stockpiles that generated an increase in crime, voluntary disarmament campaigns such as the Gun Free in 1994 were promoted, which encouraged the collection of weapons in exchange for amnesties, gift certificates, in-kind donations and monetary rewards for about USD 25,000. Between 1997 and 2000, surpluses were destroyed with a total of 262,667 weapons destroyed. However, the campaign did not have the time to publicize the incentives offered and was harshly criticized by South African arms organisations (Aguirre, Álvarez and Pardo, 2015: 40).

The process in South Africa has its own particularities, and differs from other African processes where demobilisation was linked to the ending of war and often included: the cessation of hostilities formalised in a ceasefire agreement, a declaration of forces and weaponry, the encampment of soldiers

63 For a detailed analysis of women facing post-conflict situations, see: Meintjes, Sheila, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen (2001). *The aftermath: women in post-conflict transformation.* Zed Books. London & New York.

64 For an account of the challenges faced by children combatants and their reintegration, see: Machel, Graça (2001). *The impact of war on children*. Hurst & Company. London.

65 According to the Head of the Women's Department of AMODEG, women ex-combatants continue to suffer discrimination, and various forms of assistance, such as financing for housing, are only available to men (Maslen, 1997).

and their subsequent demobilisation. In South Africa, demobilisation was linked to the process of integration of eight armed forces into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and aimed solely at ex-combatants from the liberation armies. Following Williams, at the time of the creation of the SANDF in 1994 it was anticipated that some 138,000 personnel would be integrated into the country's new Defence Force. The envisaged force levels consisted of some 90,000 former South African Defence Force (SADF) members, 32,000 former African National Congress Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) members, 6,000 former Pan-African Congress People's Liberation Army (APLA) members and 10,000 members from the former homeland armies (Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei). Later, in 1996 some 2,000 paramilitary fighters from the Kwa-Zulu Natal based Inkhatha Freedom Party's militia were also included in the integration process (Williams, 2005: 8 – 9). By 2006, the levels of the SANDF had been reduced to 73,000, instead of the 138,000 initially planned. The reasons for this are outlined below. As the DDR process in South Africa was linked with the integration of different armies, it is relevant to consider the integration as a mean to achieving democracy in a more complex transition process towards democracy.

Integration of armed forces in South Africa

As Frankel pointed out, democratization seldom succeed when they are opposed by the military forces of authoritarian regimes and their success rate is improved immeasurably should the military assist or otherwise display forms of social performance that do not discourage the emergence of democratic cultures and structures (Frankel, 2000: vii). All transitions require negotiations including political gamesmanship not only between stakeholders in civil society but also between military actors, especially where each player possesses their own armed forces (Op. Cit.: 1). In South Africa's transition, the will of the SADF was a clue factor that not just permitted integration of forces, but also was an example of integration for other fields of social transformation. Colombia has not considered integration of forces in the last and current process, but due to the importance this process had in South Africa, and its relation to DDR in that context, it is relevant to highlight some aspects of it.

Frankel shows how, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the South African Defence Force and Umkhonto we Sizwe conducted talks about the future of armed forces in South Africa. According to Shubin, it was during the late 1980s when the ANC top leadership began receiving signals from the SADF highest echelons on the urgency of a political settlement (Shubin, 2001:1). On the side of the SADF, there was an strategic analysis of the comparative costs of integrating the MK members individually or as a group (Frankel, 2000: 5), but this decision also had to pass through political considerations and negotiations between MK and the SADF. In fact, as negotiations advanced, MK accused SADF of “discriminatory, devious, perceptive, and arrogant judgements” (Ibid.: 16), trying to impose some conditions on the belief that the integration process was a kind of absorption of MK into SADF, while MK considered the process as a genuine merge of forces, which meant that conditions equally applied to both parties.

Regarding levels of expertise and training, the SADF was surprised by the level of general knowledge About military aviation on the part of their counterparts (Ibid: 7). This also happened in the navy. The level of knowledge by the SADF about the MK and the system of its training was rather pitiful, and the appearance of [MK] cadres with some naval expertise produced confusion in the SAN’ (Frankel quoted

by Shubin, 2001: 2). As Shubin notice, courses of regular officer training in the Soviet Union taken by MK members were more extensive (and probably, more intensive) than those of their new colleagues of the former SADF: the term of such courses in the Soviet military academies was at least three years, while in South Africa it can be as little as six months (Ibid).

Reluctance to integration was also a natural ingredient of the process. As the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) reported, it was becoming clear that "there [were] elements within SAN who not only do not support the integration process but are actively trying to torpedo it" (Frankel, 2000: 65). And distrust was not just on the side of the SADF. As Frankel notice, "some MK leaders believed that the Wallmansthal AA [assembly area] was a concentration camp where they were to be cordoned prior to an SADF military onslaught ... living conditions were, at least at the outset, sufficiently poor to justify some of the worst MK suspicions. Adequate tents, bedding, and clothing were in short supply for much of 1994 and each delay tended to confirm NSF suspicions. Food was initially poor and unvaried, except for that provided to SADF personnel" (Frankel, quoted by Shubin, 2001: 3).

DDR in South Africa

In the South African context, demobilisation refers narrowly to soldiers from the former guerrilla forces of MK and APLA who did not meet the standards for integration into the SANDF or who did not wish to integrate. The process of demobilising those already in the SANDF is referred to as rationalisation (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 7-8). Then, the process was not so much an attempt to reduce the force numbers, as a process of demilitarisation. On the contrary, it was a way to deal with those ex-combatants from the liberation armies who did not want to integrate in the SANDF, or who did not qualify for integration. In fact, there were suspicions that demobilisation was an attempt to obstruct integration of forces, since it was cheaper to offer people packages than to integrate them (Op. Cit.: 13). Additionally, an informal demobilisation process occurred in South Africa during the post-1990 period as many guerrilla fighters returned home "owing to the fact that the integration process was only to occur some four years later. Many of these were "lost" to the system and were, as a result, not placed on the Certified Personnel Register – the register where the names of the personnel from all eight integrating armies were placed" (Williams, 2005: 9).

Similarly, the reduction of the SANDF was due to the fact that "only 15,000 of the registered 38,000 guerrilla fighters were finally attested for service within the new National Defence Force" (Williams, 2005: 9). Most preferred employment elsewhere, and 6,000 of them were demobilised due to ill-health, age or aptitude. To complete the picture, the number of former SADF declined "as a result of either having opted for voluntary severance, termination of service as a result of contract expiration or sheer political reluctance, and fear, to serve under an ANC government. Yet none of these processes attested to a formal demobilisation process!" (idem). By the same token, the governmental initiatives to deal with the process of DDR were based in a complete lack of information[66].

66 Interview to Hugo van der Merwe, Cape Town, November 16, 2005.

Furthermore, the planned demobilisation in South Africa lacks a long-term reintegration strategy. The 1994 demobilisation package had three components: one-off gratuities; limited counselling over a two-week period on personal matters, careers, social services and finance; and the opportunity of joining the military Service Corps (SC) for 18 months and receiving training in basic skills, life skills and adult literacy. It was not compulsory to join the SC and many non-statutory force members took their packages and left, sometimes without the limited counselling. There was no further training or social reintegration assistance offered (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 14). But the way the programme was implemented had serious problems. According to Hugo van der Merwe[67], researcher from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, there was a great deal of corruption involved in the process. Officially it is not acknowledged, and it has not been properly investigated, but "there is lots of stories of people being put onto lists just because they knew the person who has the authority to do that". Similarly, during the training and education programme people got frustrated and left the programme. Additionally, in the process of paying people out, "there was no advice about how to use that money, how to invest in education or anything like that".

If we consider, for instance, the ex-combatants that were based in other countries, like Angola and Namibia, "many felt disoriented on their return to South Africa, and had found reintegration into society stressful. 'When I returned I felt utterly disoriented and had no one to explain basic things such as how one finds a telephone number in a telephone book or how one opens an account' (Cock, quoted in Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 15). Some of them required assistance in dealing with a complex cash economy. In exile, combatants generally handled small amounts of money and many of their day-to-day needs were met by the organisation. An MK official explained, 'Life in MK did little to equip men and women to face the responsibilities of family, managing money, work, and a routine existence... In exile everything was provided; everything was taken care of; you didn't even see money'" (Op. Cit.: 15). The problem with the cash payments, when they are not supplemented by other reintegration programmes or at least mechanisms to encourage their investment on education and productive activities, is that a significant proportion of former combatants have difficulties using the payments to increase their long-term income" (World Bank, quoted in Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 16). And this occurred in South Africa.

Regarding the challenges faced by ex-combatants some years after their demobilisation, Sasha Gear finds in her research that "the vast majority of interviewees feel they have been badly let down by those who propelled them into action and inspired their lives as combatants. A common element is the sense that the ideological paradigms that framed the wars they fought in, and their identities as combatants, have been betrayed" (Gear, 2002: 1). According to Hugo van der Merwe, "they weren't simply fighting for a democratic system, they were motivated by more serious social transformation, whether there's land or distribution of wealth and getting out of poverty and I think that is something that they still feel are half the road of taking the struggle further"[68]. As Gear notes, "for many, the disjuncture between what they fought for and their present realities is a bitter pill to swallow" (Op. Cit.: 1). Although political freedom has been achieved, conditions for many have not changed. This sense of betrayal or abandonment can trigger dangerous reactions in people who are trained to solve problems through violence, and it could be avoided through the improvement of the DDR process. In fact, Gear finds that

67 Interview to Hugo van der Merwe, Cape Town, November 16, 2005.
68 Interview to Hugo van der Merwe, Cape Town, November 16, 2005.

there is "considerably less anger, [...] amongst those that have secured alternative income generating opportunities" (idem: 9).

> "The importance of a demobilisation programme which supports social reintegration was highlighted by reports of disaffected ex-combatants in South Africa involved in crime and violence. In 1995, there were reports of a group of ex-uMkhonto We Sizwe (MK) and APLA combatants, calling themselves 'Akaplas', wreaking havoc in the KwaZulu-Natal townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi (Mail & Guardian, 22-28 September 1995). In November 1995, disgruntled former APLA combatants threatened to embark on a crime spree unless irregularities regarding the integration of APLA members were addressed (Business Day, 9 November 1995)" (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 6).

Although there are signs of ex-combatants involved in crime, it is difficult to establish whether there is a relationship between the increase of crime and the demobilisation. Nevertheless, the political impact of some ex-combatants linked with crime has played an important role in the stigmatisation of ex-combatants as a category. As Gear says, "by focusing attention on ex-combatants only when they are perceived as a security threat, will contribute to their further stigmatisation and marginalisation. Thus far, contemporary public attention in relation to ex-combatants has tended to be restricted to the involvement, or potential involvement, of some in crime" (Gear, 2002: 17).

Regarding the issue of stigmatisation, the TRC in South Africa has been, according to ex-combatants, inconvenient. "The TRC, they claim, is a fundamental factor in the stigmatisation of ex-combatants who were part of the apartheid security forces. Those who have been 'hunted' down suffer the consequences of notoriety, and this hinders their reintegration into society" (Gear, 2002: 7). Additionally, they fear that "instead of confirming peace in their communities, the TRC process, by personalising the deeds of the conflict, may result in more violence. They have now provided the families of their victims with knowledge of their identities. A potential consequence, they say, is that they may become the victims of revenge violence" (Op. Cit.: 13).

Normally, TRCs are the products of the combined pressure from civil society and the international community. While in the case of South Africa, the TRC was central in the discourse of either civil society organisations and the international community, the process of DDR - affected by the TRC – did not have meaningful participation of those actors. According to Williams, "civil society [...] is one of the critical actors in the demobilisation debate without whose involvement the possibility of meaningful reintegration is severely bedevilled" (Williams, 2005: 7). Regarding this lack, Hugo van der Merwe pointed out that "there wasn't research, there wasn't an understanding" by the South African society related to DDR issues[69]. Following Gear, in South Africa "at the level of broader society mechanisms to assist with the reintegration of ex-combatants are apparently either absent, inadequate or failing. Rather than the development of support mechanisms to facilitate the stressful process, exclusionary, and sometimes conflictual, relations are produced or reproduced" (Gear, 2002: 17).

Meanwhile, a positive role has been played by the leaders. Even though the demobilisation began without the necessary legislation in place, the ex-combatants, who were under great levels of uncertainty, maintained their position towards peace. This decision is in part explained by the fact that

69 Interview to Hugo van der Merwe, Cape Town, November 16, 2005.

the leadership was committed with the peace process. As an MK/SDU ex-combatant said, “the leadership at the top agreed that this had to stop. If I don't follow orders given to me by my leaders, anything might happen. I would get detained; the organisation [would] not represent me. That is why I say I have accepted everyone who is my enemy” (Gear, 2002: 4). As during the first years of the process in Medellín, with the commitment of “Don Berna”, the role of the leaders was a key point in keeping stability and peace during the most sensitive stages of the process.

Finally, the South African experience shows one of the dangers of a DDR process without a proper intervention of the state and the international community. Although it can be seen as a marginal fact, some of the ex-combatants got involved in mercenary activities. One of the most well known is the case of Executive Outcomes, a mercenary company that was involved in armed conflicts throughout Africa. Executive Outcomes was formed mainly by South African ex-soldiers. The dangers of these kinds of activities include the lack of control and accountability of mercenary groups which are not regulated and are now prohibited by international laws.

As a last statement, it must be taken into account that “the demobilisation process in South Africa has occurred not as a result of a nationally driven and centrally co-ordinated process with an overarching strategy but more as a result of a series of intentional and unintentional piece-meal interventions” (Williams, 2005: 10). This constitutes, in itself, a particularly interesting process in order to measure the need of DDR programmes.

A post DDR disarmament that somehow linked the processes of South Africa and Mozambique was the so called “Rachel” operation. The governments of both countries began in 1995 g joint process of collection and weapons destruction called operation "Rachel", which involved the police forces of the two countries and consisted in the collection of arsenals using persuasive methods to encourage the civilian population to deliver weapons and information on the location of clandestine deposits. The operation lasted until 1999 and the weapons were destroyed in situ. However, it is known that it had two more phases for a total of six that extended until 2003, period in which 611 weapons caches were found. Nonetheless, the process faced some difficulties because of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the authorities of Mozambique and by acts of corruption of police officers of both countries involved with traffic networks, which forced debugging and purges (Aguirre, Álvarez and Pardo, 2015: 39).

In the next chapter, a discussion of the applicability of the lessons of DDR for the Colombian experience will be presented. As it is shown, the application of some of the lessons require special conditions, which are not present in every process of DDR. The Colombian case is *sui generis* in many aspects, such as the fact that DDR of ex-paramilitaries and guerrilla deserters has been held while the armed conflict between the government and guerrillas is still taking place. The strong illegal economy related to drug trafficking also poses a challenge that is stronger in Colombia than in any other case. That is why the lessons must be carefully analysed to avoid mistakes and ineffective or unnecessary efforts.

Chapter 4
About the applicability of the "lessons" for Colombia

As the reader should have noticed, the lessons suggested in the previous chapter cover a wide range of issues and many of them imply the participation of more than one actor. In most cases, the possible application of the lessons depends on the political will of governments, institutions, ex-combatants and civil society. The context can also condition strategies and the way the policies are implemented. Every case is different from the others, and those differences may shape the results of a particular strategy. What worked in a place may be problematic in another place. Also the national and international agendas can determine the necessity or inadequacy of certain decisions, and what was a good strategy in a certain time is not necessary good today. In countries such as Colombia, where important political decisions are made following the guidelines of international institutions such as the World Bank, and where many of those decisions have disappointed the expectations of citizens and governments, it is important to discuss the applicability of what is identified as lessons. That is precisely the aim of this chapter: to analyse the pertinence and applicability of the lessons presented above.

Firstly, it is important to recognise two peculiarities of the Colombian process of DDR. One is that the peace accord was reached between the government and AUC, while other actors were still in arms,[70] and more than 10 years later, a peace accord was signed with FARC while ELN is just beginning conversations and other post-paramilitary groups remain. This implies that ex-combatants face two important risks: retaliations from their traditional enemy -the now so called post or neo paramilitaries- and the will of the ELN and organised criminal groups to recruit some of the soldiers that have been demobilised and who still retain important military training and valuable information. The second peculiarity of the Colombian process is the strength of the drug industry that has been feeding the war. The illegal market of drugs is tempting for ex-combatants who sometimes cannot find productive jobs on the legal market. Although these peculiarities represent difficult challenges for the process of DDR, and the lessons tell us few about how to deal with these issues, there are some aspects that can be improved in the implementation of the DDR process that is taking place today.

The discussion will be done in four main areas: the international involvement and efforts, lessons of disarmament and demobilisation, lessons of reintegration, and how society impacts DDR processes. Although we consider DDR as a process where, in practice, it is difficult to distinguish between disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration as independent issues, some of the lessons are especially pertinent to disarmament, demobilisation or reintegration.

70 During the first years of the peace process FARC was increasing attacks against the Armed Forces, and their leaders manifested that they would not negotiate with Uribe's government. Meanwhile, the ELN was having a process of conversations with the High Commissioner for Peace which was expected to conduce to a more serious commitment to peace and eventually to a peace accord. Later on, during the government of Juan Manuel Santos, FARC reached a peace accord which is beginning its implementation while this paper paper is written (and the demobilisation process is at the stage of concentration of combatants in assembly areas), and the ELN is beginning negotiations in Ecuador.

The international dimension

We have argued that the processes of DDR have impacts not just over the countries involved, but also over the regions. In this sense, even the UN Security Council has recognised that the international community must seriously assist countries involved in post-conflict peace-building. International assistance is important financially and because it increases trust between the parties.

In Colombia, the involvement of the international community was very limited regarding the process of DDR of the AUC. Two main international organisations participated: IOM, monitoring the DDR process, and OAS, verifying the implementation of the peace accord. There are no other countries or institutions participating as observers, and just some years after the demobilisation some countries got involved by funding DDR programmes[71]. The EU is funding initiatives as the "Peace laboratories"[72], important in peace building, but DDR is not included in the objectives of the Peace Laboratories. The Colombian government asked for the support of the UN and the international community, but there was not positive answer for the process with paramilitaries. The UN do not seemed to trust that peace process, and one of the reasons seems to be the fact that the AUC was considered a "terrorist organisation" by the United States of America and with strong links with drug trafficking. Nonetheless, the UN has committed with the DDR process of FARC. The current conversations between the government and the ELN seem to be important for the involvement of the international community, as they see a stronger commitment to peace when the government negotiates with left-wing armies.

Even though, the international involvement is expected to increase in Colombia, it is also important that those initiatives take into account the lessons of other processes. In this sense, an UN involvement should be fed by the experience of local programmes that have considered the cultural and social context where the DDR has been taking place. It should also have a very clear mandate in order to avoid misunderstandings and to permit effective actions[73]. Similarly, the involvement of multiple actors –national and international– will require high levels of communication between them, in order to coordinate actions and to have a better understanding of the conditions of DDR.

Coordination and articulation at the local level is not always easy and the case of Medellín (the so called "social laboratory" of Colombia) can be particularly challenging. In Medellín international, national and local initiatives work in peace building. NGOs, governmental programmes, universities, churches, target frequently the same groups. Although not necessarily involved in DDR programmes, those initiatives can affect, for good or for bad, the reintegration of ex-combatants. There are some complementary projects, but also unnecessary replication of actions and to some extent, actions and counteractions. In this context, communication and articulation between different institutions are not just useful, but necessary and complex. Articulation of actions is a challenge that regards the

71 In the new accord reached between FARC and the Colombian government, the UN has created a new team for monitoring the implementation of the peace accord, including the DDR components. By the time this paper is written, the UN mission is just beginning its job.

72 Peace Laboratories (*Laboratorios de Paz*) is a programme of peace building that takes place in areas where more than two armed actors have presence. Through the Peace Laboratories the EU is funding productive projects, development projects and processes of nonviolent conflict resolution.

73 If the international community gets involved in DDR processes in Colombia, it is important, for instance, to have a clear definition of what an ex-combatant is, taking into account the complexities and dynamics of the Colombian conflict (*bandas*, *combos*, self-defence groups, guerrillas, drug – war – related business, etc.).

participation of any new actor who wants to intervene in peace building in Colombia, but is also a challenge that concerns the actors involved currently. Institutions like UN could play an important role in this sense.

Additionally, the international community has been important for the creation of a TRC in Colombia[74]. Nonetheless, the CNRR –the former Colombian TRC– had to operate under difficult conditions. The fact that the new Truth Commission will take place while opposition groups are still in arms increases the risks of retaliation against ex-combatants and their families. These circumstances should be addressed to avoid violent revenges.

On the regional level, it is important to involve in the Colombian process all the neighbour countries. The parties in conflict have had some kind of links with all the countries in the region. Arms are bought mainly in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador and are introduced to Colombia through Panama, Venezuela and Brazil. Colombian drugs, which frequently are changed by arms, are sold in Ecuador, Brazil, Peru and the Caribbean[75]. It is possible that ex-combatants and officials have been hiding weapons, which could be sell in the region in the aftermath. Nevertheless, countries in the region have been reluctant to be involved in matters related to the Colombian conflict in the past, and for now, no regional initiative has been raised. However, international agreements for arms control should be strengthened.

Finally, there is the fact that some international NGOs have been monitoring the Colombian conflict. Human Rights Watch, the United Nations High Commissioner for Colombia and Amnesty International are examples of such organisations. Particularly Amnesty International has made mistakes in its reports about the Colombian DDR process in the past. Those reports have called the attention of the national and international press. Their impact is undeniable. The problem comes when those reports do not have into account certain important rules such as: evaluating programmes according to their objectives, taking as references similar cases occurred in the past or in other countries, considering the characteristics of the analysed object, and taking into account the context. This happened with a report made by Amnesty International that was "evaluating" the DDR process in Medellín[76]. These are the main reasons why the report qualified as negative the experience of DDR with the BCN. The political implications of such kind of reports can include the decision of international organisations of not to support the process. In this sense an evaluation of media and international NGOs interventions in peace building is needed.

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74 *Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (CNRR).* Created on October 5, 2005.

75 The arms and drugs business involve countries beyond the region, who should contribute to DDR in Colombia, but the most vulnerable countries are Colombian neighbours.

76 See: *Boletín 882, del 2 de septiembre de 2005*. Municipality of Medellín.

Disarmament and demobilisation

Some experiences of disarmament and demobilisation have had failures because of the definitions they choose. Firstly, there is the question of who is eligible for disarmament. The general assumption is that the only target groups of disarmament are the armies in conflict. That has been the assumption in Colombia. However, as the experiences in Mozambique and South Africa show, disarmament should aim not just ex-combatants, but society. Some efforts of disarmament of civilians have occurred in Colombia, especially in Bogotá. Nonetheless, the current DDR process is not considering disarmament of civilians and what it means in terms of threats to peace will remain unless further disarmament is implemented. It is quite possible to promote disarmament of civilians parallel to the DDR process in Colombia. If these initiatives include the region, the impact could be remarkable.

Another problem that has been addressed in many cases is the lack of information and unreliable information during processes of DDR. On the one hand, the information regarding the numbers of combatants to be demobilised is frequently manipulated by commanders. Increasing the numbers of soldiers is used to include civilians to benefit from DDR programmes, opening avenues for clientelism to gain political support. This undermines the aims of the programmes, which expend significant amounts of resources and efforts on individuals that do not have the same necessities of the ex-combatants. Similarly, once the demobilisation takes place, it is important to collect pertinent information to understand the profiles of the ex-combatants. This will help the planning and implementation of the training and educational programmes, as well as the psychosocial support actions. The registers in Colombia have been, in general, complete and pertinent, and although they can always be improved, the Colombian programmes have more to show that many other programmes in the world.

On the other hand, it is a usual practice to leave groups of armed soldiers out of the DDR process, as a protection group that can be useful in case that the peace process fails. This situation has happened in Mozambique and in the current process in Colombia, although not publicly recognized. A major challenge comes after peace is consolidated. How to demobilise those groups? The political costs of recognising those groups are too high for the parties and the economic costs of sustaining hidden armies become a serious problem. But the decision of demobilising the totality of the armies lay in the hands of their commanders. At the end of the day, the commanders should consider whether to pay the costs of undeclared armed forces or to assume the risks of declaring them all.

Reintegration

Most of the lessons found are related to the reintegration process. It is understandable once the processes of disarmament and demobilisation happen in shorter periods of time, while reintegration is a long term process. Regarding reintegration, the particularities of the context where it takes place can be more decisive for the possible applicability of a lesson. In the case of Mozambique, for instance, the two-year subsidy was a successful strategy. It prevented that ex-combatants consider crime as an alternative to get money for survival, at least during the most critical years of the process, and helped them with resources to contribute to their families, facilitating their reintegration. Nevertheless, the social and cultural conditions of Colombia may require a longer period of subsidies. The phenomenon of drug trafficking and the illegal economy (and culture) are particularly strong in Colombia, increasing

the temptation of getting involved in this illegal market. While levels of unemployment are high in both Mozambique and Colombia, involvement in the illegal economy is less culturally sanctioned in Colombia than in many other countries. Decades of "narcotization" of the economy, politics, and society and in general culture, have produced a relaxation of social and moral sanctions to a wide range of crimes –especially economic crimes-. Vulnerability of criminalisation is, in this context, presumably stronger.

In contrast, strategies as income generation through agriculture can be a better economic option in Colombia than in Mozambique. Infrastructure for selling products (roads, access to markets, and means of production) is better in Colombia than in Mozambique, where the war targeted infrastructure in a higher degree. Alternative products promotion to discourage coca plantations should be included in those programmes, and indeed, it is included in the peace agreement with FARC.

Regarding the implementation of training programmes, Colombia, as South Africa, Mozambique and many other international cases have had weaknesses that can be avoided. The Peace and Reconciliation Programme in Medellín has taken into account the preferences and profiles of ex-combatants to choose the areas where they want to be trained in. However, better advice should be given in order to improve the choices of the beneficiaries. For example, information and advice about the needs of the market are still week. Furthermore, if the programmes are more participative and include the perspective of ex-combatants in the planning phases, better results can be achieved. A practical strategy could be to include some ex-combatants that were demobilised during the first stages of the demobilisation process to design and improve the programmes that are being implemented for those ex-combatants that were demobilised in the later stages. Those ex-combatants of Medellín, coming from individual demobilisations or from the collective DDR process of paramilitary groups, could be advisers for the ex-combatants that are beginning their process of reintegration. Even more, why not to include some of them –those who have shown abilities for the task- as part of the team of trainers?

Two more things should be said about the training process. Firstly, although Williams propose Alternative Career Certification Programmes ACP for demilitarisation in South Africa before demobilisation, this strategy seems difficult to implement in Colombia. A major reason for this is that those soldiers to be demobilised in Colombia are not part of an institutional armed force, but are part of "illegal" or rebel forces. It is not realistic to pretend that FARC or eventually the ELN can implement ACP before demobilisation. Once the soldiers are identified by civil servants, experts or trainers, they are more likely to be demobilised than to remain in arms, with the expenses that it supposes. ACP can work in South Africa because those soldiers to be demobilised are part of the institutional armed forces, which do not have to keep their identities hidden in the same degree as the "irregular soldiers". Secondly, the training processes can and should differentiate between different categories of ex-combatants in order to better address their needs. Children, women, officials and soldiers, and different levels of education have different needs and expectations. The same can be said regarding delivery of tool kits, clothing and psycho-social assistance. The absence of gender oriented strategies in Colombia has been remarkable, with the argument that the ACR has into account the individual necessities of each person. In the case of FARC, gender strategies are part of the negotiations and must be implemented in the near future.

DDR and society

There are some additional lessons that are related to society. Normally, programmes of DDR are managed by governmental institutions, the military, the international community and to some extent, civil society organisations such as NGOs and churches. Nonetheless, civil society still plays a marginal role in DDR. Participating in DDR is not restricted to the implementation of DDR programmes or training programmes for the ex-combatants. Involvement in DDR can include the participation of the private sector in employment strategies, promotion of reconciliation, development, and education.

As it is shown in chapter 2, stigmatisation is one of the obstacles that prevent a successful social reintegration of ex-combatants in their communities and economic reintegration through employment. The belief that ex-combatants are more prone to be involved in crime than other groups is not proved and there are more reasons to think that this belief is erroneous. Stigmatisation of ex-combatants is an issue that should be worked at society level. This is a problem that exists in Colombia and not much is being done to change it. Still, involvement of civil society and the private sector is more than weak, although those who work in DDR processes have identified this necessity long time ago.

Additionally, DDR programmes in Colombia have not been systematically linked with other "Rs" programmes (such as repatriation, reconciliation, rehabilitation and relocation). Just isolated experiences have been done. The Peace and Reconciliation Programme in Medellín has promoted this kind of actions, but at the national level greater efforts must be done, although reconciliation is actually gaining importance. The expectancies of communities and demobilised soldiers include the implementation of development projects at the local level, the results are to be seen. On the other hand, the above mentioned Peace Laboratories, which are integral development programmes that include some of the other "Rs", do not consider reintegration as part of them.

Finally, there is a circumstance that has been documented internationally: the presence of militias poses a major challenge to DDR. The situation in Colombia is even more complex, because the peace process is not including all the parties in conflict. In this sense, the only effective way to deal with this is to advance in the conversations with the ELN. Even more, neo paramilitary groups and large organized criminal armies linked to criminal (drugs) organizations should be taken into account. Meanwhile, the government should guarantee the security of those who are handing over their weapons.

A second generation of DDR should be considered to address the case of post-paramilitary groups and for *bandas* and *combos*. For some contexts such as Haiti, Afghanistan, Liberia or Ivory Coast, the United Nations has coined the term "second generation of DDR" to define efforts to promote security in areas where there is a significant presence of militias, criminal gangs, drug traffickers or paramilitary groups, all of them armed, who use large doses of violence against the civilian population. Programs to disarm these groups, of a different nature from the guerrillas, are therefore needed, especially since there is no peace agreement. It is a similar strategy to Community Violence Reduction (CVR) programs. Several peacekeeping operations have had to design specific disarmament and reintegration programs for these types of situations of community insecurity, where the classic DDR schemes are not applicable (Fisas, 2012: 33).

To conclude, this chapter has discussed the applicability of lessons of DDR for Colombia. Some of them could be easily implemented (articulation with other development programmes, inclusion of communities, participation of ex-combatants in the design and planning of the programmes), while others seems to be not applicable at all (ACP, for instance) or need special conditions that are not given in Colombia. But the most determinant factor to implement the lessons and improve the programmes lay in the political will of governments, civil society, and the international community and rebel forces.

Conclusions

The importance of DDR programmes is undeniable. Democracy strengthening and peace building can be at risk if DDR processes are not properly planned and ex-combatants are forgotten.

Some people still argue that ex-soldiers should not be treated as a special group and that assistance programmes should not target them at the expense of other vulnerable populations, at least not during the first years following disarmament and demobilisation. However, as the case studies suggest, it is important to support the processes of reintegration and to provide some special benefits to former combatants. It is also important to note that a return to armed violence is a higher risk when demobilised ex-combatants face difficult conditions and desperation. This dissertation has highlighted some of the diverse and on-going strategies being adopted towards disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in Colombia. Some general lessons from international experiences, particularly from Mozambique and South Africa, have been also discussed to some extent.

DDR involves different and numerous actors and every actor have something to say, something to teach and something to learn regarding its role and position in the process. Governments, NGOs, military, the international community, the media and civil society play important roles that can either facilitate or undermine the processes of DDR in a particular country. A press report, for instance, can either encourage the support of international donors or produce mistrust between the donors and the implementing organisations. This could happen due to the lack of understanding or information which can then lead to misinterpretation and therefore have negative consequences on the process as a whole[77]. According to this, it is obvious that DDR is a sensitive political issue that deserves to be addressed by several national and international actors and studied in depth.

The Colombian process shows how local programmes of DDR, compared to other cases, may be well conceived and add to national programmes. But those "well conceived" programmes face difficulties because of the particular conditions of the conflict in Colombia and the specific cultural, social, political and historical circumstances. It is not easy, under these conditions to implement some of the so called "general lessons" of DDR. Moreover, there are factors that make the Colombian process *sui generis*, and challenges, such as the presence of *bandas* and *combos*, seem to be unique -at least in the degree of such presence- to the Colombian situation. Undoubtedly, in the future Colombia will have important experiences and lessons on DDR to share. More specifically, the country will prove a valuable source of knowledge on how to implement DDR processes while an ongoing conflict is still being waged. Similarly, lessons can be drawn on how to deal with conflicts which are characterised by a wide range of economic, political, cultural and social motivations. Still, the Colombian past and current experiences of DDR are referents that must be taken into account when studying the issue, especially for Latin America and developing countries. Colombia has had DDR experiences where amnesty has been given, and the process with AUC was the first in the country to take into account the concepts of truth, justice and reparation, and represented a valuable experience to define the peace process with FARC regarding DDR, truth and transitional justice. Therefore, it is no surprise that after

77 This was the case of the report that Amnesty International produced about the DDR process in Medellín, referred above.

more than 60 years of war, the efforts to end the conflict are now being considered much more seriously by the international community.

As Berdal pointed out, "external actors cannot replace political commitment, nor can they generate political momentum in absence of trust and will among the parties. They can, however, by the manner in which support is extended, discourage defection from a peace process, thus strengthening, however subtly, the degree of commitment that does exist" (Mats Berdal quoted by Alden, 2003). International participation gives credibility to processes and is also important in providing funds for such programmes. Regional participation can make the difference between a successful DDR and peace building process. Without regional participation there is a risk that violence will re-escalate and social and political problems will be displaced to neighbouring countries.

One of the key issues in DDR programmes is the question of who is eligible for disarmament. An integral programme of disarmament which includes civilians can be complementary to disarmament and demobilisation of soldiers. Similarly, DDR programmes should be based on a deep understanding of the nature and mechanics of the conflict, in order to include categories of combatants that have been excluded or discriminated such as children and women. Also, appropriate information will contribute to better planning and implementing the programmes and will help to identify special groups and to improve the impact of the actions.

In general, DDR programmes can be more participative. They could include ex-combatants in the design and implementation of strategies which aim at the civilianization of former soldiers. Training, advice and logistics can involve the participation not just of experts, but also of civil society organisations and former soldiers. Active participation of civil society through institutional channels (Frankel, 2000: 140) adds political and practical advantages to the process of civilianization, while participation of ex-combatants in the planning process contributes to a better understanding of the beneficiaries, their needs, interests, and characteristics.

The Achilles heel of DDR, in all the cases studied, is the lack of clarity and planning in reintegration, mostly because of lack of information or unreliable information. Frequently, numbers of combatants to be demobilised, numbers of weapons to be handed over, profiles of the ex-combatants, expectations, needs of the economic market, etc., are either incomplete, absent, false or a combination of all of this. Appropriate information systems and databases are needed to achieve better results from the planning stages to the successful reintegration. Differentiation of "special groups" (women, children, soldiers, officials) would improve the impact of DDR programmes and efficiency of public expenditure in peace building. An appropriate understanding of the nature of the conflict and its dynamics is particularly useful for planners and policy makers. An illustrative example is the lack of legislation that would permit the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of *bandas* and *combos* in Colombia as they were not considered integral part of the conflict.

Important sectors of society have had marginal participation on DDR. Active support of the private sector is still needed. The private sector could provide valuable resources and support strategies for employment promotion, training focused on the needs of the market, financial support, etcetera. Furthermore, if DDR programmes are better coordinated with other development programmes this will increase the possibilities of success and the impact of such strategies. Relocation, repatriation,

rehabilitation and reintegration programmes should be articulated to achieve comprehensive strategies of peace building.

The strategic and general approaches outlined above require a practical "operationalization" which will ensure the success of DDR in countries like Colombia. Well conceived policies do not always achieve their objectives due to failures in their operationalization. However, the successful implementation of DDR process will depend mostly on the political will and commitment of governments, armed forces, the international community and civil society.

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