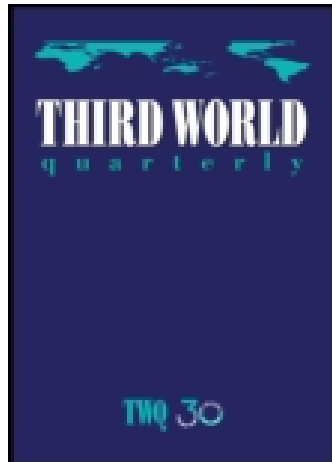


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Football and Post-War Reintegration: exploring the role of sport in DDR processes in Sierra Leone

CHRISTOPHER B DYCK

ABSTRACT Growing enthusiasm for ‘Sport for development and peace’ (SDP) projects around the world has created a much greater interest among critical scholars seeking to interrogate potential gains, extant limitations and challenges of using sport to advance ‘development’ and ‘peace’ in Africa. Despite this interest, the role of sport in post-conflict peace building remains poorly understood. Since peace building, as a field of study, lends itself to practical approaches that seek to address underlying sources of violent conflict, it is surprising that it has neglected to take an interest in sport, especially its grassroots models. In Africa, football (soccer) in particular has a strong appeal because of its popularity and ability to mobilise individuals and communities. Through a case study on Sierra Leone, this paper focuses on sports in a particularly prominent post-civil war UN intervention—the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process—to determine how ex-youth combatants, camp administrators and caregivers perceive the role and significance of sporting activities in interim care centres (ICCs) or DDR camps. It argues that sporting experiences in DDR processes are fruitful microcosms for understanding nuanced forms of violence and healing among youth combatants during their reintegration process.

These children had military minds and military-centric ideas. We had to teach them, if I may use that term, to think otherwise, to begin to think like civilians again. We had to take them back to where they were before—a civilian mentality.¹

Ex-combatants sitting idle brings a lot of conflict in the camp. But football engages them in profitable activities, it is where ex-combatants devoted a lot of time in the camp. Sometimes after school they used to play it up to night. So the problems they used to make during that time was minimised during football. So if football was taken out of the camp, it would create a lot of riots. When a football got spoiled [deflated], they would replace it right away because they knew that problems would be minimised.²

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United Nations interventions in Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras), West (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire), Central (DRC, Rwanda, Central African Republic) and Southern Africa (Mozambique, Namibia) and Asia (East Timor) since the late 1980s have sought to end violent hostilities and secure 'peace' in countries emerging from civil conflict.³ These efforts have been supported by the World Bank and by UN agencies such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO) and several NGOs. Peacebuilding emerged in a period of increased international interventionism during the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the UN being called upon to respond to a number of violent internecine conflicts. The UN's original conceptualisation of peacebuilding sought not only to bring violent hostilities in these contexts to an end, but also to address structural causes of violence within these societies in order to build a durable, lasting peace.⁴

Over the past decade or so UN agencies, departments and programmes have been incorporating various types of sporting activities in their respective mandates.⁵ The UN DPKO, for example, uses 'sport for peace' projects in some of its current peacekeeping operations, including in the DRC (MONUC), Liberia (UNMIL), Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). UNICEF has been advancing sport for peace programmes in post-war contexts to promote reintegration for former child and youth combatants.⁶ One of the prominent means of integrating sport programmes within the UN system has been within broader disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Yet it is not clear what role and contribution sport can play in these settings, nor what limitations are associated with sport and peace building in DDR.

This article addresses two exploratory questions: can sport assist DDR efforts for youth combatants and, if so, under what conditions? Second, can sport assist in rebuilding inter-community relations between ex-combatants and communities? An in-depth case study of Sierra Leonean experiences of sport in DDR camps is examined in order to gain a deeper appreciation of the micro-dynamics of sport in demobilisation and reintegration processes. What are the potential gains and extant limitations of sport in DDR processes? Can sport have a positive impact on DDR processes 'on-the-ground' in a post-conflict context like Sierra Leone? To address these questions, the article examines how ex-youth combatants, camp administrators and caregivers perceived the impact and significance of sporting activities in DDR camps.

The paper is divided into four main sections. The first section provides relevant background and context to DDR processes in post-conflict peace building and provides a brief overview of the politics of Sierra Leone's DDR process. Part two reviews the literature on peace building and offers a theoretical understanding of sport and peace building. The next section offers qualitative perceptions from youth and child combatants, camp administrators and caregivers on the role and significance of sport in the two DDR

camps under study (one in Freetown, one in Bo). The final section steps back from these positive gains to critically analyse the possibilities and limitations of sport, and considers some potential roles within broader DDR efforts in Sierra Leone. In sum, the article argues that examining sporting experiences in the DDR process is a fruitful microcosm for understanding nuanced forms of violence and healing among youth combatants during their reintegration process.

Theory and context: sport, peace building and DDR

Sport and peace building

A nascent body of critical scholarship is interrogating the potential gains, limitations and emergent challenges of using sport to advance development and peace.⁷ Yet sport in post-conflict contexts has been a relatively neglected issue within the body of literature on sport for development and peace (SDP). The peacebuilding literature has also not yet engaged with the issue of grassroots sports and whether sport has a role to play in broader efforts to reduce violence within societies emerging from conflict. Specifically what is lacking in the literature are fine-grained analyses and empirical research about participants' understandings of sport in relation to wider patterns of violence in society. Moreover, despite an increase in use of sport among UN bodies and NGOs to promote peace building in DDR contexts, few programmes of this nature have been critically monitored or evaluated. The handful of studies that does exist suggests that well-designed and culturally sensitive sport programmes can make modest contributions to reconciliation and conflict resolution or prevention in post-war and divided societies.⁸ As Sugden has argued, 'if projects are locally grounded, carefully thought out, and professionally managed they can make a modest contribution to wider efforts to promote conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence.'⁹ Sugden argues that local ownership and integration with societal norms and values are key factors that enable Football 4 Peace programmes to contribute to conflict resolution between Arab and Israeli children in northern Israel. Høglund and Sundberg's research suggests that sport can promote inter/intra-community reconciliation in South Africa if organisers remain mindful of barriers such as language, stereotypes and psychological trauma during design and implementation phases.¹⁰ In addition, sport, especially football (soccer), has an important significance on the African continent with respect to possible roles in nation and community building.¹¹ Yet the contribution of football to conflict resolution in Africa lies mostly at the grassroots and community levels. Paul Richards argues that peace building actors in Sierra Leone have overlooked football's potential significance in reducing violence among youth combatants and rebuilding social relations between conflict-affected communities.¹² Richards raises the interesting possibility that sport can play a role in reducing violence and fostering reintegration. If so, then we need to conceptualise different

types of violent behaviour in order to understand how football may play a role among ex-combatants.

Peacebuilding theory

Johan Galtung's theoretical distinction between direct and structural violence provides a useful framework for understanding types of violence in post-war societies. Galtung defines direct violence as specific incidents or events that cause physical harm to another individual or one's self. In contrast, Galtung argues, peace building must address structural violence,¹³ which he defines more broadly and ambitiously as latent forms of violence that affect the physical and psychological well-being of individuals, and therefore prevent them from realising their full potential.¹⁴ Although broad, this conceptualisation appreciates deeper levels of violence beyond the *prima facie*.

Structural violence can include structures, actions and discourses that affect one's basic social, physical and psychological needs.¹⁵ This broader definition is inclusive of chronic threats such as hunger, disease, lack of access to education and work, and gender-based violence. While this definition remains extremely broad, and is vulnerable to the same criticisms that confront the so-called 'freedom from fear' definition of human security,¹⁶ Galtung's framework remains useful because it extends violence-reduction interventions beyond simply ending large-scale conflict. For instance, while not underestimating the significant challenges and contributions in disarmament phases in terms of preventing war recurrence, a Galtungian perspective argues that removing means of violence only addresses direct physical harm, while underlying sources of structural violence remain latent within conflict-prone societies. These latent forms of violence, he suggests, will undermine long-term peace and stability. Although not without controversy, UN bodies, led by the DPKO and the UNDP, have conceptualised and implemented DDR programmes that aim to address violent conflict in countries emerging from civil war.

Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration

DDR programmes have become part and parcel of contemporary peace-building practice over the past two decades.¹⁷ One particular aim of these programmes is to support former combatants' transition from military to civilian status.¹⁸ After cessation of large-scale hostilities, ex-combatants must come to grips with a series of structural and individual challenges.

DDR has three distinct yet overlapping components. First, disarmament attempts to collect and dispose of a wide range of arms through the development of arms management programmes. Achieving 'peace' is also dependent upon breaking up command and control structures of non-state armed groups, thus making it difficult to organise violent conflict.¹⁹ Second, demobilisation is essential to downsize or completely disarm armed forces and/or armed groups, and involves discharge of combatants, often with a support package to assist in reinserting them into community life.²⁰ This

encampment process often but not always involves a stay in interim care centres or DDR camps for up to several months. Third, reintegration involves transformation from military to civilian life, with ex-combatants actively participating in the economic and social life of their communities.²¹

DDR has been controversial. Conventional wisdom suggests that, at best, DDR can be a short-term intervention that attempts to end hostilities and to remove weapons from combatants so that armed groups can be dismantled.²² Some analysts have focused on the poorly understood phase of socio-economic reintegration.²³ This has led to a debate about whether the reintegration phase should be effectively de-linked from DDR and treated as a distinct, long-term process.²⁴ While not underestimating the inherent challenges involved in disarmament, evidence from past UN-led DDR efforts in Mozambique and Liberia indicates how failure in reintegration leads to insecurity and instability.²⁵ The reintegration phase remains poorly understood and under-conceptualised, including the length of time required.²⁶ However, a consensus is emerging that the time frame for reintegration must be long and flexible.²⁷

Theoretically demobilisation and reintegration are mutually reinforcing processes that aim to dismantle military command and control structures to establish a basis for an individual's post-war civilian identity. Recent research has shed light on the requirements and difficulty of disbanding wartime networks and relationships between combatants with militarised skills and wartime values (like cruelty and violence), and replacing these with employable skills and civilian values.²⁸ However, Denov's research on child soldiers in Sierra Leone indicates that, even after formal demobilisation, informal networks continue to exist between combatants and commanders.

The problem of sustainable demobilisation and reintegration is particularly acute in a country like Sierra Leone. The scope and duration of the conflict there means that every part of society was affected. For 11 years the conflict was the pervasive and underlying factor that defined people's lives. Demobilisation and reintegration needs to be framed within this broader societal context.

Youth combatants in the DDR process

During Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war many children and youths participated as soldiers and in various other roles for government, militia and rebel forces.²⁹ It has been estimated that some 6774 children went through DDR processes in Sierra Leone.³⁰ Of this total, an estimated 80% were between the ages of seven and 14.³¹ After conflict ends child combatants suffer from particular acute forms of structural violence, including psychosocial stress, which is often described in terms of depression, violent behaviour, disturbing memories of violence, anxiety and fear.³²

Youth combatants must detach psychologically and socially from their former armed group and military identity. Demobilised combatants also require rehabilitation to overcome social stigma and drug addiction.³³ Family unification and community acceptance is also critical for long-term reintegration.³⁴ In the absence of family and/or community support

structures, many young combatants are likely to remain dependent upon wartime networks and values to attain their livelihood. Clearly the structural and individual problems facing many youth soldiers are challenging and immensely complicated to address in a comprehensive manner.

Ultimately success in reintegration depends on ex-combatants finding sustainable employment, or alternative livelihoods that meet basic needs.³⁵ However, in Sierra Leone these individual challenges exist within a larger national framework of post-conflict reconstruction, where political, economic and social sectors are unstable. On the economic side Sierra Leone's depressed national economy remains a major challenge for post-conflict reintegration.³⁶ As far as post-conflict reintegration assistance is concerned, most emphasis has been placed on funding socioeconomic opportunities such as skills training or education during DDR processes.³⁷

The next section provides the necessary context to understand the peace process and reintegration in Sierra Leone, as well as the actors involved in DDR near the conclusion of Sierra Leone's civil war.

Politics of DDR in Sierra Leone³⁸

There was talk of DDR during the latter stages of the Sierra Leone civil war, from the stalled 1995 UN peace talks to President Kabbah's peace agreement with the RUF in 1996, to the 1997 AFRC coup and the 1998 intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group, which returned Kabbah to power. A National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) was established in July 1998 and received financial support from the UN and several international donors, including the UK. The Sierra Leonean government and its international partners conducted a formal DDR programme in three phases between 1998 and 2003.³⁹ Phase I began in 1998 after Kabbah returned to power. This phase had limited success, with only 3183 ex-combatants registering for disarmament and demobilisation.⁴⁰ Phase II began in 1999 following the signing of the Lomé peace accord;⁴¹ it continued until 2002 with an interim phase from May 2000 to May 2001 when renewed fighting continued. During this phase 21 526 combatants were demobilised. The bulk of demobilisation efforts occurred after the UN peacekeeping body UNAMSIL was strengthened and reinforced by UK intervention in 2001. During phase III 47 781 combatants were demobilised, bringing the total to 72 490.⁴²

The Lomé Peace Accord (1999) included explicit provisions for the inclusion of child soldiers in the DDR process. Children between the ages of seven and 18 were accorded child soldier status. To be eligible, children had to prove they could load and discharge a weapon, and had to verify they had been in an armed group for at least six months. According to the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of NCDDR, 189 children were disarmed in Phase I, 2,384 children in Phase II and 4272 children in Phase III, bringing the total to 6845. Not all child combatants went through the formal DDR process, however. Many feared prosecution by the government and decided to disarm informally or escape and return to their community.⁴³

DDR centres were established throughout the country to facilitate demobilisation and to sow the seeds of reintegration. In early November 2000 two DDR camps opened in Port Loko, one at Daru and one at Kenema. Four additional disarmament sites were opened on 17 April 2000 in Bo, Magburaka, Makeni and Moyamba.⁴⁴

However, despite the advantage of a centralised approach to demobilisation and reintegration programmes, several major issues arose with the camps. First, there was considerable insecurity in and around DDR centres. Several camps in Makeni, Moyamba and Magburaka were attacked in early May 2000, resulting in the release of a number of RUF soldiers. Second, delays in demobilisation at certain sites created disorder and unrest among combatants. In July and August 2001 riots, demonstrations and beatings of NCDDR staff took place in demobilisation camps in Lunsar and Port Loko.⁴⁵ Third, funding shortages for NCDDR also caused delays and unrest within those DDR camps.⁴⁶

Case study: DDR interim camps in Freetown and Bo

This case study draws on data collected in two DDR camps in Freetown and Bo. Data were collected between May and September 2005. A total of 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted with former child and youth combatants participating in the DDR programmes. In addition, interviews with four adult camp administrators and caretakers were undertaken. These camps were unique because they housed combatants from various fighting forces. The Bo camp, for instance, housed RUF, Civil Defence Forces (CDF), former Sierra Leone/Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (SLA/AFRC) and Liberian combatants.⁴⁷ It included three phases. Phase I involved documenting and registering combatants and providing them with medical support.⁴⁸ During this phase participants were symbolically stripped of their uniform and weapons and discharged from their fighting force. This was not an entirely successful process because many former youth combatants retained networks with their former commanders and in some cases remained dependent upon them for their livelihood.⁴⁹

During Phase II the interim care centre included core programmes such as individual psychosocial counselling sessions, informal and formal education, cultural activities,⁵⁰ community development projects,⁵¹ and sports.⁵² In addition to these formal activities, youths slept in the same dormitories, ate meals and prayed together, and received group counselling. In the Bo camp children between six and 12 years of age were permitted to stay in formal education, while those over the age of 15 were provided with 'informal training' in vocational trades.⁵³ For participants electing to return to school, the DDR process provided a one-to-three-year subsidy to offset school fees.⁵⁴ Former combatants had a choice of several vocational trades. A monthly allowance (normally Le60 000, or roughly \$30 for each combatant) was included during vocational training, as was a basic tool kit upon graduation.⁵⁵ Children and youths were separated and housed in dormitories based on their age, gender and size. This was primarily to prevent older and

bigger male youths from bullying small children.⁵⁶ Some of the older males in the camp were encouraged to assume leadership roles with younger ex-combatants.

In phase III the final phase, administrators located family or communities to whom the ex-combatants could return after the process was complete.⁵⁷ During the first month, however, youths would often return to their sleeping quarters, remain idle or fight among themselves during delays or breaks from regular programming. Males started playing sports during these breaks, while women and girls assisted with cooking preparations. These games were organised at lunchtime or after regular activities ended in the afternoon and played with a homemade ball.⁵⁸ Later on youths were engaged in sporting activities from anywhere between three to four hours a day.⁵⁹ The most dominant sport among males was football, while females played volleyball. Other sports and games in the camp included table tennis, *draf*,⁶⁰ and scrabble. Sports were played regularly after the initial month in the camp.

Identifying immediate impacts of introducing sport in the camps

Interviews with DDR participants revealed four immediate benefits of sport in the camp. The main and overarching benefit was a gradual reduction in the level of direct violence among male youths. Not only did this make the administrators' and caregivers' jobs safer and easier, it also minimised disturbances in the immediate neighbourhood. The second direct benefit resulted from interactions on the football pitch between DDR youth and local community teams. In this context football games provided a reason for DDR youth to interact with neighbouring communities. Football games became the framework for re-establishing relations with these communities, which had the effect of helping all parties to come to terms with ex-combatants in the post-war period. Third, sports helped to build social networks among young people that could be fostered and utilised for other development efforts. Fourth, sport 'distracted' youths from the stress of psychological trauma. Each of these immediate benefits is explored and critically analysed below.

Sport and violence in the camp

The main and overarching impact of introducing sport in the camp was a noticeable reduction in the level of violence among male ex-combatants residing there. Initially the camp atmosphere was tense and hostile because combatants from various fighting forces were encamped in the same setting. Violence, defined in terms of immediate threats to physical safety, was therefore a regular feature among males during the first month.⁶¹ Camp administrators sought to discourage conflict by instituting a series of rules and norms in the camp.⁶²

During the first month in the camp male combatants continued to rely on militarised skills they had learned and developed during the war. For example, males would defend themselves with small weapons, including pocket knives, when their perceived physical security was at risk. They also

continued to rely on allegiances established during the war. Code and nicknames were often used to communicate informally between members of the same fighting force. Other war tactics used in the camp included intimidation of smaller boys and a continuation of rigid hierarchies between older youths in positions of leadership and younger, subordinate children.⁶³

Many had come from the warfront as hardened individuals with pent up frustration. Others had been exposed to hard drugs like cocaine and emerged from the war addicted to such substances. A male youth combatant explained the mood of the camp:

Initially when we came to the camp, everyone was in that thug, combative mood. We were just from the war and [we were] hardheaded, rough. So we were finding life very difficult because everyone had his or her own past [during the war]. The old combatant tricks were very much among us.⁶⁴

Another male ex-combatant explained his opinion of the early days in the camp:

There were a lot of enemies formed during the war—we were all fighting on different sides. So there were a lot of grudges and animosity among the boys when we first entered the camp.⁶⁵

One camp administrator confirmed the tense and volatile environment in the early days in the camp:

They were very violent when they came [to the camp] initially. Sometimes they would wound themselves and fights turned bloody. So we would do room searches to confiscate knives or grenades. We also tried to befriend them by talking and eating with them, so they didn't see us as outsiders but as elder brothers.⁶⁶

Despite efforts to build friendships within the camp, football games initially allowed for a continuation of wartime tactics. For example, war slogans were often used on the pitch, as were nicknames that referred to wartime allegiances.⁶⁷ An administrator in Freetown explained how this problem was addressed:

We [the organisers, referees, coaches] had to remain sensitive to the words and actions that were taking place on the field. Someone can say something that would make another player withdraw from the others. Most of the youth know how to identify each other based on codes that were used when they were fighting. Some of the youth also had scars on their bodies that identified what faction they fought for. So we could monitor conflict and sometimes predict when it was going to happen.⁶⁸

While initially apprehensive about sport as a catalyst for peace, administrators and caretakers strategically integrated sport to complement vocational training, education programmes and counselling. One interview with

an administrator responsible for providing psychosocial assistance captured camp organisers' strategic decision to integrate sport in the camp. Although he argued for sport's potential to feed into cycles of violence in the camp, he also perceived that sport could channel male aggression—or what he called 'pent up extra energy'—effectively to 'burn it out of their system'. It is useful to quote him at some length:

When they were in warfront, they would get into really aggressive actions. Actions that would really involve violence and hurt. We didn't want that to continue. But you know when you are playing football, it is a violent game as well. Sometimes when they were playing they would fight, but we would always be around to say 'no wounding'—'not that much violence'. And we saw that it was helping. For example, some of the indicators that we had were we [the caregivers] would watch children while they were in the restful state. So we took more to games like football and volleyball as ways of expending their extra energy and making them more tired. And those who had serious cases, would receive special counselling, and/or be given drugs to make them sleep more.⁶⁹

Gradually sport gave camp organisers a respite from the stress of their work. Football games and practices were often organised to prevent males from engaging in violence within and outside the camp. One male combatant explained:

Sports helped to liven us up. When we left school, there was nothing else to do. If we sat around all-day and thought about our past, we would probably stir up trouble.⁷⁰

Several former child soldiers (males) had developed considerable strength and endurance during the war and administrators sought out opportunities to keep them from physically attacking one another. Sport was an outlet to expend this physical aggression and endurance. One youth leader in the Bo DDR camp explained how war had prepared his team mates well for football in the camp:

During the war, these boys used to build up a lot of endurance. You know, when you are carrying a gun and a heavy bag and walking 20 miles a day, or even running for five miles through the bush, you build up a lot of endurance. So the physical training was already with us, all we needed was training in the technical aspects of football.⁷¹

Direct violence, in the Galtungian sense, often erupted over disagreements relating to an alleged foul or missed penalty. In some cases these games turned violent, resulting in a complete shutdown of the game and confiscation of the football for a period of calm. Although this violence was troubling, these moments also provided teaching opportunities for administrators and teachers in the camp. When games were shut down, administrators made a priority of talking with the youths about the importance of accepting defeat, and learning to abide by the decision of

the referee. This element featured regularly in games, especially after a team lost. As a camp organiser in Freetown noted, ‘After a game, we would bring the losing team together and talk to them and say to “take it cool” and “you don’t want any violence”’.⁷²

Several governance issues were addressed in the football games in an attempt to manage conflict peacefully. Administrators taught the rules of the game to ex-combatants and spectators in order to reduce ambiguity. Moreover, conflict often arose as a result of a referee’s judgment about a foul or goal. Initially, youths refereed their own games, until administrators started refereeing to reduce ambiguity and tension in the game. Administrators also prevented players from forming teams based on old wartime affiliations. In practice, these governance strategies contributed to regulating conflict in the camp and on the pitch.

Sport and relations between combatants and communities

The second direct benefit was that sport created a framework for ex-combatants to interact with surrounding communities. Ex-combatants encountered stigma from the community when they left the DDR camp. On one hand, youths feared recrimination from nearby communities. On the other hand, community members feared that ex-combatants might sporadically turn violent. The relationship between combatants and community was characterised by mutual suspicion and fear.

Understandably there were serious concerns as to whether communities were ready to accept ex-combatants as civilian members. Some ex-combatants had committed violence against their own family or community; others were perceived to be responsible for violent atrocities.⁷³ Thus, after physical violence among males residing in the camp decreased, camp administrators turned to the issue of establishing an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence within their immediate neighbourhood.

The DDR camps had a negative public image for two main reasons. First, there was a general misunderstanding within the community about the objectives of keeping ex-combatants in camps.⁷⁴ Second, males would often leave the compound to hang out in *potes*⁷⁵ to buy illicit drugs like cocaine and marijuana, to drink palm wine, or to search for women.⁷⁶ This would often result in fights breaking out or disturbances within the immediate vicinity. A community member would call one of the youths a ‘rebel’ or ‘corrupt boy’, a term used in the *Krio* language to refer to damaged, violent youth. This negative perception frustrated the young men considerably. Youths in the camp were therefore encouraged by administrators to play football to keep them from leaving the compound.⁷⁷ As an administrator explained:

People in the community called the boys ‘rebels’. That would make them [the ex-combatants] go very wild. The youth didn’t like that because they had disarmed and explained that they wanted to be normal citizens again. This hurt them a lot and made them turn very violent against the community.⁷⁸

In the Bo camp administrators organised football matches between DDR youth and community teams after three months of living in the camp. For some youths football provided an alternative to informal interactions in *pote* settings. Sport then became another means for the community to come to terms with accepting ex-combatants as civilian members of society. Not surprisingly these games turned violent initially.⁷⁹ After several incidents where football games turned violent, camp administrators and local community leaders came together to develop and disseminate sensitisation campaigns and to reinforce messages of peaceful coexistence and reintegration.⁸⁰ This eventually had the effect of reducing violence between the DDR youngsters and the immediate community, as explained by an administrator:

Towards the end, we didn't need to be on the pitch. The boys themselves would organise the games against the community and it ended peacefully. So our presence was not always needed. . .⁸¹

These interactions also complemented other types of interactions between combatants and local communities. For instance, some ex-combatants would assist with community development projects like fixing bridges and roads. Sport was particularly useful, however, because it created an excuse for the community and the ex-combatants to engage with one another and the game itself provided a framework for this initial interaction.

Sport and social networks between ex-combatants

Sporting activities in the camp also led to the building of social networks and new friendships among ex-combatants. One female youth combatant emphasised the importance of building social relationships in the camp as a way of coping with her past and in the absence of family or community support. Her primary priority was to be reunited with her family. She underscored how important social interaction and making friends was to her in the camp. Through sports she made friends with those with whom she could share common experiences. She explained:

Keeping to yourself in the camp is not really productive for you. But when you meet with your companion and interact with each other, maybe you forget about what has happened to you.⁸²

For another female it was equally important to establish friendships with other males and females in the camp. Aside from group prayers and other cultural activities like story telling, sports was one of the few activities that encouraged large-group interactions. According to this ex-combatant:

Without sports, we would have been keeping to ourselves. As we played, we came to know one another. Without sports, I would only think about what I am going to do. But sports brought us together so that we would interact with one another, so I thought of us as a team or group.⁸³

Administrators attempted to build upon these social networks to advance other skill-building exercises. For instance, sports were linked with rehabilitation initiatives, including several 'quick impact' projects.⁸⁴ One camp administrator in the Freetown camp described how he tried to link sport with vocational skills training:

The youths would form a football team, and then start to open up to each other, build connections and start communicating with one another. Then, afterwards, we had those same team mates involved in various short-term projects together, like a carpenter who exchanges his services with someone trained in masonry.⁸⁵

Moreover, sport helped foster peaceful relations between youngsters, which later extended beyond the life of the camp. An administrator cited an example of two youths who had been encamped together in Freetown and played football in the same team. One received training as a carpenter; the other was a construction worker. After the camp the carpenter returned to his home in Freetown, while the construction worker returned to the northern town of Kabala. When the carpenter was awarded a contract to build a house in Freetown, he called his friend from Kabala to exchange their skills.⁸⁶ This is one instance where social networks extended beyond the end of the DDR process and contributed to an income-generating opportunity.

The issue of social networks raises an important question regarding the allocation of resources for reintegration support. Within DDR programmes, the reintegration phase often receives considerably less funding than the disarmament and demobilisation phases.⁸⁷ One of the inherent weaknesses in Sierra Leone's DDR process was that, after its completion, there were few follow-up programmes to monitor and support ex-combatants who had successfully graduated with a specific vocational certificate. If there had been a follow-up programme, these social networks, like the one between the carpenter and construction worker, could have provided modest support to further foster relationships and sustainable reintegration. Future research could investigate ex-combatants' use of skills learned in the DDR camps as a way of gauging programme effectiveness and whether more tailored reintegration interventions need to be introduced.

Sport as a temporary distraction

While the main impact of introducing sport was a noticeable reduction in the level of violence among males in the camp, some interviewees pointed out that sport mostly provided a distraction from psychological stress and trauma relating to their role in and participation during the war. For example, one male combatant noted that sport helped him to forget about his past during the war, at least temporarily:

Football helped me to stop thinking of other things from my past. Whenever I am on the pitch I will be fully concentrating on the game. After the game, I will

come back and for two to three hours, sit down with friends to discuss the football game. So it doesn't give much time to think about past issues. So after finishing the discussion, I would wash up and go to bed. It is only after sometime that I might begin to think about these issues. By that time, before daybreak, I will be back in school, occupying my mind and by the end of the day, be back on the football pitch. So there was no time to be sitting down and thinking about the past.⁸⁸

Based on such experiences, administrators believed that engaging youth in sports would provide a temporary opportunity to escape psychological suffering caused during the war. Indeed, a female interviewee spoke about sports helping them to forget about their past. She explained, 'When we play volleyball, we are together with all our friends. We create fun and we laugh. So this made me forget about my past.'⁸⁹

Critical reflections

While the interview data illustrate the fact that sport provided a short-term distraction and helped reduce violence particularly among male youths, it is important to note that it was one of many activities aiming to support reintegration. In this way sport played a supplementary role with other rehabilitation initiatives, notably vocational and job-related training, education and psychosocial counselling. Sport later complemented community development initiatives such as road maintenance. Thus, it is essential to conceptualise sport as one of many tools available to DDR practitioners, and if used effectively, one component within a broader range of rehabilitation and developmental activities. Keeping these limitations of sport in mind avoids overstating what potential and modest gains sport can bring to a DDR setting.

Another concern is that sports like football are heavily gendered and segregated activities, which may reinforce certain hierarchical relations in a post-war society. On one hand, camp administrators insisted that teams form regardless of one's former fighting force affiliation; moreover, teams were rearranged regularly for added variation and to promote co-operation. This intervention, along with the discouragement of other war-related tactics mentioned above, can be important with respect to broader violence reduction and conflict resolution strategies. On the other hand, it is clear from this case study that football became a masculinised activity within the camp, which played into male aggression and gender-based roles. Male youths, especially older ones, were seen as the primary beneficiaries of sport; female combatants, in contrast, were perceived by males as spectators, and thus requiring secondary access to leisure and play. In particular, women were allowed to play sports only after completing their chores and cooking responsibilities.

Sport in DDR processes, therefore, does not inherently address problematic gender relations that may extend from war to peacetime. As a result, sport risks perpetuating complicated post-war gender-based violence, which requires attention and sensitivity.⁹⁰ Sport can reinforce masculinised

attitudes and behaviours and exacerbate negative or disrespectful views and actions towards women and girls, especially among older males.⁹¹ Similarly, sporting activities in DDR can reinforce certain hierarchical relations among the young, since sports were segregated according to age and gender. By failing to encourage inter-generational and gender mixing, organisers missed opportunities for building positive and respectful relationships between boys and girls. The key point is that sport in DDR does not typically address gender-based violence, and in fact runs a risk of perpetuating negative attitudes and behaviours toward women.⁹²

A final critical insight relates to how DDR processes approach the encampment phase. A core assumption of the DDR camp phase is that ex-combatants must be temporarily 'removed' from society, 'rehabilitated' and then 'returned' to civil society. This approach has several strengths but also limitations. On one hand, camps allow for a centralised approach to service delivery like accommodation, food, medical care and training, and allow authorities to control ex-combatants.⁹³ It remains debatable, however, whether encampment is necessary, especially for youth combatants. A more effective approach might be to reduce the time frame of the DDR camp, and offer specific skills training and/or educational activities that meet immediate community needs. If the encampment phase can contribute by reducing structural violence among combatants, then an alternative approach could involve transitioning young combatants back and forth from the DDR camp to their community earlier in the process (rather than at the conclusion of the camp). This would allow them to become more accustomed to life as a civilian earlier in the process, and enable them to learn how to respond to the various pressures they are likely to face when returning to their community. A key question concerns the degree to which interaction through sport can facilitate these dynamics and enable earlier 'normalisation' of relations with neighbouring communities.

Conclusion

This article has found that examining sporting experiences in the DDR process offered insights and understanding concerning various types of violence among youth combatants during their reintegration process. Such results may provide guidance and insight for programmes and interventions taking place in this context. To do so, however, sport in DDR must be considered in relation to different types of violence within post-conflict contexts, namely patterns of both direct and structural violence. Data from this case study suggest that sport can play a modest role in supporting reintegration efforts for young combatants under several conditions. Sport brought a useful dynamic to DDR that few other group activities were able to offer, by encouraging broadly cooperative scenarios and incorporating child and youth combatants from various fighting forces. Sport activities were seen to decrease direct violence in the camp, with football games organised among male combatants effectively channelling violent tendencies and, alongside other rehabilitation and developmental activities, reducing levels and

intensities of direct physical harm within the camp. Yet it is clear that sport was, and must continue to be, seen as but one component of an integrated approach with other activities like school, vocational training and counselling, which aim to rehabilitate and prepare ex-combatants for 're-entry' into civilian society.

By all accounts from the participants, sport was a successful peacebuilding option and one of the most popular and satisfying activities in the camp. With that in mind, there may be a tendency to overstate the role and significance of sport in DDR processes, as children and young people everywhere tend to much prefer playing sports to activities such as classroom learning. Although sport is a low-cost initiative for DDR organisers, there must be an appropriate balance between it and other rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives that are important for preparing youth for civilian society after the formal DDR process ends. Sport appeared to be heavily emphasised in the Bo camp, as youths would often play football for three or four hours a day. This was typically the same amount of time, if not more, that they spent engaged in skills training or schooling. This raises an important question concerning whether there is a point of diminishing returns for integrating sport in DDR, and whether there is a risk that other important rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives such as labour-related skills training or education may become neglected.

A final limitation of sport in DDR relates to the fact that sport does not directly engage with the dominant political and economic structures and the sources of structural violence *vis-à-vis* young people's experiences in armed conflict, or how violence may be embedded within formal and informal post-war institutions. Clearly these are complex issues that must be addressed to facilitate successful reintegration supporting peace and long-term development. DDR is one of several systematic attempts to do this, with sport as one tool in this larger process. Greater attention to the role of sport in DDR camps should not preclude or replace the need to provide a continuum of reintegration assistance and support activities for youth combatants, including after they leave the camps. This reinforces the need to avoid overstretching and/or essentialising the positive and tangible contributions that sport can provide in a post-war context.

Notes

1 Personal interview conducted by the author with DDR camp administrator, Bo, 1 July 2005.

2 Personal interview conducted by the author with male youth combatant, Bo, 21 July 2005.

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- 4 Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping*, New York: United Nations, 1992.
- 5 United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving Millennium Development Goals*, New York: United Nations, 2003; and B Kidd, 'A new social movement: sport for development and peace', *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 2008, pp 370–380.
- 6 See, for instance, <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/dpko>. See also UNICEF's sport programmes that target ex-combatants in Liberia and elsewhere; and <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/human-rights/education-of-children-in-need/projects-by-region/africa/liberia-sports-centre-for-former-child-soldiers/>.
- 7 D Black, 'The ambiguities of development: implications for "development through sport"', *Sport in Society*, 13(1), 2010, pp 121–129; S Darnell, 'Power, politics and "sport for development and peace": investigating the utility of sport for international development', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27(1), 2010, pp 54–75; R Levermore & A Beacom, *Sport and International Development*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDPIWG) Secretariat, *Literature Reviews on Sport for Development and Peace*, Toronto: SDPIWG, 31 August 2007.
- 8 PK Gasser & A Levinsen, 'Breaking post-war ice: open fun football schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Sport in Society*, 7(3), 2004, pp 457–472; K Hoglund & R Sundberg, 'Reconciliation through sports? The case of South Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 29(4), 2008, pp 805–818; J Sugden, 'Teaching and playing sport for conflict resolution and co-existence in Israel', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41(2), 2006, pp 221–240; and SDPIWG, *Literature Reviews on Sport for Development and Peace*.
- 9 Sugden, 'Teaching and playing sport for conflict resolution and co-existence in Israel', p 221.
- 10 Hoglund & Sundberg, 'Reconciliation through sports?.'
- 11 For literature on the sport–nation-building nexus in Africa, see D Black & J Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation: Sport, Culture, Politics and Power in the Old and New South Africas*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998; D Black & J van der Westhuizen, 'The allure of global games for "semi-peripheral" polities: a research agenda', *Third World Quarterly*, 25(7), 2004, pp 1293–1309; G Armstrong, 2002, 'Talking up the game: football and the reconstruction of Liberia, West Africa,' *Identities*, 9(1), 2004, pp 471–494; Armstrong 'Life, death and the biscuit: football and the embodiment of society in Liberia, West Africa', in G Armstrong & R.Giulianotti (eds), *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2004; and Armstrong & R Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*.
- 12 Richards suggests that soccer 'offers a neutral space through which combatants and society at large might begin to seek some mutual accommodation in a "shared space" before getting down to the hard tasks of reforming specifically Sierra Leonean social identities and social understandings'. P Richards, 'Soccer and violence in war-torn Africa: soccer and social rehabilitation in Sierra Leone', in G Armstrong & R. Giulianotti (eds), *Entering the Field: New Perspectives on World Football*, Oxford: Berg, 1997, p 149.
- 13 J Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 1969, pp 167–191; and Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996. Some further qualification on Galtung's notion of structural violence is necessary. Sometimes he uses the term 'social injustice' interchangeably. Note Galtung's distinction between structural violence and physical violence: structural violence is distinct from physical violence—the former being measured by the number of deaths caused from bodily harm by group conflict or war. As cited by Galtung, an example of physical violence might be when a 'husband beats his wife', in contrast to structural violence, whereby 'a husband deliberately keeps his wife in ignorance'. 'Violence, peace and peace research', p 171. He also cautions against using the word 'exploitation' as a replacement for structural violence, since the latter is less politically charged and more amendable to facilitating communication than the word 'exploitation'.
- 14 Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', p 168.
- 15 This leaves socioeconomically deprived individuals in a 'state of permanent, unwanted misery, usually including malnutrition and illness', Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', p 171; see also Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, pp 197–200.
- 16 For definitions of human security, see United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report*, New York: UNDP, 1994. For a critique of human security, see R Paris, 'Human security: paradigm shift or hot air?', *International Security*, 26(2), 2001, pp 87–102.
- 17 Muggah, *Security and Post-conflict Reconstruction*; and United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards*, New York: United Nations, 2006.
- 18 M Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization after Civil Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; M Berdal & D Ucko (eds), *Reintegrating Armed Groups After Conflict: Politics Violence*

- and Transition, London: Routledge, 2009; Muggah, *Security and Post-conflict Reconstruction*; United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, New York: United Nations, 2006; and Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration (SIDDR), *Final Report*, Stockholm: Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2006.
- 19 J Spear, 'Disarmament and demobilization', in S Stedman, D Rothchild & E Cousens (eds), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002, pp 28–36.
- 20 IDDRS, 2006, p 6.
- 21 *Ibid*, p 19.
- 22 Berdal *Disarmament and Demobilization after Civil Wars*; and N Colletta & R Muggah, 'Rethinking post-war security promotion', *Journal of Security Sector Management*, 7(1), 2008, pp 1–25.
- 23 A Baare, *An Analysis of Transitional Economic Integration*, Working Paper, Stockholm: SIDDR, 2005, at <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/54/02/05d5985b.pdf>, accessed 12 June 2009; SIDDR, *Final Report*; and L Speaker, *Reintegration Phase of DDR Processes*, The Hague: Netherlands Institute for International Relations, 2008.
- 24 Muggah, *Security and Post-conflict Reconstruction*.
- 25 K Jennings, *Seeing DDR from Below: Challenges and Dilemmas Raised by the Experiences of Ex-Combatants in Liberia*, Oslo: FAFO, 2008; and J McMullin, 'Reintegration of combatants: were the right lessons learned in Mozambique?', *International Peacekeeping*, 11(4), pp 625–643.
- 26 M Humphreys & J Weinstein, 'Demobilization and reintegration', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(4), 2007, pp 531–567; Muggah, *Security and Post-conflict Reconstruction*; IDDRS 2006; and SIDDR, *Final Report*.
- 27 IDDRS, 2006.
- 28 M Denov, *Child Soldiers: Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front*, London: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp 149, 158. The final report of the truth and reconciliation Commission notes that, of the total number of children disarmed, 3710 had been with the RUF, 2025 with the CDF, 471 from the SLA, 427 with the AFRC and 134 were from other factions or non-affiliated. See Denov, *Child Soldiers*, p 158, footnote 6.
- 29 A Abraham, 'Dancing with the chameleon: Sierra Leone and the elusive quest for peace', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 19(2), 2001, pp 205–222; and D Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, New York: Palgrave, 2005.
- 30 Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, 2004, at www.trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/index.shtml.
- 31 Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, *Precious Resources: Adolescents in the Reconstruction of Sierra Leone*, New York: Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children, 2002.
- 32 TS Betancourt & KT Khan, 'The mental health of children affected by armed conflict: protective processes and pathways to resilience', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 20(3), 2008, pp 317–328; S McKay & D Mazurana, *Where Are the Girls? Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives during and After War*, Montreal: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2004; and M Wessells, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- 33 R Brett & I Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004.
- 34 TS Betancourt, S Simmons, I Borisova, S Brewer, U Iweala & M.de la Soudiere, 'High hopes, grim reality: reintegration and the education of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone', *Comparative Education Review*, 52(4), 2008, pp 656–684; Betancourt & Khan, 'The mental health of children affected by armed conflict'; and McKay & Mazurana, *Where are the Girls?*.
- 35 IDDRS 2006.
- 36 J Hanlon, 'Is the international community helping to recreate the preconditions for war in Sierra Leone?', *The Round Table*, 381, 2005, pp 459–472; M Silberfein, 'The geopolitics of conflict and diamonds in Sierra Leone', *Geopolitics*, 9(1), 2004, pp 213–241; and United Nations Development Programme, 'Draft Country Programme Document for Sierra Leone 2008–2010', UNDP, New York, 2008.
- 37 Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization after Civil Wars*; M Knight & A Ozerdem, 'Guns, camps and cash: disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion of former combatants in transitions from war to peace', *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(4), 2004, pp 499–516; and R Muggah, 'No magic bullet: a critical perspective on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and weapons reduction in post-conflict contexts', *The Round Table*, 94, pp 239–252.
- 38 This section draws heavily on Denov, *Child Soldiers*; Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*; and L Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the destruction of Sierra Leone*, London: Hurst & Company, 2005.
- 39 Denov, *Child Soldiers*.
- 40 D Molly, *The DDR Process in Sierra Leone: An Overview and Lessons Learned*, Freetown: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, 2004; and Denov, *Child Soldiers*.

- 41 Article XVI of the Lomé Peace Accord (1999) stipulated a DDR process targeting the RUF, SLA, CDF and paramilitary groups. These child and youth combatants went through a formal disarmament and demobilisation process managed by a National Commission for the Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) and overseen by external peacekeepers. The Lomé accord called for the RUF to immediately cease fighting and disarm under the authority of the UN-backed NCDDR in exchange for a general amnesty blanket for all forces. Controversially several key government posts were to be allocated to rebel leaders, while guaranteed rights were extended to transform the RUF into a legitimate and legal political entity. RUF leader Foday Sankoh was appointed chair of the new government body that oversaw diamonds and natural resources.
- 42 D Miller, D Ladouceur & Z Dougal, *From Research to Road Map: Learning from the Arms for Development Initiative in Sierra Leone*, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2006.
- 43 Denov, *Child Soldiers*, p 159.
- 44 E Berman, *Re-Armament in Sierra Leone: One Year After the Lomé Peace Agreement*, Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2000, p 24.
- 45 M Malan, S Meek, T Thusi, J Ginifer & P Coker, *Sierra Leone: Building the Road to Recovery*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2003.
- 46 As the UN Secretary General's report on Sierra Leone in 2000 states, before May 2000 there was a shortage of \$19 million in the Multi-donor Trust Fund administered by the World Bank.
- 47 Personal interview conducted by the author with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005
- 48 Knight & Ozerdem, 'Guns, camps and cash'.
- 49 Denov, *Child Soldiers*; and Humphreys & Weinstein, 'Demobilization and reintegration'.
- 50 Several group activities were organised in the camp, including group prayers (often in the morning, or evening before bed), story-telling, and occasional musical dances, drama events, ball dances and cultural shows.
- 51 Later in the camp the camp administrators organised several community development initiatives with communities in the immediate vicinity. The purpose was to promote reconciliation and acceptance with the community. In some cases this involved community projects to rebuild roads and infrastructure, schools, clinics and water pipes. For instance, a UNDP-funded programme called 'Community Action for Post-Conflict Recovery', which hired ex-combatants to provide assistance to war-affected communities.
- 52 Personal interviews conducted by the author with camp administrators, Freetown, 16 June 2005; Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 53 Personal interview conducted by the author with camp administrator, Freetown, 15 June 2005. Such trades included carpentry, masonry, auto mechanic, welding, computer training, tailoring, hairdressing, etc. Combatants were expected to develop skills and gain work experience for re-entry into civilian life. It was believed that once trained, ex-combatants would return to their community and put to use the skills they had developed. According to my interviews, youths stayed in the camps for a period of three to six months on average. These accounts closely correspond with those of other scholars who have examined the process. See K Peters, 'From weapons to wheels: young Sierra Leonean ex-combatants become motorbike taxi-riders', *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, 10, 2007, pp 1–23, who suggests that combatants received vocational trade for a period of six to eight months.
- 54 Civic education is seen as a key issue in post-conflict reintegration. Education is regarded as essential for fostering peaceful social relations and social reconciliation after violent conflict. See Denov, *Child Soldiers*. In the camp individual combatants were permitted to return to school based on their former level of study. Logistically this meant that those interested in returning to school received basic education during the encampment phase and were provided with funding to pay school fees for between one to three years. Personal interviews with camp administrators, Freetown, 16 June 2005; Bo, 1 July 2005.
- 55 K Peters, 'From weapons to wheels'.
- 56 Personal interview conducted with camp administrator, Freetown, 12 July 2005.
- 57 Personal interview conducted with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 58 Personal interviews conducted with male combatants, Bo, 13 June 2005; 17 June 2005; 14 July 2005.
- 59 Personal interviews conducted with camp administrators, Freetown, 16 June 2005; Bo, 23 July 2005.
- 60 This is the *krio* word for draughts, which is basically the old British name for checkers.
- 61 Personal interviews conducted with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005; personal interview with male combatant, Bo, 17 June 2005; personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005. It was noted unequivocally that females did not become engaged in fighting or violence in the same way as their male counterparts did.
- 62 Camp norms included: participants were forbidden from destroying camp property, from using violence against camp personnel or other youth, and from possessing weapons.
- 63 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.

- 64 Personal Interview with male combatant, Bo, 14 July 2005.
- 65 Personal interview with male combatant, Bo, 21 July 2005.
- 66 Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 67 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 68 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 69 Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 70 Personal interview with male youth combatant, Freetown, 17 June 2005.
- 71 Personal interview with male youth combatant, Bo, 21 July 2005.
- 72 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 73 Denov, *Child Soldiers*.
- 74 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 75 *Potes* are popular youth hangouts, often located in slum areas of towns, where individuals socialise, drink palm wine and smoke marijuana. Before the war, *potes* were infamous sites for discussing revolutionary philosophies for unemployed and marginalised populations. I Abdullah, 'Bush path to destruction: the origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36(2), 1998, pp 203–235.
- 76 Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 77 As an administrator in Bo stated: 'We tried to encourage them to stay in the compound because of the mentality of the community. They would call them rebels and that would make them go wild. But we found this difficult. This is why we introduced games, so they wouldn't leave the campus. And once they would exhaust themselves from the games, they would stay in. The more they stayed within the camp, the more the violence between the home and the neighborhood decreased.' Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 78 Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 79 One particular instance almost turned catastrophic. One infamous match took place on '*Shelmingo*' football pitch against the sons of a nearby police unit. It is worth noting in detail. In a match organised in the local police compound, the game started off in a friendly manner. However, after several hard fouls, supporters of the other team called the camp players 'corrupt boys'. A fight broke out and some DDR youth returned to their compound to collect more fighters. They returned with stones and small weapons. A military police officer was called in to intervene. According to interviews with some males involved in the fight, the military officer blamed the DDR youths for instigating the violence. Some DDR youths responded by disarming the officer. It was only after a Reverend was summoned that the youths were persuaded to let the officer go. Information from interviews with male youth combatants, Bo, 12 July 2005; 14 July 2005; 21 July 2005, and informal conversations with camp administrators in Bo.
- 80 This administrator explained: 'We the caregivers (teachers, administrators) came together, and made a plan of activities for two weeks of sensitisation. We determined what we were going to tell people, if we ask a question, this is how it should be answered. If you don't know, find a way in putting it so that one of us can answer it.' Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 81 Personal interview with camp administrator, Bo, 23 June 2005.
- 82 Personal interview with female youth combatant, Bo, 7 July 2005.
- 83 Personal interview with female youth combatant, Bo, 6 July 2005.
- 84 An example of a 'quick impact' project is a community development initiative such as road maintenance or infrastructure building. According to a camp administrator who oversaw some of these projects, 'the youths need to be given short-term rewards in order to build up their confidence in themselves, and to know that they are progressing'. Interview, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 85 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 86 Personal interview with camp administrator, Freetown, 16 June 2005.
- 87 N Ball & L van de Goor, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping Issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles*, Report of the Conflict Research Unit for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006; and L Specker, 'The R-phase of DDR processes: An overview of key lessons learned and practical experiences', Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' Conflict Research Unit, 2008.
- 88 Personal interview with male combatant Bo, 14 July 2005.
- 89 Personal interview with female youth combatant, Bo, 6 July 2005.
- 90 C Carpenter, 'Recognizing gender-based violence against civilian men and boys in conflict situations', *Security Dialogue*, 37(2), 2006, pp 83–103.
- 91 To paraphrase one of the camp administrators in Bo, males would often engage in 'womenising', which involved competing over and bragging about women, and engaging in abusive behaviour within the neighbouring community while celebrating at the conclusion of a football match.
- 92 Carpenter, 'Recognizing gender-based violence against civilian men and boys in conflict situations'. That said, these patterns of violence can be mistakenly interpreted as 'natural' for male child

combatants; this assumption is false, as gender-based violence often reflects broader forms of systemic violence that is socially constructed according to gender ideas and roles.

93 For instance, in registering, disarming, discharging and supervising ex-combatants and making it easier for them to disband fighting forces and command and control structures.

Note on contributor

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