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Title: **'Once We Were Warriors Too': Exclusions of Women from Demobilisation Programmes in Sierra Leone**

Abstract:

Post-conflict society, characterised by positive peace requires a thoroughly demobilised mindset amongst not only former-combatants, but also those mobilised more broadly within conflict. Until now demobilisation programmes have taken a traditional understanding of conflict, focusing on armaments, rather than psychologies, ideologies and cultures. This has led to an unnatural distinction being made between combatants and civilians, where such division is increasingly less evident in fighting. It has also caused demobilisation to be continually paired with disarmament, once again emphasising the military element of conflict. This ignores the broader sense in which people are mobilised in conflicts, as ancillary support and 'bush wives'.

This paper considers the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme in Sierra Leone and examines how its standards for registration provide some indication as to what it is to be considered 'mobilised' during conflict. The overly militaristic approach to DDR taken ignores alternative, non-combative roles at the broader level of involvement in conflict that, if left unchecked, risk disrupting the already fragile post-conflict environment. A case study of women in the Sierra Leonean conflict is used to demonstrate how this social group, in both combative and non-combative capacities, is excluded from DDR programmes. This exclusion results in an unfinished process of uprooting the remnants of a war mindset that resides within the psychological and material state of those left mobilised, and potentially risks undermining the carefully crafted post-conflict peace.

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree. It is the result of my own independent investigation and all authorities and sources which have been consulted are acknowledged in the bibliography.

Signed..... Date.....

'Once We Were Warriors Too':

**Exclusions of Women from Demobilisation Programmes
in Sierra Leone**

Lisa Denney

*And when I leave
What will I be?
I can't be what I was before
I can't be what I am during
I must be something else.*

Vigil, Joan Furey

The process of demobilisation encompasses a shift from wartime to peacetime, from a state of mobilisation to one of demobilisation. It makes assumptions about both the nature of war it is transitioning from, and the kind of peace it is attempting to craft. Where these assumptions do not capture the realities of the conflict that is being ended and the peace that is being forged, demobilisation programmes become less effective in facilitating this transition. Who is demobilised at the termination of fighting is suggestive of who is perceived as mobilised during conflict. Thus, in order to ensure that the peace achieved is one of a positive and sustainable nature, those mobilised in fighting need to be demobilised in peace.

The question that this paper examines is who is considered mobilised in conflict and why certain other categories are not. Using a Foucauldian approach, particular exclusions of demobilisation programmes can be revealed that are otherwise concealed by less critical, positivist theories. From an examination of *demobilisation*, one can infer common understandings of mobilisation. This paper takes as its case study the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme carried out in post-conflict Sierra Leone from 1999 to 2005. This scenario aptly demonstrates the blurring of traditional security divides, including civilian/combatant, victim/perpetrator and protector/protected, that no longer operate (if in fact they ever did) with such clarity in contemporary wars. The exclusions inherent to the DDR process in Sierra Leone afford insight into the limited understandings of mobilisation that currently predominate. Such exclusions risk undermining a fragile peace by allowing significant segments of the population to retain a mobilised mindset, susceptible to inflammation. The critical approach taken in this paper considers specifically the exclusion of women from DDR programmes, in both combative and non-combative capacities. Their absence from such

processes highlights the material- and armament-focus of DDR, ultimately manifesting itself as a masculinist activity. In order to avoid this exclusion and maximise prospects for the establishment of positive peace, it is contended that demobilisation needs to be decoupled from disarmament. This separation will allow demobilisation to be understood as a psychological, ideational and cultural process, as well as a material one, recognising that conflict must be resolved not solely by dismantling armed groups, but also by dismantling cultures of violence. This will provide a wider registration standard for DDR programmes, recognising the mobilisation of women and non-combative actors. On a broader level it will also promote a more comprehensive understanding of security - one that more accurately reflects the nature of conflicts (such as Sierra Leone) currently taking place.

The paper shall proceed by first establishing common elements of DDR programmes and the broad, theoretical basis of demobilisation: what it is, how it has evolved and its potential to exclude. Second, from this point, a Foucauldian method of oppositional knowledge shall be drawn upon to infer an understanding of mobilisation that reveals a material-, armament- and masculinist-approach to DDR. Such an outlook assumes a traditional idea of conflict with clear civilian/combatant, victim/perpetrator and protector/protected divides that do not necessarily exist in contemporary wars. Third, a case study of the DDR programme in Sierra Leone will demonstrate the application of DDR to such conflicts, setting out the context of the civil war, the DDR process itself and the exclusions (specifically of women) manifest within it. Fourth, the problems of perception that inhibit women being viewed as legitimately mobilised shall be examined, explicating their continual low-representation in DDR programmes and considering the implications. Finally, a way to reunderstand demobilisation in a less exclusive and

traditionally-bound manner will be proposed through decoupling from disarmament. The broader approach to demobilisation that this separation allows raises questions of where demobilisation lies on the development/security spectrum. Duffield's linking of these two realms provides an innovative method for conceiving of demobilisation from a more developmental and less security-focused perspective. This approach allows a broader understanding of conflict and what it is to be mobilised within it.

The issues of demobilisation, women in war and contemporary conflict have each independently garnered a substantial body of academic literature, illuminating a diverse range of viewpoints. One could mention here, for example, the work of Kees Kingma on demobilisation¹, Paul Richards on Sierra Leone² and Jan Jindy Pettman and Chris Coulter on women in war.³ A vast pool of resources also lies in primary source reports from non- and inter-governmental organisations and research institutes, such as Susan McKay's and Dyan Mazurana's investigation of girl soldiers.⁴ Yet there is little that draws these arenas together and considers the disconnect that emerges when one does.

The issue of mobilisation specifically is one that has been largely neglected, perhaps implying that it is something considered obvious. Yet an examination of the aforementioned literature reveals that this is far from the case. The broader-based mobilisation that is characteristic of new wars has not been paralleled by an acceptance of women, as the excluded category discussed here, as a legitimate component of post-

¹ Kees Kingma (ed.), *Demobilisation in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Houndsmills: MacMillan, 2000).

² Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1996); Paul Richards, Steven Archibald, Khadija Bah and James Vincent, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?: Transitioning Ex-Combatants Towards Community Reconstruction After the War in Sierra Leone', 30 November 2003.

³ Jan Jindy Pettman, *Worlding Women*, (London: Routledge, 1996); Chris Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment: Female Fighters in Sierra Leone', Working Paper 22, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of Witwatersrand, November 2005.

⁴ Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, 'Where Are the Girls?: Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives During and After War', International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2004.

conflict demobilisation. (This is not to suggest that women are the only excluded category. Indeed, children, traditional warriors, non-combative men and the disabled are also excluded to varying degrees). An examination of this phenomenon then also taps into literature on the role of women in war and images of fighting women. This paper thus serves as a linking tool to examine the interstices between these insufficiently bonded subjects. It aims to establish a line of dialogue across these terrains to touch upon the neglected question of what it is to be mobilised in modern conflict.

Before embarking upon this project, four caveats need to be mentioned. First, Sierra Leone has been taken as a particular case study as it highlights the blurring of traditional wartime distinctions, such as civilian/combatant and victim/perpetrator. The DDR process carried out there is also recent, and largely perceived as one of the more successful of its kind. This heightens its utility as an archetypal programme to be scrutinised. The findings within this paper however should not be considered as relevant only to the limited context of Sierra Leone. As shall be demonstrated, many of the issues raised are endemic to demobilisation efforts more generally. In this sense, Sierra Leone operates predominately as the contemporary setting in which demobilisation and its exclusions play out. While inevitably some interactions will be case specific, the Sierra Leone context also exhibits features that are part of broader trends.

Second, women are considered as the excluded category because there is significant literature on their roles in conflict, and because of the intriguing social and historical milieu that shapes perceptions about the mingling of women and war. The paper by no means suggests that women are the only excluded group, merely that their exclusion is important and overlooked.

Third, references to ‘contemporary conflict’ or ‘new wars’ are frequent throughout the paper and, without explanation, risk becoming meaningless tropes. Here they are used to refer to the largely intra-state conflicts that have broken out throughout the less developed world since the 1990s. Often referred to as new wars⁵ or fourth generation warfare⁶, these conflicts break with traditional conceptions (though not necessarily practices) of conflict with their clear distinctions between civilians/combatants, victim/perpetrator, home/front *et cetera*.

Fourth, at times a seeming conflation of demobilisation and DDR programmes emerges throughout the paper that needs clarification. The practice of demobilisation predates DDR programmes, as the historical lineage of the concept in Chapter 1 shall demonstrate. Since the 1990s demobilisation has been predominantly a practice carried out within the DDR framework. Thus, demobilisation practices as they currently stand (that is, within DDR) are tied to a history of the *concept* of demobilisation from earlier, not-DDR, demobilisation practices. Speaking contemporarily however, it becomes difficult to separate demobilisation and DDR, because the two always exist in unison. Exclusions from demobilisation occur, as shall be argued throughout this paper, largely *because* of the persistent pairing of demobilisation with the other DDR components. It should also be noted that the reintegration phase of DDR will not be considered within this paper. This is not to discount its importance or need for investigation, but merely that it lies outside the scope of this paper and does not bear directly on the question of mobilisation discussed herein.

⁵ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p. 5.

⁶ William S. Lind, ‘The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation’, *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989, pp. 22-26.

The final mention to be made is to account for the critical approach taken. Given that the premise of this paper is to investigate the position of those who fall outside the ambit of dominant demobilisation practices and thus outside of its guiding theory, dominant approaches will only continue to miss what this paper seeks to find: that is, the inclusion of those currently not appearing on the radar. Thus, it is outside of the incumbent theories of conflict and politics that the intersection of demobilisation, gender exclusion and modern conflict is best illuminated. With these provisos in mind, a theoretical background to demobilisation can be provided that will facilitate the more specific discussions that follow.

Ch.1 – Demobilisation in Theory

An effective examination of the disconnect between understandings of demobilisation and mobilisation as they apply to contemporary conflict requires that demobilisation, and how DDR programmes apply it to post-conflict communities, be understood. A prototype DDR programme shall thus be sketched below, highlighting the relevance of DDR exclusions outside of the Sierra Leone context alone. The lineage of the concept and purpose of demobilisation shall then also be provided, demonstrating some of the inconsistencies which arise in applying DDR models to contemporary conflicts. Each of these aspects highlights the broad spectrum of privileges and exclusions inherent within demobilisation processes, and the negative impact that the legacy of the concept of demobilisation has had upon the practical application of DDR programmes in modern war.

While consideration of the exclusion of women in the context of Sierra Leone is quite specific, broader exclusions and their relevance apply to a much wider theatre of DDR programmes and post-conflict situations. Despite attempts to tailor DDR programmes to specific country and conflict settings, their application has taken a surprisingly one-size-fits-all approach.⁷ Such routine treatment suggests either an overrated sense of success or apathetic disposition amongst DDR practitioners, both resulting in a lack of innovation and ingenuity. In order to magnify the exclusions inherent within DDR and highlight their relevance at a level broader than just Sierra Leone, a typical programme structure will be provided. Variations of this model have been implemented in locations as diverse as Guatemala, Angola, Eritrea, Kosovo and East Timor.⁸ While Sierra Leone is taken as the case study in this paper, as it reveals a particular intersection between

⁷ Chris Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 4.

⁸ Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 'Women, War, Peace', *Progress of the World's Women*, v1, (UNIFEM: New York, 2002), p. 118.

contemporary conflict, women, mobilisation and post-conflict life, these findings may in fact be pertinent in other DDR scenarios. The framework provided below seeks to highlight how some of the exclusions to be discussed specifically in relation to Sierra Leone also emerge in other DDR programmes, as all have taken the following as their base model.

DDR programmes are initiated by independent third parties (usually a grouping of foreign governments, the United Nations, and inter- and non-governmental organisations) when parties to a conflict reach a ceasefire or peace agreement, when one party emerges victorious over another, or when both sides are forced to cease fighting due to unsustainable resources.⁹ It comprises combatants of formal and/or informal armed groups first being registered by meeting particular requirements (almost exclusively this has been the handing in of a conventional weapon or rounds of ammunition, constituting the disarmament phase).¹⁰ Once this prerequisite has been fulfilled, combatants are cantoned in demobilisation camps where they give up uniforms, rank and other military paraphernalia and begin the process of disassociation from military life.¹¹ In early programmes, combatants were provided solely with a cash incentive, with the intention of easing costs of reintegration into civilian life.¹² A cash sum is still commonplace, though it is now usually provided in conjunction with skills training and may also include foodstuffs, agricultural implements or seeds, clothing,

⁹Mark Knight and Alpaslan Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace', *Journal of Peace Research*, v41(4), 2004, pp. 499-500.

¹⁰ Robert Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War: A Critical Perspective on DDR and Weapons Reduction in the Post-Conflict Period', *Contemporary Security Policy*, v27(1), April 2006, p. 199.

¹¹ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', pp. 499-500;503.

¹² Kees Kingma and Kiflemaria Grebrewold, 'Demilitarisation, Reintegration and Conflict Prevention in the Horn of Africa', Discussion Paper, Bonn International Centre for Conversion and Saferworld, July 1998, p. 6.

payment of school fees, career or personal counselling services or housing materials.¹³ A greater emphasis is being placed on providing non-transferable incentives, as cash has been used to purchase newer, more dangerous weapons, thus facilitating the proliferation, rather than the cessation, of violence.¹⁴ Reintegration then occurs by transporting the now former-combatants to their home (or chosen alternative) communities.¹⁵ More recently, efforts have been made to carry out community consultation in order to raise awareness of the difficulties of reintegration.¹⁶ Outside of such initiatives however, those who are not eligible for the DDR programme receive no demobilisation efforts. The categories of combative women and children (considered to be the most vulnerable category of persons in conflict and post-conflict situations), traditional warriors and auxiliary personnel are among those regularly excluded under this framework.¹⁷

This DDR programme archetype has been the result of an ever-evolving purpose of its bundled components: disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. Of interest here, the purpose of demobilisation has morphed from one of purely neutralising potential for disruption of peace by former-combatants, to one of ensuring social cohesion of communities and successful conversion of combatants into civilian life.¹⁸ Yet its legacy of application to traditional conflicts, its continual coupling with disarmament and its resultant male-orientation, make it problematic in relation to contemporary conflict.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', p. 505.

¹⁵ Kees Kingma, 'Demobilisation, Reintegration and Peacebuilding in Southern Africa', in Kees Kingma and Peter Batchelor (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa*, (Bonn: Bonn International Centre for Conversion, 2004), p. 135.

¹⁶ Kees Kingma, 'Demobilisation, Reintegration and Peacebuilding in Africa', in Edward Newman and Albrecht Schnabel (eds.), *Recovering from Civil Conflict*, (London: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 192.

¹⁷ Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 4.

¹⁸ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', p. 500.

By way of historical account, demobilisation has traditionally referred to the downsizing of formal state armed forces at the end of interstate conflict.¹⁹ For example, at the end of World War II, state armies of the major powers underwent one of the largest decommissioning programmes of military personnel in modern history.²⁰ Such manpower was no longer needed for the war effort or economically viable in peacetime. Military personnel surrendered their ranks and uniform, participated in decommissioning and re-entered civilian life. This framework assumed the context of a clear combatant/non-combatant and home/front divide.²¹ Contemporary conflicts do not necessarily operate with such clarity and the application of demobilisation, as traditionally understood, upon them may thus prove inadequate.²² Where informal armed groups have permeated the space between civilian and soldier, demobilisation becomes an ambiguous process of sorting the legitimate from the illegitimate fighter-claims. Where a conflict's 'front' has also been its 'home', participation in the war effort will be broader-based and civilian/soldier distinctions less obvious.²³ Thus, the traditional model of demobilisation is problematic where it is simply superimposed upon contemporary conflicts. How one navigates the gaps of applying demobilisation to these conflict situations is thus crucial to post-conflict peace.

Despite the inconsistencies between demobilisation's original purpose and the nature of contemporary conflict, a return to the language of demobilisation occurred throughout

¹⁹ Kees Kingma, 'Assessing Demobilisation: Conceptual Issues', in Kingma, *Demobilisation in Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp. 26-27.

²⁰ Guy Lamb, 'Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa', South African Centre for Conflict Resolution, September 1997, <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/staff_papers/guy_demil_peace.html>, accessed 11 July 2006.

²¹ Miriam Cooke, 'Woman, Retelling the War Myth', in Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (eds.), *Gendering War Talk*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 182.

²² Honor Fagan, 'Women, War and Peace: Engendering Conflict in Post-Structuralist Perspective', in Ronaldo Munck and Purnaka L. De Silva (eds.), *Postmodern Insurgencies*, (Houndsmills: MacMillan, 2000), p. 204.

²³ Cooke, 'Woman, Retelling the War Myth', p. 182.

the 1990s. DDR test case programmes were carried out in Namibia, Cambodia and El Salvador, largely sponsored by the United Nations and the World Bank.²⁴ A proliferation of such programmes and funding for them has since seen more than fifteen DDR initiatives since their revival and a general acceptance of their value to peacebuilding endeavours.²⁵ The original intention of demobilisation in these new conflict scenarios was to neutralise potential spoilers of peace agreements or ceasefires.²⁶ Thus, those demobilised were those considered a potential threat to peace. Traditional gender stereotypes and Western traditions of conflict, which assume grown men to be aggressive and women to be passive, (to be further discussed in Chapter 4) played a prominent role in this regard.²⁷ These assumptions ensured that in early DDR programmes those designated as suitable for demobilisation were almost wholly adult males.²⁸ This discrimination was fortified by the rigid registration requirements set out further below, that recognised only conventional weapons (predominantly the Kalashnikov, or AK-47) as legitimate proof of combatant status.²⁹ Such strictures also manifest in the exclusion of non-combative, yet still mobilised, auxiliary support personnel, traditional *juju* warriors, who fought with homemade weapons and voodoo magic, and women and child soldiers, who often had their weapons removed by male commanders prior to DDR registration.³⁰ Again, the distinctions that DDR relies upon for its success do not necessarily exist in the contexts to which they are being applied. The blurring of combatants and civilians and the diversity of their tools of fighting do not correspond to conventional conceptions of conflict. Attempts to force such an

²⁴ Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War', p. 194.

²⁵ Kingma, 'Demobilisation, Reintegration and Peacebuilding in Africa', p. 181.

²⁶ Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf, 'Women War Peace', p. 118.

²⁷ Pettman, *Worlding Women*, p. 89.

²⁸ Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Joe Alie, 'The Kamajor Militia in Sierra Leone: Liberators or Nihilists?', in David J. Francis (ed.), *Civil Militia*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 63.

imperfect model upon an ill-fitting post-conflict setting results only in exclusions and missed opportunities to build a positive peace, as shall be gleaned from the analysis in this paper.

Demobilisation has also been consistently paired with the weapons reduction-focus of disarmament, which has a longer history and often overshadows the looser components of demobilisation and reintegration within DDR.³¹ Taking demobilisation to be a material, armaments-focused process, and neglecting its less tangible psychological, cultural and ideational elements, again reinforces particular privileging. Those who were mobilised through the possession of a weapon are recognised to the exclusion of those alternatively mobilised. Again, women and children who had their weapons removed prior to DDR registration, *juju* warriors who fought with traditional weapons and those personnel performing non-combative roles, are not able to gain access to the benefits of DDR programmes due to the overly-restrictive standards imposed.³² It is not in dispute that those mobilised in the conventional understanding of the term (that is, with recognised weapons) are in palpable need of demobilisation, but rather that the limiting of DDR processes to this conventional conception of conflict and what it is to be mobilised within it, is. It implies that the post-conflict moment is at threat only from a tangible return to armed conflict. This neglects the danger of a fragile peace being weakened by community tension and mistrust, resulting from a lack of thorough dismantling of the war mentality that pervades the minds of more than just the armed warriors. Such a broader focus is necessary to ensure that a positive, not merely negative, peace is achieved.

³¹ Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War', p. 195.

³² David J. Francis, 'Introduction' in Francis, *Civil Militia*, p. 14.

Despite deficiencies within the demobilisation framework, DDR programmes have become a mainstay of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.³³ Former United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros-Boutros Ghali officially confirmed the critical role of demobilisation in the Supplement to an Agenda for Peace.³⁴ The purpose of demobilisation has been recognised as contributing not only to the preservation of peace agreements and ceasefires, but to reconstituting the civilian within the combatant.³⁵ That is, ensuring that former-combatants are given the tools (both material and, to a lesser extent, psychological) to play an integral part in post-conflict, civilian life. This recognition of the usefulness of DDR stems from an increasing emphasis on positive, rather than merely negative, peace.³⁶ Those implementing DDR programmes now strive not for just the absence of violence, but for acceptance of former-combatants into communities and cooperation amongst them. This kind of positive peace actively prevents the renewal of fighting because peace becomes fortified by community cohesion.³⁷ Positive peace is surely threatened when DDR programmes fail to demobilise and ‘re-civilianise’ all those who were mobilised in conflict. Those excluded from DDR, whether combative or non-combative personnel, are, by implication, not officially considered ‘mobilised’. This is likely to rouse feelings that their contribution to the conflict (possibly an independence struggle) has been undervalued and they may maintain the mobilised mindset that facilitated their wartime involvement.³⁸ Unacknowledged and still mobilised, such forgotten categories may well feel frustrated and discontent with the post-conflict transition, potentially begetting a return to

³³ Muggah, ‘Emerging from the Shadow of War’, p. 195.

³⁴ ‘Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations’, A/50/60, (New York: United Nations, 1995).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

³⁶ Joanna Spear, ‘From Political Economies of War to Political Economies of Peace: The Contribution of DDR after Wars of Predation’, *Contemporary Security Policy*, v27(1), April 2006, pp. 172-173.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Pierre du Toit, *South Africa’s Brittle Peace: The Problem of Post-Settlement Violence*, (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. 81.

violence.³⁹ Incomplete demobilisation programmes may therefore constitute a potential threat to the carefully crafted positive peace that development practitioners aim for. To close the gap and ensure an effectively demobilised, and thus peaceful society, DDR programmes must part with their framework based on traditional conflict that does not always reflect the nature of contemporary wars. Decoupling demobilisation from disarmament and accepting an obscuring of the conventional divides, such as civilian/combatant, will allow for demobilisation programmes to be broadened in scope, in order to better fit contemporary conflicts and thus avoid exclusions that will otherwise detract from post-conflict peace.

The overview provided in this chapter of the evolution of the purpose of demobilisation and an archetypal DDR programme, are intended to frame the issues of exclusion from the demobilisation process, which determines who is, and who is not, recognised as mobilised in conflict. To be consistent, broader understandings of peace, that is, positive rather than merely negative, need to also imply broader understandings of conflict.⁴⁰ Those who are essential to maintaining a society characterised by positive peace need to be recognised as such and valued throughout the demobilisation process. Mobilised in their various ways throughout the conflict, those excluded are left with a culture, psychology and mindset of a person in conflict.⁴¹ Through the armaments-focused registration requirement of a conventional weapon and the neglect of alternative conflict roles that many of those mobilised played, DDR programmes significantly miss achieving their broadened purpose of positive peace. From this appreciation of demobilisation, Foucault's oppositional knowledge can be employed in the proceeding

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Pettman, *Worlding Women*, p. 90.

⁴¹ Marie Breen Smyth, 'The Process of Demilitarisation and the Reversibility of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, v16(3), Autumn 2004, p. 548.

chapter to infer an understanding of mobilisation, which may then be critiqued according to its applicability and relevance to contemporary conflict.

Ch.2 – Inferring Mobilisation

The question of what it means to be mobilised in conflict arises when one must decide who qualifies for demobilisation and who does not. It touches upon the very nature of violent conflict and the roles recognised within it. This chapter posits that the question of mobilisation is importantly more complex than has traditionally been conceived. Beyond the understanding of mobilisation as the official listing of the rank and file of formal state armed forces, the territory of mobilisation has been left almost exclusively uncharted.⁴² Obscured further by contemporary conflicts, with their lack of traditional divides between civilians and combatants, victims and perpetrators, the question of mobilisation has been buried beneath conversations of who is to be *demobilised*. Yet surely it is impossible to distinguish those requiring demobilisation when uncertainty exists as to who is mobilised in the first place? This chapter therefore seeks to clarify mobilisation by using Foucault's oppositional knowledge to infer meaning from what is known about *demobilisation*. The understanding of mobilisation uncovered may then be measured against contemporary conflict to ascertain its accuracy of reflection and usefulness.⁴³

In studying mental health regimes, Foucault determined that sanity and insanity are co-dependent concepts, relying upon the existence of each other to ensure their own distinctiveness.⁴⁴ Thus, what it is to be sane is constructed in relation to what it is to be insane. In application here then, what it is to be mobilised is constructed in relation to what it is to be demobilised. Based upon the DDR model in the preceding chapter, this

⁴² Mats Berdal, 'Disarmament and Demobilisation After Civil Wars', Adelphi Paper 303, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 39.

⁴³ It should be caveated here that while this argument draws upon Foucault's work, it does not attempt to transpose his entire theoretical edifice. Rather, contributions are selectively applied that help to expose the relational nature of mobilisation and demobilisation and how they represent a particular construction.

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Vintage, 1988).

implies that to be mobilised is to possess a weapon or rounds of ammunition, to be a part of a formal or informal armed group and to be able to tangibly prove such possession and involvement. What this implies then, is that those who administer DDR programmes have the final word on what it is to be mobilised, just as the medical profession determine what it is to be insane.⁴⁵ Their knowledge and expertise of DDR is therefore supposed to equip them with the know-how to navigate the border between mobilised and unmobilised status. Yet this knowledge that they possess is not itself natural or true, meaning that it has no claim to be *the* correct and qualified knowledge because it is justified only by its *own* assumptions of that knowledge. It is particular and thus includes and excludes according to its own, arbitrary logic.⁴⁶ In the case of demobilisation/mobilisation, as shall be set out below, a masculinised approach is privileged.

The requirements for proving ones eligibility for demobilisation programmes suggests that a state of mobilisation is tangible and material. It can be physically verified by the possession of a weapon. This approach ignores the intangibles of the psychological, ideational and cultural states of mobilisation.⁴⁷ The mindset that legitimates what is done with material weapons is left intact and not perceived as dangerous. Viewing mobilisation in this way, those who operate under a psychology and culture that views violence as a legitimate tool for resolving conflict, but do not actually possess the material means to wield such violence, are not eligible for demobilisation and are therefore not considered mobilised. This excludes auxiliary personnel (most often women) who carry out a vast array of support functions from spying, cooking,

⁴⁵ Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, *Understanding Foucault*, (London: Sage, 2000), p. 22.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Power*, (New York: New Press, 1994), p. 330.

⁴⁷ Breen Smyth, 'The Process of Demilitarisation', p. 545.

strategising to providing sexual services, roles integral to the waging of contemporary wars, as the case study of Sierra Leone shall highlight.⁴⁸

Taking an armament focus also privileges the male role in conflict and legitimises it as being 'more mobilised' than the female role.⁴⁹ The confiscation of weapons from female fighters by their male superiors and their tendency to carry out overlapping roles (fighter and bush wife, for example) decrease their access to weapons.⁵⁰ Being incognisant of this, DDR programmes disproportionately exclude women from registration and thus simultaneously deny them the label of 'mobilised'. Both mobilisation and demobilisation thus become overwhelming masculine, cementing perceptions of war as a male activity. For this reason, the ways in which women are mobilised need to be brought to the fore in order to dislodge the assumed correlation between men and war.

In order to recognise the particular discourse of security that mobilisation and demobilisation are located within, the distortions that shroud this must be unveiled. Determining who falls into the category of mobilised is based on a particular knowledge of what demobilisation is (in the same way that sanity is determined by those who claim to know what insanity is). This knowledge upon which DDR practitioners rely is legitimised by the dominant discourse of security, which is no more 'true' or 'rational' than alternative discourses.⁵¹ Rather, such knowledge is founded upon certain power relationships that privilege the material, the gun and the masculine. Foucault recognises such arbitrary knowledge bases and resolves that everything is therefore dangerous,

⁴⁸ Chris Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 4.

⁵¹ Foucault, *Power*, p. 329.

requiring “hyper-pessimistic activism” to constantly question and reassess the incumbent knowledge system legitimising the dominant discourse and actions carried out through its logic.⁵² The picture of mobilisation that is painted by understandings of demobilisation must therefore be contrasted against the nature of contemporary conflict, to unveil perspectives it dangerously cloaks as absent. Dangerously, because little is done to recognise that the understanding of demobilisation and mobilisation promoted by DDR practitioners is particular and, at best, a part-truth. While any alternative DDR formulation posited will also inevitably exclude and self-legitimise, where the opportunity for meaningful participation in post-conflict society is denied to a significant category of the population, is where the poststructuralist deconstructive project must end and an attempt to construct a *least* exclusionary practice must be built.

This view of the demobilisation/mobilisation mirror is grounded in an increasingly inapplicable concept of contemporary conflict. War is represented as an activity perpetrated by men with guns, distinct in their mobilised status from civilian victims. The emphasis is on a material form of mobilisation – on the gun, rather than the mindset that allows the gun to be used in a violent way. It also clings to an increasingly outdated divide between civilians and combatants and victims and perpetrators. Such approaches do not necessarily reflect the nature of wars being fought.⁵³ The case study of the conflict in Sierra Leone in the following chapter demonstrates this in more detail, but it is useful to highlight here some general trends of which understandings of mobilisation and demobilisation seem to be unaware.

⁵² Quoted in Joseph Rouse, ‘Power/Knowledge’, in Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 112.

⁵³ Francis, ‘Introduction’, p. 14.

Modern conflicts take place under a fog of indistinction, with constant overlap between civilians and combatants, victims and perpetrators, home and front, and protector and protected roles.⁵⁴ Such murkiness limits the applicability of traditional conflict theories that rely upon these very distinctions being superimposed upon new wars. Rather, new models for interpreting conflict need to be devised, taking into account the blurring of traditional divides that have previously given war its discernable logic and allowed interventions in such conflicts a measure of success. In order to begin to understand contemporary wars so that what mobilises them can be *demobilised*, their very constitution requires analysis.

The discipline of peace studies was transformed by the recognition of positive, as opposed to negative peace, being more than simply ‘not war’.⁵⁵ Positive peace became an initiative in itself, continuing long after violent conflict had ceased. It aimed to *build* peace, not merely dismember war.⁵⁶ In the same way, complex understandings of conflict need to recognise that war is not simply the absence of peace. It too has a constructive project (albeit with destructive aims) to foster a war culture that perpetuate violence from which a warring elite profit. These are the structures of war that permeate the economy, politics and the population, acting to mobilise each to further embed the conflict.⁵⁷ A mobilised population rationalises violence as a legitimate tool for resolving disputes.⁵⁸ While this mentality is not a material factor, it is a vital component of the

⁵⁴ Coulter, ‘The Post-War Moment’, p. 3; Alex de Waal, ‘Contemporary Warfare in Africa’, in Mary Kaldor and Basker Vashee (eds.), *New Wars*, (London: Pinter, 1997), pp. 288-290.

⁵⁵ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996); Sir Adam Roberts, ‘Just Peace: A Cause Worth Fighting For’, in Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller (eds.), *What is a Just Peace?*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Breen Smyth, ‘The Process of Demilitarisation’, pp. 546;548.

⁵⁸ Jacklyn Cock, ‘The Sociology of Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa’, in Peter Batchelor and Kees Kingma (eds.), *Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: Volume 1 Concepts and Processes*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 109.

war machine that acts as the catalyst for picking up the material gun. This intangible precedes the material and thus is surely also as central, if not more so, to the question of mobilisation. Darby and McGinty have recognised this non-material aspect of mobilisation as a ‘custom of violence’ stating that:

Many people...do not live in the war zone, but...are also affected by the custom of violence. This does not mean that large numbers of people became engaged in violent actions. It does not even mean that they acquiesce in those actions. It means that violence and its effects have worked their way into the very fabric of society and become part of normal life so that they become accustomed to the routine use of violence to determine political and social outcomes.⁵⁹

Thus, while individual combatants may undergo a process of demobilisation, a society’s culture and discourse remains combative.⁶⁰ A person in possession of a weapon without this mobilised mindset surely has less of a claim to mobilised status than a person mobilised psychologically, but without access to the material means to act. To be comprehensively effective then, demobilisation mechanisms must dismember these structures that fortify conflict, and recognise them as a crucial component of what it is to be mobilised. As Breen Smyth notes:

Demobilisation...must reach into all those aspects of civilian life and culture that have become militarised during the conflict, in order to provide the cultural and ideological conditions under which peaceful, democratic and non-military methods of governance can underpin the transition to peace.⁶¹

Whether this approach to demobilisation renders it excessively loose and impractical in application, will be discussed in the final chapter, where an attempt to reconfigure DDR will be undertaken. This paper proceeds then, on the basis that understandings of inferred mobilisation are overly-restrictive due to a limited approach to demobilisation adopted by DDR programmes. The following chapter provides a case study of the conflict in Sierra Leone, highlighting how the roles of women were neglected in the demobilisation process.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Breen Smyth, ‘The Process of Demilitarisation’, p. 549.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 544.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 548.

Ch. 3 – Sierra Leone, Women and DDR

Sierra Leone has been chosen as the case study for this paper as it illuminates the question of what it is to be mobilised in contemporary conflict, though the intersection of demobilisation programmes and gender exclusion. It also illustrates the nature of modern warfare as inconsistent with the assumptions that traditional demobilisation programmes presuppose. These assumptions relate mostly to how one determines who is mobilised. Who one considers mobilised is a crucial determinant in navigating rights and responsibilities under international law, strategising war and, central to this paper, ensuring the establishment of sustainable, positive, post-conflict peace. This chapter will first set out the nature of the conflict in Sierra Leone, highlighting specifically the diverse roles played by women within it. Following will be an examination of the DDR programme and how it operated to exclude women. This discussion will then lead into a detailed investigation in the following chapter of how gender and conflict collide to produce rigid assumptions about who is considered mobilised.

The decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone was part of a string of conflicts in the West African region that fed into and sustained each other.⁶² It began in 1991 with attacks in the Eastern provinces of Kailahun and Pujeha by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), trained and funded by Liberian warlord, Charles Taylor.⁶³ The purpose was to gain greater access to diamond mines within Sierra Leone, best achieved by destabilising the government and creating chaos through terror amongst the civilian population.⁶⁴ Irregular soldiers were recruited from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Cote D'Ivoire.⁶⁵ Foreign recruits were largely motivated by personal profit

⁶² William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p. 114.

⁶³ Alie, 'The Kamajor Militia', p. 51.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Reno, *Warlord Politics*, p. 124.

and a lack of alternative employment, whereas many Sierra Leonean fighters have pointed to poor levels of education, opportunities and infrastructure as their qualm with the government.⁶⁶

The fighting that ensued resulted in the country being effectively split in two between the areas remaining under government control, and those terrorised by the RUF. Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) soldiers, recognising the lucrative benefits of pillaging and diamond mine theft, took to posing as rebels, resulting in the ‘sobel’ phenomenon – soldiers by day, rebels by night.⁶⁷ This crossover isolated civilians even further, prompting them to take security into their own hands by forming civilian defence forces (CDFs), such as the Kamajors, Donsos and Tamaboros.⁶⁸ A strict view of traditional conflict would view CDFs as oxymoronic, as they violate the civilian/combatant divide by allowing the two roles to exist contemporaneously. Yet this phenomenon is representative of the changed nature of warfare that traditional conflict mechanisms, such as current DDR formulations, fail to recognise. Tactics of rape, torture, mutilation, abduction and pillaging were common amongst the RUF, with the SLA and some CDFs also complicit in committing such atrocities. The amputation of limbs was commonplace as was the forced killing of ones family members.⁶⁹ The RUF in particular extensively used recruitment through abduction, creating a unique civilian/combatant and victim/perpetrator crossover.⁷⁰ In 1997, after devastating most of Sierra Leone, the RUF and SLA formed an alliance and requested CDF surrender. The largest and most formidable of the civilian forces, the Kamajors, refused and fighting

⁶⁶ de Waal, ‘Contemporary Warfare in Africa’, p. 326.

⁶⁷ Reno, *Warlord Politics*, p. 125.

⁶⁸ Alie, ‘The Kamajor Militia’, p. 55.

⁶⁹ Istifanus Zabadi, ‘Civil Militias: Threats to National and Human Security in West Africa’, in Francis, *Civil Militia*, p. 126.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

continued. Peacekeeping efforts by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and later the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) led to the eventual cessation of hostilities with the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement, reinforced after a return to fighting by the 2001 Abuja Agreement.⁷¹ The conflict was officially declared over in January 2001.

It is interesting to note that representing the conflict without explicit reference to gender, as above, generally summons pictures to mind of young, machine gun-clad *men*. It is for this reason, and the fact that this myopically-gendered lens translates into practical effect through demobilisation programmes, that the roles of women specifically are here examined. Women in Sierra Leone operated as the traverses of traditional divides in conflict – between civilian and combatant, victim and perpetrator and protector and protected. Women fought with the RUF in both combative and non-combative capacities, (with some estimates of their numbers as high as one third of the entire force) and with the CDFs.⁷² RUF battalions operated a Combat Wives Unit with exclusively female combatants, wielding ‘sista berettas’ (Beretta submachine guns).⁷³ Some became instructors in RUF ideology and trainers within the Vanguard (the RUF elite). Others were charged with policing captives, acting as bodyguards and spying.⁷⁴ In such capacities these women were clearly mobilised in conflict, according to traditional assumptions that one must be engaged in combat to be mobilised. Yet women carrying out alternative non-combative roles were surely equally mobilised in witnessing the horrors of war, supporting and constituting the machine that perpetrated it and being shaped psychologically and emotionally by its force.

⁷¹ Alie, ‘The Kamajor Militia’, p. 61.

⁷² McKay and Mazurana, ‘Where are the Girls?’, p. 95; Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest*, p. 89.

⁷³ Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, ‘The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone’, in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *African Guerrillas*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), p. 188.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

The diverse roles played by women cannot be viewed exclusively. They were simultaneously fighters, bush wives, domestic workers, spies, farmers, sex slaves, nurses, herbalists, traditional healers and liaisons.⁷⁵ When a woman operates as both a wife and a fighter, why is she a wife first and a fighter second? This multitude of roles should not result in their contribution being regarded as ‘less-than-warriors’. Often these varied roles are conflated into the feminised category of ‘camp followers’ which, despite passive connotations, are the backbone of rebel forces.⁷⁶ These women raid for food, provide medical care, fetch water, gather intelligence, plan attacks and facilitate the functioning of the war economy.⁷⁷ They also share the hardships of campaign, including extreme heat and cold, hunger and thirst, heavy burdens, uncomfortable quarters and long, dangerous expeditions.⁷⁸

A commonality of the experience of women mobilised in the conflict, whatever their role, was rape. Voluntary fighters, abducted sex slaves and all categories in between were subject to the familial system of camp life – favoured women were taken as ‘bush wives’ (an informal wartime marriage) and others were for communal ‘use’.⁷⁹ When a wife was replaced by one younger or more attractive, she would be forced to fight on the frontline.⁸⁰ Their release was disallowed lest they provide information to opponents of RUF tactics or atrocities.⁸¹ A Physicians for Human Rights report explains the bush wife system:

The lives of ‘wives’ in the camps were hellish...those caught while attempting to escape were killed as a deterrent to the others. As a survival strategy, many ‘wives’ cooperated with the male fighters, who, in turn, protected them...the rest were

⁷⁵ Penny Boreham, ‘Sierra Leone’s Forgotten “Bush Wives”’, BBC News, 9 June 2006.

⁷⁶ Cynthia Enloe, *Manoeuvres: The International Politics of Militarising Women’s Lives*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 38.

⁷⁷ Chris Coulter, ‘The Post-War Moment’, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Martin Van Creveld, *Men Women War*, (London: Cassell and Company, 2001), p. 95.

⁷⁹ David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, (New York: Palgrave, 2005), p. 242.

⁸⁰ McKay and Mazurana, ‘Where are the Girls?’, p. 94.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

communal property and all men had sexual rights over them. According to some of the girls, gang sex was a daily occurrence in the camps.⁸²

Such treatment caused extraordinarily high rates of sexually transmitted disease amongst the women, particularly HIV. The possibility of transmission was increased due to the violent nature of intercourse and associated risks of abrasion.⁸³ The spreading of inhibiting or life-threatening disease, where this was even understood as taking place, was considered secondary to the perpetuation of the RUF by forcing women (whatever their mobilised capacity) to bear their children.⁸⁴ If these women were not mobilised in the perpetuation of the conflict, then at the very least their reproductive systems were.

In Sierra Leone, where recruitment took the form of both abduction and volunteering, civilians were forced to become combatants and thus also perpetrators. Even as the perpetrators of vicious violence, women were still the victims of rape and possibly abduction. Their homes became the frontline when they were forced to kill their families, neighbours and school teachers. As women fought, they also continued to provide the traditional private, home duties of the female as carers through cooking, cleaning and sexual gratification. While mobilised on the front, women carried on simultaneously as civilians. This unique position posed problems for the DDR programme, as shall be set out below.

Sierra Leone's DDR programme was established under the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord with the intention of including women and men within its mandate. Its aims were threefold: to collect, register and destroy all conventional weapons; to demobilise

⁸² Quoted in Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, p. 44.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 45.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 243.

approximately 45,000 combatants; and to demobilise and reintegrate ex-combatants.⁸⁵ The programme was funded and implemented as a joint project by the Sierra Leonean government, the United Nations, the World Bank, various INGOs and donor governments (with a notable contribution from the United Kingdom).⁸⁶ Phases I and II of the DDR programme required the voluntary surrender of a conventional weapon.⁸⁷ Those claiming to be combatants were questioned and often required to disassemble and reassemble a gun, usually an AK-47, to determine their status as a fighter.⁸⁸ Note here that the model gun to be assembled to prove ones mobilised status did not include the Berreta submachine gun, the known weapon of the Combat Wives Unit. While it is likely that women within the Unit could also assemble an AK-47, the DDR standard shows from the outset a lack of tailoring to women's roles in the conflict. Phase III took a broader approach to DDR, recognising the limits of inclusion under Phases I and II. Group disarmament was allowed on the basis of turning in heavy weaponry that would have required multiple fighters for operation, such as rocket propelled grenades, mortars and heavy machine guns.⁸⁹ Clips of ammunition were also accepted at some registration centres, though this was inconsistently applied.⁹⁰ Phase III was intended to encourage female combatants to register, as their turnout in Phases I and II was disproportionately low. It is estimated that 72,500 combatants were disarmed across all of the phases, of which a mere 4,751 (or 6.5%) were women.⁹¹ Estimates of the overall number of women involved in fighting are as high as 30%, with others suggesting that there were

⁸⁵ Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 3.

⁸⁶ McKay and Mazurana, 'Where are the Girls?', p. 98.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Richards et al, 'Where Have All the Yong People Gone?', p. 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 3.

four to five bush wives for every conventional fighter.⁹² Such figures indicate that the non-participation of women is a systematic trend, requiring further analysis.

Women were both expressly excluded from DDR programmes in some circumstances and chose not to participate in others. Both instances reveal an ignorance of the complicated position women occupy on the part of those designing and implementing the DDR process. First, the programme in Sierra Leone limited its understanding of mobilisation to that of a traditional armaments focus, thus excluding those who did not play a direct combat role, most often women.⁹³ Second, even those women that did play a combat role often had their weapons removed by senior commanders (almost exclusively male) to be redistributed at a profit to men eager to gain the benefits of DDR.⁹⁴ The programme carried out in Sierra Leone failed to appreciate the deep-seated gender stereotypes that would push women from the frontline back into the invisibility of the private home, denying them their demobilisation. The DDR process also failed to consider the fear that women often felt at the prospect of being encamped with their former abusers.⁹⁵ This highlights the inability to make sense of the crossover of the roles of victim and perpetrator that women played. The DDR process saw the combatants as the perpetrators who needed to be neutralised, not recognising that some were also in fact victims of their fellow perpetrators. Women also face a moral discourse about fighting in war that men escape (more on this in the following chapter).⁹⁶ Many women in Sierra Leone spoke of a stigma attached to those who were

⁹² Megan MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors: The Reintegration of Girl Soldiers in Sierra Leone', International Studies Association Paper, San Francisco, March 2006.

⁹³ Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, p. 259.

⁹⁴ MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors', p. 15.

⁹⁵ McKay and Mazurana, 'Where are the Girls?', p. 101.

⁹⁶ Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 16.

involved in both combative and non-combative capacities with the RUF.⁹⁷ Returnees were often shunned from their families and communities, unable to marry or reintegrate into society.⁹⁸ Women who had volunteered, as well as those who had been abducted, were considered soiled: promiscuous and violent, contravening the norms of respectable female behaviour. The fear of such stigma caused many women not to enrol for DDR in the hope that they could bury their indecent past.⁹⁹ Again, the DDR programme needed to go to greater lengths to foster awareness and acceptance within the community of those involved in the conflict in order to include women.

Other women did not participate because by the standards of the programme, they would have been registered as children, eligible for a separate DDR programme.¹⁰⁰ Yet many 'girls', defined according to international standards as under eighteen years of age, considered themselves adults. They had children of their own, had been carrying out the responsibilities and tasks of an adult, had a bush husband and had fought alongside adults.¹⁰¹ The girls thus fell into a gap in the programme: still technically children but identifying, and being identified in their community, as adult. Some feared retribution for the atrocities they had committed or witnessed.¹⁰² Knowledge of the Sierra Leone National Truth and Reconciliation Committee, with reconciliatory powers, was often inaccurate and many were led to believe that they possessed retributive powers, capable of punishing former-combatants. Such misinformation was promoted to women as a reason for them to return home and allow men to take their place in DDR and gain its

⁹⁷ Rachel Brett and Irma Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why they Choose to Fight*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), pp. 97;99; Caspar Fithen and Paul Richards, 'Making War, Crafting Peace: Militia Soldiers and Demobilisation in Sierra Leone', in Paul Richards (ed.), *No Peace No War*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), p. 133.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors', p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 17.

benefits instead.¹⁰³ A general belief predominated that the entire DDR process was essentially a cash for guns programme tailored to men.¹⁰⁴ The under-representation of women in the Sierra Leonean DDR process has ensured for them a more difficult road to post-conflict recovery. Research carried out in Uganda suggests that those who undergo demobilisation cope better with post-conflict life than those who do not.¹⁰⁵ For example, they perform better at school, find alternative, sustainable work more easily and form stronger and more stable social relationships.¹⁰⁶ Exclusion from demobilisation also makes transitions to civilian life potentially problematic in coping independently (or at least, without the support of the demobilisation infrastructure) with post-traumatic stress or psychological disorders, as well as physical injuries or disabilities.¹⁰⁷ Undemobilised former-combatants also face wartime drug and alcohol addictions without the support that can be provided in DDR programmes.¹⁰⁸ Women find it harder to gain employment and are often forced into prostitution, resulting in greater exposure to HIV and other venereal diseases.¹⁰⁹ Due to the stigma of those who fought, women are also often considered unsuitable for marriage, thus humiliating themselves and their families, who may refuse to accept them.¹¹⁰ Being excluded from DDR, women are also largely barred from veteran's associations.¹¹¹ Such alienation risks creating an oppositional category whose disgruntlement should be taken seriously by governing authorities.¹¹²

¹⁰³ Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 23.

¹⁰⁴ MacKenzie, 'Forgotten Warriors', p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ McKay and Mazurana, 'Where are the Girls?', p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Brett and Specht, 'Young Soldiers', p. 101.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Coulter, 'The Post-War Moment', p. 14.

¹¹⁰ Emily Schroedar, Vanessa Farr and Albrecht Schnabel, 'Gender Awareness in Research on Small Arms and Light Weapons', Swiss Peace Foundation, January 2005, pp. 17;57.

¹¹¹ Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf, 'Women, War, Peace', p. 120.

¹¹² Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 4.

Ultimately then, the conflict in Sierra Leone involved the mobilisation of women in many diverse capacities, and yet has not been followed up with a comprehensive DDR programme. Rather, the DDR programmes conducted in Sierra Leone have excluded women due to its emphasis on armaments and its disinclination to consider the social milieu that women returning from conflict face. This exclusion results in a disadvantaged position for women in post-conflict society, threatening from the outset its stability and sustainability. The particular moral discourse that women face in relation to conflict shall be examined in the following chapter, giving consideration to the implications this has in a DDR context.

Ch.4 – Problems of Perception: Women as Warriors

Demobilisation plays a critical part in post-conflict endeavours to restore, build and maintain a positive peace, as well as to give meaning to the experience of war. It goes to the core of determining how conflict will be remembered and understood within a society. What elements and whose version to remember and enshrine as history depend upon the categories of inclusion and exclusion that take place in the crucial and fleeting post-conflict moment. How a society chooses to remember its past, whose experiences of humiliation, insecurity, solidarity, bravery and fear are endorsed, has implications for the present and future.¹¹³ It is a kind of retrospective judgement, in which some players are recognised and others overlooked. Such inclusions and exclusions within demobilisation programmes do not represent a truth or lie about who was or was not mobilised, but rather construct a particular reality that is needed in the present to facilitate the passing of the post-conflict moment. Exclusions also make DDR programmes practically effective (by delineating a manageable target group), and therefore simultaneously legitimate the programme itself.

The traditional gender stereotypes that bind women and men to roles and characteristics that are portrayed as natural, act on the post-conflict moment to ensure a particular history is told.¹¹⁴ While women's roles may have broadened during conflict, any 'liberation' that may have been achieved through it is too often 'disremembered' when the fighting ceases.¹¹⁵ A post-war masculinisation ensues that tangibly remembers war

¹¹³ Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), p. 233.

¹¹⁴ Miriam Cooke, 'Woman, Retelling the War Myth', p. 200.

¹¹⁵ Barbara Seitz, Linda Lobao and Ellen Treadway, 'No Going Back: Women's Participation in the Nicaraguan Revolution and in Post-Revolutionary Movements', in Ruth H. Howes and Michael R. Stevenson (eds.), *Women and the Use of Military Force*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 171; Sita Ranchod-Nilsson, "'This Too is a Way of Fighting': Rural Women's Participation in Zimbabwe's Liberation War", in Mary Ann Tetreault (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia and the New World*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), p. 63.

as male.¹¹⁶ Women are pushed back to the passive, private and feminised homestead, while men remain in the public arena, to actively determine political agendas and reconstitute armed forces (which female former-combatants are largely excluded from).¹¹⁷ Why is this selective programme followed and how is it possible, given that:

Women have always and everywhere been inextricably involved in war, [but] hidden from history...During wars, women are ubiquitous and highly visible; when the wars are over and the war songs are sung, women disappear.?¹¹⁸

This chapter examines the problems of perception that arise when women are deemed mobilised. In so doing examples of female warrior images will be drawn upon. The stereotypes that both inform and sprout from these images will then be considered, paying particular attention to the protector/protected relationship, on which the very purpose of war has often been premised, and the victim roles which are delineated as appropriate for women.

The nub of this paper's critique of demobilisation in Sierra Leone centres on the inability to consider women, playing either combative or non-combative roles in conflict, mobilised. Demobilisation programmes are structured in such a way (not necessarily cognisantly) that women are excluded from their ambit. Images throughout history have fortified this reluctance to view women as mobilised and where they are admitted as so being, to delegitimize them as unnatural and unfeminine. The ancient Greek mythical image of the Amazons, an all-female warrior force in the 5th and 6th Centuries BC, represents such an unnatural group.¹¹⁹ Living on the borderlands of the Greek Empire, these women were man-killing warriors who cut off one of their own

¹¹⁶ Klaus Theweleit, 'The Bomb's Womb and the Genders of War', in Cooke and Woollacott, *Gendering War Talk*, p. 307.

¹¹⁷ Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf, 'Women, War and Peace', p. 120.

¹¹⁸ Linda Grant de Pauw quoted in Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 59.

¹¹⁹ Goldstein, *War and Gender*, p. 11.

breasts to facilitate archery, controlled their offspring by sleeping with foreign men and murdered any sons they bore to maintain their single-sex society.¹²⁰ Their world was depicted as topsy-turvy and in stark contrast to the ideal Athenian woman, reinforcing men's construction of their own patriarchal society as orderly and natural.¹²¹ "The popular image of an Amazon is hardly flattering: a big, burly, single-breasted female; hostile; unattractive, a woman who has chosen to act like a man."¹²² The Amazons were suggestive of promiscuity, lust, disobedience and madness – characteristics highlighted to make their opposites (the feminine ideals espoused in patriarchal societies) seem natural and right. Yet a particular sexual appeal is still evident in these images. Amazons were dangerous, rebellious and thus, exciting. The poet Virgil (70BC – 19BC), writing during the Roman Empire, influentially spoke of 'taming' the Amazons with stories of converting them through marriage, and of a beautiful Amazonian Queen.¹²³ Such overlap of unnatural, manly power figures and sex objects can be seen more recently in images such as Xena Warrior Princess and Lara Croft. Xena actress, Lucy Lawless, highlights the irony:

As Xena, the tall, strong, athletic beauty with gloriously blue eyes is toggled out in boots, a leather miniskirt and metal breastplates that do her breathtaking body no harm at all.¹²⁴

While such images may show female warriors in a gentler light than mere brusqueness, the implications are hardly flattering. The image is still suggestive of promiscuity and an unnatural lifestyle not befitting of a decent, feminine woman. This attitude was prevalent in Sierra Leone, where women involved in the fighting forces were ostracised from their communities post-conflict for being licentious, brutal and thus,

¹²⁰ Ilse Kirk, 'Images of Amazons: Marriage and Matriarchy', in Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener (eds.), *Images of Women in Peace and War*, (London: MacMillan, 1987), pp. 28;30;33.

¹²¹ Goldstein, *War and Gender*, p. 17.

¹²² Boslooper and Hayes, quoted in Kirk, 'Images of Amazons', p. 33.

¹²³ Sharon MacDonald, 'Drawing the Lines – Gender, Peace and War', in MacDonald, Holden and Ardener, *Images of Women in Peace and War*, p. 6.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Goldstein, *Women at War*, p. 19.

unwomanly.¹²⁵ Evidence from reintegration efforts suggest that it is easier to accept a male who underwent the wartime experience of:

being forced to drink the water from human skulls, eating human flesh, collecting bags of ears and hands...beating your teachers or neighbours to death, killing your parent or sibling, torturing your colleagues.¹²⁶

The traditional role of women as givers of life and nurturers seems irreconcilable with the warmaking role that they are increasingly taking on.¹²⁷ Despite a seeming acceptance of their contribution *during* conflict, women are stripped of the legitimacy of their experience post-conflict, as it jars with societal expectations. In Sierra Leone:

The power and status that some female fighters during the war had accrued from having the reputation of being some of the most vicious fighters, did not translate into any culturally accepted prestige in post-war society, on the contrary, those qualities were the very opposite of socially accepted female behaviour throughout most of Sierra Leone.¹²⁸

The state of emergency environment that predominates during war provides a leniency for women and the roles that they are entitled to that peacetime does not. Exploiting this unnatural perception of female fighters, male combatants in Africa sometimes dress as women to enhance their magical powers and appear more frightening to their opponents.¹²⁹ This inability to digest the fighting roles women may play suggests that a perception exists that they should be playing other roles instead. It is to these roles of women as victims and ‘the protected’ that the paper now turns.

Due to the construction of the feminine as passive, gentle and relatively weak, women have often been symbolised as the ideal victim. The United Nations has been accused of taking such an approach, and testimonies from Sierra Leone lend weight to such claims.¹³⁰ Despite the October 2000 Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and

¹²⁵ Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf, ‘Women War Peace’, p. 120.

¹²⁶ McKay and Mazurana, ‘Where are the Girls?’, p. 119.

¹²⁷ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 183.

¹²⁸ Coulter, ‘The Post-War Moment’, p. 6.

¹²⁹ Goldstein, *Women at War*, p. 83.

¹³⁰ MacKenzie, ‘Forgotten Warriors’, p. 2.

Security, which emphasised the integral role of women as fighters in conflict and post-conflict peacemakers, on the ground the UN has continued to view women as victims.¹³¹ To facilitate the collection of forces for DDR enrolment in Sierra Leone, CDFs and the RUF would assemble their fighters at meeting points, to be picked up by UN units. Reports have claimed that groups of up to 100 women were left behind, because the UN was under the impression that men, not women, were the perpetrators of the violence and required demobilisation.¹³² Such an approach denies agency to women outside of a particular construction of the victim role. It assumes women to be benign bystanders who are hurt, wounded and suffer powerlessly. It ignores the active efforts made and assumes that unlike men, women are not prey to the excitements of violence and the community mentality it fosters.¹³³ It is an approach that is, as Naomi Wolf claims, “sexually judgemental” and “prescriptive”.¹³⁴ This distinction between perpetrators (male) and victims (female) satisfies assumptions about appropriate roles for women. Exertion of informal control over women is maintained through the perpetuation of such stereotypes.¹³⁵ Thus it can be seen that the role of women as victims is more comfortably accepted than their role as fighters, but why so? What purpose does female victimhood serve that it is so consistently reinforced?

The rationale for violence depends heavily on the existence of those in need of protection. As the protected were traditionally immune from being targeted, this logically meant that they also could not fight.¹³⁶ Monopolising on biological realities of

¹³¹ Victoria Brittain, ‘Women in War and Crisis Zones: One Key to Africa’s Wars of Underdevelopment’, Working Paper 21, Crisis States Programme, London School of Economics, December 2002, p. 1.

¹³² McKay and Mazurana, ‘Where are the Girls?’, p. 101.

¹³³ Michael Salla, ‘Women and War, Men and Pacifism’, in Inger Skjelsbaek and Dan Smith (eds.) *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, (London: Sage, 2001), p. 71.

¹³⁴ Quoted in MacKenzie, ‘Forgotten Warriors’, p. 7.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Van Creveld, *Men Women and War*, p. 31.

womanhood (that is, women as life-givers) and societal constructions (women as carers and nurturers), women were effectively categorised as ‘the protected’.¹³⁷ Thus, war was premised on men being mobilised to protect their women, who in turn had an obligation to fulfil their roles as being worthy of protection. Not to fulfil this role was considered unpatriotic, ungrateful and *unfeminine*, as indicated by images of French women being publicly paraded half-naked with their heads shaved for colluding with the enemy in World War II.¹³⁸ A rejection of the role of the protected results in the very purpose of war being challenged (who is being fought for if the women do not need or want protection?) and the oppositional role of the male as protector being questioned (if she does not need protecting, he is no longer the protector). Thus the roles of protector and protected are mutually constructive of each other and dependent upon fulfilment of the other.¹³⁹ The problem is that this binary does not represent what *actual* men and women are doing. While the neatness of the logic that ‘women need protection as they are victims because to not be a victim is unfeminine’ is appealingly straightforward, it does not reflect the reality of the roles that women are playing in conflict and the transformation of the feminine that results. Women *do* participate in conflict. They:

generate high profits for their commanders through looting and activities in illicit war economies, and it is their productive and reproductive labour that forms the backbone of many of today’s rebel forces. They raid for and grow food, acquire medical supplies, fetch water, serve as porters, care for the wounded and provide information to plan future attacks. They supply the labour needed to extract diamonds, gold and other minerals, cut timber and load trucks and planes so that the war economies that make up and fuel today’s armed can function. They are used to carry out the most violent attacks, which tear the fabric of their communities and nations. They fight and are killed.¹⁴⁰

The gendered stereotypes of females as unnatural fighters but natural victims in need of protection highlights the disconnect between the reality of conflicts such as Sierra

¹³⁷ Elshtain, *Women and War*, p. 183.

¹³⁸ Van Creveld, *Men Women and War*, p. 37.

¹³⁹ Pettman, *Worlding Women*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁰ McKay and Mazurana, ‘Where are the Girls?’, p. 117.

Leone, and assumptions governing post-conflict practices in these settings. Initiatives such as demobilisation cannot be conducted with such misconceptions in mind.

The flipside of women's exclusion from demobilisation is their encouraged participation in development and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.¹⁴¹ This approach makes meagre steps towards granting agency beyond the bounds of victimhood, yet is still constrained by a slavish acceptance of women as solely nurturers and peacemakers. While it recognises that women have valuable contributions to make, it limits these contributions to the only arena in which women are perceived to be useful. It still denies the possibility of fighting women, or even alternatively mobilised women. By reserving for women this space in positive reconstruction efforts, is their exclusion as negative, combative agents simultaneously fortified? If so, granting women inclusion within post-conflict peacebuilding efforts is perhaps a regressive step in affording them the recognition of unbounded agency that they deserve and, in reality, already act out.

The implications of perceiving women in this way for DDR go beyond a denial of unbounded agency however. Practically, women are left in a mobilised state, because not being recognised as mobilised, they are not eligible to be *demobilised*. This is not to suggest that women remain *traditionally* mobilised, terrorising the population with guns. Rather that they will continue to operate with a mobilised mentality – viewing violence as an acceptable method of resolving problems, retaining a wartime regard for their enemies, not feeling that the war has officially ended for them, and that their contribution has been ignored.¹⁴² Accompanying such lack of resolution may be psychological trauma that goes undetected if they do not gain the benefit of medical and

¹⁴¹ Elshtain, *Women and War*, pp. 180-185.

¹⁴² Breen Smyth, 'The Process of Demilitarisation', pp. 545-546.

psychological monitoring in demobilisation centres.¹⁴³ This risks alienating them from their communities, leading to further discontent. In Sierra Leone, many female former-combatants are living dangerous lives of prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, as they have been unable to reintegrate into peacetime life.¹⁴⁴ Aside from the personal hazards of being excluded from demobilisation, broader community safety may be jeopardised. Veterans of conflict are recognised as a significant social category in need of support post-conflict.¹⁴⁵ Any frustrations or discontent that they may feel risks being converted into a return to violence either in their own community, or in neighbouring conflicts (as the crossover of fighters from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire demonstrates). Thus for the sake of individual, as well as communal security, it is essential that those mobilised, in their various capacities, be *demobilised*, so that post-conflict life may provide resolution to all who were involved in the conflict, and who should all be involved in the peace.

Perceptions of women as inimical to images of warriors need to be revised to take into account the multitude of roles that women play in conflict, not simply those of victims, the protected and peacemakers. The unfeminine and sexualised figures of the few recognised female fighters also require demystifying, so that they can cease to be represented as unnatural. In such a way, the role of women in conflict can be revealed in all its manifestations, and thus allow mobilised women their right to demobilisation and sustainable post-conflict life.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Richards et al, 'Where Have all the Young People Gone?', p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Ch. 5: Reconfigurations: Decoupling Demobilisation from Disarmament

Under current formulations, demobilisation implies a limited form of mobilisation operating largely to exclude women from its purview or, where women are considered mobilised, doing little to tailor programmes to their circumstances, resulting in their nonparticipation. Such exclusion is embedded in social consciousness through historical images and perceptions of gender, thus becoming difficult to unseat when it manifests in demobilisation practices. This chapter seeks to examine the possibilities for reconfiguring demobilisation so that women and other excluded categories can be more successfully integrated into its mandate. In order to do this, demobilisation needs to be delinked from its masculinist and traditionally-constant accomplice, disarmament. There is a danger however that broadening demobilisation by isolating it from disarmament will render the concept excessively loose and potentially meaningless. It risks being diluted to the extent that rather than maintaining its status of urgency and importance as a security practice, it merely becomes development assistance by another name. A way out of this predicament can be found however in the work of Duffield, who perceives a merging of security and development to be taking place that increasingly obscures the distinction between the two. It is within this overlapping space that demobilisation finds itself and where, as shall be argued below, it belongs. Thus, a reformulation of demobilisation that is inclusive and more representative of contemporary conflict, while still being practically viable, *is* possible if traditional preoccupations with associated disarmament and security status can be cast off.

DDR programmes have traditionally come as a bundle. The components are a part of a singular whole: a post-conflict troika of demilitarisation, each serving a particular

purpose yet ultimately aiming for the same reinforcement of sustainable peace.¹⁴⁶ Disarmament, as the foundational component of the package, has been exposed to greater scrutiny and receives more funding than the later additions of demobilisation and reintegration.¹⁴⁷ This is perhaps due to its longer history, but also its tangibility, measurability and strong connection to security. Disarmament can be seen, tested, recorded and justified as integral to the urgent enforcement of peace.¹⁴⁸ By virtue of these traits, disarmament has a greater resonance with programme donors and stakeholders, again reinforcing its centrality in DDR processes.¹⁴⁹ These characteristics afford disarmament a visibility and sense of importance that are denied to a greater extent to DDR's other components. Yet as has been discussed throughout this paper, it is the coupling of demobilisation with disarmament that often results in women being excluded from the processes of the former. The material-, armaments-focus of disarmament (that is, requiring the handing in of a conventional weapon for registration) is incognisant of the non-combat roles that the majority of women play in modern wars, as well as the practice of male superiors removing weapons from female fighters prior to demobilisation for personal profit. Disarmament thus ensures limited sight for the rest of the DDR package by imposing a standard for initial registration that limits enrolment to those who fit a picture of mobilisation in traditional conflict.¹⁵⁰ It does not recognise the diverse roles played in contemporary wars and how these roles are integral to fighting, even if they do not carry a weapon.

¹⁴⁶ Kingma, 'Demobilisation, Reintegration and Peace-Building in Southern Africa', pp. 133-134.

¹⁴⁷ Cock, 'The Sociology of Demilitarisation and Peace-Building in Southern Africa', p. 109.

¹⁴⁸ Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War', p. 195.

¹⁴⁹ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', p. 503.

¹⁵⁰ Spear, 'From Political Economies of War', pp. 173-174.

By enshrining disarmament as the first stage of DDR, the purposes of demobilisation and reintegration are seen through the lens of this weapons-focused phase.¹⁵¹ The entire DDR process is weaponised, as it were, thus excluding many women and auxiliary personnel. For example, were demobilisation to precede disarmament in the DDR process, initial registration may be based more on determining mobilised mindsets and taking weapons off those with such a potentially dangerous mentality.¹⁵² This would involve extensive psychological analysis and behavioural observation. Practicality insists that disarmament will never be entirely comprehensive, particularly in parts of Africa where the trade in small arms and light weapons is reaching pandemic proportions.¹⁵³ This being so, surely it is the attitude that makes these weapons dangerous that needs to be curtailed, instead of merely taking the weapons away when access to a seemingly endless supply can be easily tapped into. Indeed, destroying the gun-culture before the guns themselves may decrease the economic value of the weapons, with less demand, and their symbolic value, with less cultural prestige attached to the gun, thus potentially increasing the number of weapons handed in under a disarmament programme.¹⁵⁴ This is not to suggest that disarmament is a futile process. It certainly has its purpose and correlations can no doubt be found between less guns and more peace.¹⁵⁵ Yet ultimately this is treating the symptoms rather than the cause. If the mindset and culture that legitimates the violent use of weapons can be demobilised, then the existence of the weapons becomes a secondary concern.¹⁵⁶ This is not the case when weapons are removed as the continuing prevalence of discontent then still remains dangerous. Thus, in order to capture women and other excluded categories within its

¹⁵¹ Patrick McCarthy, 'Deconstructing Disarmament: The Challenge of Making Disarmament and Arms Control Machinery Responsive to the Humanitarian Imperative', (UNIDIR: Geneva, 2005), p. 52.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', p. 503.

¹⁵⁴ Spear, 'From Political Economies of War', pp. 173-174.

¹⁵⁵ Knight and Ozerdem, 'Guns, Camps and Cash', p. 503.

¹⁵⁶ Spear, 'From Political Economies of War', pp. 173-174.

ambit, demobilisation must be divorced from the masculinist and armaments-focus of disarmament. This will allow it to better embrace the non-material elements of mobilisation, be they psychological, cultural and/or ideational, thus affording those mobilised in alternative capacities the opportunity of demobilising.

Such a broadening of the demobilisation catchment through disassociation with disarmament may be open to criticism of becoming conceptually loose and expansive, and thus practically unviable in application.¹⁵⁷ If mobilisation can extend from a material state of carrying weapons, to facilitating fighting through support capacities, to being able to mentally justify the use of violence as a negotiation tool, those eligible for demobilisation will be a group far larger than any cantonment area is capable of processing. Further, the panoply of experiences of mobilisation within the conflict will be too diverse to be amenable to any integrated programme. The further one digresses from the obvious security category of the weapon-wielding warrior, the less convincing demobilisation's claim to being a security issue (and thus being imbued with the urgency and importance that this carries) becomes.¹⁵⁸ Demobilisation then risks being incorporated under that broad, catch-all category of 'development assistance', and competing for funding and resources with the multitude of other projects that fall within its umbra.¹⁵⁹ The specificity of purpose and demarcated targeting that programmes located within the security realm operate with may not be satisfied by the broadened scope of demobilisation posited here. Thus, does demobilisation simply become development policy by another name, losing its privileged position as a security issue in the process?

¹⁵⁷ Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War', p. 199.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Duffield's work on the merging of security and development may offer an alternative conception of the above quandary. He considers that the new wars have dissolved the conventional distinctions that gave traditional conflicts their logic, rendering contemporary wars in need of reconceptualisation.¹⁶⁰ This reconceptualisation centres around the convergence of security and development that occurred throughout the 1990s and continues to be a defining feature of modern conflict.¹⁶¹ Duffield argues:

...there is a noticeable convergence between notions of development and security. Through a circular form of reinforcement and mutuality, achieving one is now regarded as essential for securing the other. Development is ultimately impossible without stability and, at the same time, security is not sustainable without development.¹⁶²

Development has been 'radicalised' and has gained an urgency, previously reserved for the domain of security, by virtue of *underdevelopment* being perceived as dangerous.¹⁶³

The causes of contemporary conflict are seen to be to do with standards of living, economic and lifestyle opportunities and social identities, rather than the traditional hard-nosed interests of states.¹⁶⁴ This recognition necessitates a view of security that is not limited by its traditional separation from that which is social, grassroots and community-focused. Understandings of security must move from a state- and military-focus, to a community- and people-centred approach, recognising development standards (be they social, economic, environmental *et cetera*) as integral to its sustainable achievement. From this viewpoint, demobilisation's shift from being a staunchly security practice to a security/development blend, more accurately reflects the nature of both security and development in the new wars.

¹⁶⁰ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars*, (Zed Books: London, 2001), p. 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 15.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 35-36.

Taking a more developmental approach to demobilisation also shifts the view one takes of former-combatants. Under the traditional DDR model set out in the first chapter, former-combatants are deemed threats to post-conflict peace due to their likelihood of resorting to a livelihood of violence, because they lack transferable skills for civilian work.¹⁶⁵ This approach perceives former-combatants as a problem to be solved and does little in the way of fostering a positive community attitude towards them upon reintegration.¹⁶⁶ In contrast to this, taking a more developmental approach that plays down the disarmament focus of DDR, former-combatants can be viewed as promising human capital, with skill potential and legitimate hopes and demands for the future.¹⁶⁷ Seeing former-combatants as a crucial component of post-conflict communities rather than potential weapon-wielding spoilers, is a more effective way of ensuring social cooperation and cohesion, central to building a sustainable peace. Decoupling demobilisation from disarmament allows this approach to be achieved by de-emphasising the material-, weapons-focus of mobilisation, accentuating instead the developmental potential of former-combatants.

The reconfiguration of demobilisation proposed goes some way to resolving two fundamental concerns with current DDR programmes highlighted in this paper. The first refers to the exclusion of women and the second to the changing nature of contemporary conflict. As has been demonstrated, women are excluded from demobilisation programmes due to DDR registration requirements of relinquishing a conventional weapon, a standard stemming from a lack of recognition of non-combat roles as sufficiently mobilised in conflict. This weapons-focus privileges the male who has

¹⁶⁵ Muggah, 'Emerging from the Shadow of War', p. 200.

¹⁶⁶ Kingma, 'Demobilisation, Reintegration and Peace-Building in Southern Africa', p. 134.

¹⁶⁷ Fithen and Richards, 'Making War, Crafting Peace', p. 118.

greater access to weapons and is less likely to play the variety of wartime roles that women do, which seem to detract from, rather than contribute to, the latter's claim to mobilised status. Removing the weapons-focused disarmament phase from demobilisation processes will allow other elements of mobilisation, such as the psychological, ideational and cultural factors to be considered in judging mobilisation claims.¹⁶⁸ This approach will allow for the recognition of non-combat, auxiliary wartime roles and will not disenfranchise those women who fought but have had their weapons removed. Moreover, this reformulation would also allow the inclusion of traditional *juju* warriors, who have been excluded from current DDR programmes due to their carrying of homemade, rather than conventional, weapons. While the stereotype images of women as fighters will not be immediately resolved by this new approach, the gradual recognition of more women playing a diverse range of conflict roles will begin the process of disassembling such image's claims to represent a natural reality. In this way, the decoupling of demobilisation and disarmament will go some way to ensuring greater inclusion of women and other excluded categories from the ambit of demobilisation practices, thus contributing to a more fully demobilised and peaceful post-conflict society.

The reconfigurations set out in this chapter are also more aware of the nature of contemporary conflict, and how it differs from traditional conflict. Accepting non-traditional forms of mobilisation (that is, not just those who carry conventional weapons), recognises the blurring of the civilian/combatant divide and the various non-military planes (for example, economic) around which conflict now also centres and

¹⁶⁸ Breen Smyth, 'The Process of Demilitarisation', p. 548.

mobilises.¹⁶⁹ Further, the increased overlap that demobilisation, without its disarmament counterpart, accepts of development and security recognises the mutuality of these two realms and the causes of contemporary wars. Divorcing demobilisation and disarmament therefore acknowledges what is currently ignored by DDR programmes: the mobilisation of women and the blurring of traditional divides within contemporary conflict. Integrating this understanding into demobilisation processes will fortify the post-conflict peace being built by ensuring that communities are more thoroughly demobilised at the psychological, ideational and cultural levels.¹⁷⁰ Rather than merely having the material means to express themselves removed through disarmament, demobilisation can independently ensure peaceful mentalities are established that take a specifically non-weaponised focus to include women within their ambit.

¹⁶⁹ Cooke, 'WOMan, Retelling the War Myth', pp. 180-182.

¹⁷⁰ Breen Smyth, 'The Process of Demilitarisation', p. 548.

Conclusion:

The conflict in Sierra Leone is an example of the new wars currently confronting the international community. The nature of the violence there is characteristic of the blurring of traditional wartime divides that previously provided security processes, such as DDR, with their discernable logic and applicability. Resting upon a shifting terrain, contemporary conflict defies resolution through such traditional post-conflict practices, as attempts at their application result in exclusions of those groups who were not accounted for in traditional formulations. Thus, as considered here, the category of women, as both fighters and auxiliary personnel, continues to be substantially underrepresented in demobilisation programmes because of a continuing adherence to outdated conceptions of conflict in which women are not represented as present. From this snapshot of women's involvement (or lack thereof) in Sierra Leone's demobilisation programme, an insight into who is considered mobilised in conflict can be glimpsed. The resistance to acknowledging women as combatants is both a cause and effect of their exclusion. Their essentialised position as victimised, protected, peacemakers is thus reified to support their ongoing exclusion. Any group of veterans omitted from post-conflict transitions pose a potential threat to the peace being established that should be averted. Upon investigation of this exclusion it becomes clear that the material- and armaments-focus of DDR, imposed upon demobilisation and reintegration components due to the overemphasis on disarmament, privileges the masculine. It is thus males who are viewed more naturally as mobilised in conflict. To escape this exclusionary DDR trap, demobilisation needs to be decoupled from disarmament, thus allowing it to be re-conceived as not only a material process, but also a psychological, ideational and cultural one. This approach will improve prospects for forging a positive peace as both the material threat of armed groups and the mindset that

prompts their actions can be pacified. In so doing, demobilisation programmes may operate with a wider registration standard, recognising the mobilisation of women and non-combative actors. Simultaneously, this approach reflects a more comprehensive representation of security that accounts for the changed nature of conflict.

This paper has posited the above argument by considering the broad theoretical framework of DDR programmes and the evolution of demobilisation and how an understanding of mobilisation can be inferred from this basis. A case study of the conflict in Sierra Leone was then provided, highlighting the diverse roles played by women and how the DDR programme operated to exclude their participation. This preceded an examination of the perceptions of women in conflict and the roles that are deemed acceptable for them to play. Finally, an attempt to divorce demobilisation from disarmament was proposed as a solution to the exclusion of women, allowing registration on the basis of mobilised status, rather than combative status. This approach prioritises the establishment of a thorough, positive peace with demobilised mindsets, rather than simply a society free from weapons. It also recognises the blurring of development and security, and that demobilisation perhaps comfortably falls within this nexus, rather than belonging to the bounded realm of security alone. Embracing this developmental approach allows demobilisation to move away from the armaments-focus of mobilisation and recognise the significance of the intangibles of psychology, culture and ideas. In turn, this conception of mobilisation allows a more comprehensive understanding of security and modern conflict.

It has been seen how ideas of mobilisation are derived from a disarmament-dominated form of demobilisation and that they are also linked to an outdated binary codification

of conflict. The reliance upon distinctions between war and peace, combatants and civilians, protector and protected, perpetrator and victim and ultimately, men and women is representative of a Manichaeian worldview that constructs, rather than reflects, reality. In this construction, women are erased from the war picture and instead embedded in a scene of essentialised images revolving around peace, the protected home and victimhood. This seeming need for wartime distinctions is captured in journalist/writer Kapuscinski's writing:

...what does it mean to think in wartime images? It means seeing everything as existing in a state of extreme tension, as breathing cruelty and dread. For wartime reality is a war of extreme, Manichaeian reduction, which erases all intermediate hues, gentle, warm and limits everything to a sharp, aggressive counterpoint, to black and white, to the primordial struggle of two forces – good and evil. Nothing else of the battlefield!

Reducing the complexity of contemporary conflict to simple binaries that provide an executable logic, does not help in gaining a deeper understanding of their phenomenon. Rather, this approach merely enshrines outdated conflict resolution practices, such as current DDR models, as suitable, when they in fact operate to exclude particular categories *because* of their reliance upon increasingly non-existent binaries. The roles of women in conflict are sidelined due to this reliance and post-conflict peace is weakened as a result. Social exclusion has been pointed to by former RUF combatants as a reason for the conflict in Sierra Leone, thus to inscribe further exclusion in the post-conflict peace would certainly be tempting fate.¹⁷¹ Including women within demobilisation programmes and post-conflict life more generally will require more than simply occupational alternatives. It will involve a transformation of the social structures and consciousness that continue to subject women and their life choices to a morally judgemental microscope. This is by no means a simple or straightforward process, yet its impact is considerably more far reaching than the experiences of the individual

¹⁷¹ Fithens and Richards, 'Making War, Crafting Peace', p. 117.

women alone. The inclusion of mobilised women within demobilisation efforts will also allow for a deeper understanding of, and thus ability to resolve, contemporary conflicts of which they are a crucial part. A demobilisation framework that recognises the involvement of all actors, in their various capacities, within contemporary conflict can be achieved if the traditional distinctions that were represented as characterising war in the past are let go. In this way, the armaments-focus of disarmament can relinquish its hold on demobilisation and both security and development can be embraced collectively, thus ensuring that mobilisation is determined not simply on the basis of wielding a weapon, but possessing the mindset that makes this dangerous.

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