

Effect of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants on Intermediate social cohesion outcomes

DDR has a small effect on intermediate social cohesion outcomes although the confidence in study findings is low due to there being only one study in the cell. Geographical region: Latin America & Caribbean

Effect: Small effect ($g = 0.06$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence as there is just one study in the cell

Short summary

DDR has a small positive impact on intermediate social cohesion outcomes by encouraging respect for victims' rights and fostering accountability, particularly when ex-combatants feel accepted by their communities. However, effects vary by outcome, as it has little influence on remorse, especially among political paramilitary members who justify past violence. Additionally, resource-rich groups show weaker support for public apologies, though this effect diminishes with reintegration experiences. While DDR helps promote some aspects of social cohesion, its ability to transform deep-seated attitudes and emotional responses remains limited.

Long Summary

The Intervention

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration is a complex programme for ex-combatants that brings together reconciliation, security and socio-economic dimensions. The process typically involves removing weapons from combatants' hands, taking individuals out of militarised structures, and providing them with training for new livelihoods as well as psychosocial support. (PKOs and PSOs not found in this cell).

How is the intervention expected to work?

DDR may have an effect on ex-combatants' ability to reintegrate by reducing their reliance on violence and increasing their understanding of civilian norms. Additionally, it can influence their willingness to acknowledge responsibility for past actions, particularly when reintegration experiences foster positive interactions with local communities. The effectiveness of DDR depends on factors such as prior socialization, group dynamics, and resource availability, which shape ex-combatants' attitudes toward justice and accountability.

Evidence base

There is one quantitative study in this cell: Daly (2018) is a primary study focused on Columbia based on survey data from 10,951 former fighters.

Evidence findings

Ex-combatants who joined armed groups at an older age were more likely to respect victims' rights, suggesting stronger prior socialization into civilian norms. While the duration in an armed group had no significant impact on most variables, it was weakly positively correlated with support for public apologies. Members of more political paramilitary factions were less likely to express remorse, possibly due to internal group narratives justifying violence. Similarly, resource-rich armed groups were less supportive of public apologies, though this effect disappeared when reintegration experiences were controlled for. Notably, those who felt accepted by their communities were significantly more likely to acknowledge responsibility. The average effect across all outcomes is small.

Included study

Daly (2018) investigates the determinants of ex-paramilitaries' support for transitional justice in Colombia, based on survey data from 10,951 former fighters. It emphasizes that ex-combatants' attitudes toward transitional justice are influenced by their proximity to victimized communities, the norms of justice they have been exposed to, and the personal risks they face. These findings have significant implications for the effectiveness of transitional justice mechanisms in Colombia, particularly with FARC rebels, and for consolidating peace.

The study employs a quantitative analysis of original survey data collected from 10,951 Colombian ex-paramilitaries to explore the determinants of their support for transitional justice. It examines how factors such as proximity to and acceptance by victimized communities, exposure to justice norms, judicial risks tied to individual culpability, and security risks related to vulnerability to retribution influence their attitudes. By analyzing these variables, the research provides insights into the conditions under which transitional justice mechanisms are likely to gain the support of ex-combatants, offering a nuanced understanding of the interplay between socialization, risk, and justice in post-conflict settings. The study is rated low confidence.

The study suggests that DDR programs' impact on social norms and intermediate social cohesion outcomes is limited. The success of DDR depends significantly on local acceptance and community reintegration.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the cell is rated low confidence as there is only one study.

Other outcomes in the study/cell:

- Violence and atrocity prevention/Social norms regarding violence and atrocities