

**Willing White Flag: Voluntary Militia Disarmament in
the Lebanese Civil War**

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To my mother, father, and other scholars with ADHD.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the conditions under which militias embroiled in civil war choose to disarm. This study argues that militias more invested in domestic politics rather than engaging in regional rivalries, are more likely to choose to disarm voluntarily. The results show that after examining seven different militias in the context of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), religious affiliation is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to cause the drastic difference in the outcome of voluntary disarmament. The theory is proven correct when accounting for domestic and international relationships and militia commitment to operating within a particular level of analysis.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Militias take many forms in many types of authoritarian or democratic states, during both times of war and peace. They most often emerge however in times of civil war and strife. Whether they emerge in the context of ethnic insurrections or focus on foreign intervention, militias are defined as “a very extensive more or less voluntary cooperation of the whole mass of the people,” that are auxiliary to the common, and often legitimate, state forces.¹ The role of a paramilitary or militia group in a state’s society can vary. Militia and rebel groups are concerned with governing over territory and the people who compose that territory, while systematically dismissing any other groups, including the rule of the legitimate state.² Militias also take on the role of defending local populations from the imposition of other groups or protecting a population from attacks from others, while attempting to gain devotion and different levels of participation from the citizenry.³ Militias can be exploitative in the way they operate, using their power and community status to coerce civilians into supporting their legitimacy. They may seek to gain that devotion by appealing to their population, securing their societal wellbeing through both social programming and, when necessary, lethal force.⁴ States and the international body at large often view militias as invalid entities despite the state-like structure they seem to supply towards a population. Militias are at times stripped

1 Corinna Jentsch et al. “Militias in Civil Wars.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 757.

2 Ibid., 756.

3 Ibid.,

4 Ibid., 758.

forcefully of their arms and made to acquiesce to the state. Assumptions about militias would indicate that they would be able to overcome such attempts through their militarized capabilities, however, is it possible for militia groups to simply decide to give up their use of force? Under what circumstances do militias choose to disarm?

Disarmament is a component of a more considerable effort to put an end to civil war hostilities.⁵ This process is varied but can appear fundamentally different in various civil wars contexts. Puzzling variation exists among the process of disarmament in militia groups. While many come to an agreement based on terms of a formalized treaty, e.g., the IRA in Ireland, there are not many clear examples of voluntary disarmament. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine exactly when militia groups disarm voluntarily. The underlying elements of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process (DDR) dictates that peace is crucially contingent on disarmament - DDR is the most significant indicator of a willingness to cooperate with the terms of peace.⁶ Disarmament is a critical component of achieving a successful process of peace negotiations, and ultimately, a lasting peace. The Taif Accords that ended the Lebanese civil war resulted in various outcomes for the many different militias. The majority of the militias chose to disarm, including all the militias in the Lebanese Front coalition as well as most militias in the Lebanese National Movement such as the Mourabitoun, Amal, and other smaller factions. Hezbollah, the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and Marada chose not to do so as a result of their relationships with external states and more broad regional activity with

⁵ David E. Cunningham, et al. "It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (Aug 2009): 579.

⁶ Angel Rabasa et al. *From Insurgency to Stability*. Rand Corporation, 2011: 53.

Iran, Syria, and Israel. Through the framework of civil war cessation, ending of hostilities, and reintegration of the state, this study argues that under the condition that militias embroiled in civil war are more focused on the resolution of domestic political disputes rather than on engaging in regional rivalries and external conflict beyond the state, we expect to see militias choose to disarm. When a militia's primary goal is focused on resolving domestic civil conflict and reintegration and peace within the territorial confines of the state, militia groups will choose to disarm voluntarily due to their commitment to the state status quo. Under the conditions, then, of wanting to be involved with other regional conflicts or deeper involvement with other neighboring conflicts rather than focus on resolving the domestic political situation, militias will not choose to disarm.

Other studies have focused on the behavior of militias during and after the negotiating process, however excluding key elements represented in many civil wars. **Theory 1** argues that the strength of a strong insurgency prevents a formalized peace process through DDR, therefore allowing militias to choose not to disarm as they can overrule any barriers to strategic bargaining with sheer military strength.⁷ **Theory 2** claims that insurgent groups rely on a fractured domestic system of politics; militias will seek legitimacy by exploiting a power-sharing and deeply divided regime structure to shield themselves from broader international condemnation to disarm, and to be perceived as an active member of the state's civil society.⁸ These arguments, while

7 Govinda Clayton. "Relative rebel strength and the onset and outcome of civil war mediation." *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 5 (Sep 2013): 620.

8 Eva Dingel. "Hezbollah's Rise and Decline? How the Political Structure Seems to Harness the Power of Lebanon's Non-State Armed Group." *Security and Peace* 31, no. 2 (2013): 72.

necessary to inform the process of disarmament, do not include elements of international influence in the process and the consequences of the militia's role as a para-state, and view the achievement of peace as limited to the state government and the militias involved, lacking nuance in its categorization and limiting the scope of the discussion to a normative discussion on the elements of the DDR process and the state in which it occurs. While compelling, the arguments presented lack the ability to be applied to civil war contexts outside the scope of just state-militia relationships, and do not profoundly discuss power-sharing frameworks or third-party involvement in DDR processes despite a historically large number of civil wars that can potentially be applied to such terms.

By using a method of difference approach, this paper seeks to explain how militias chose to disarm willingly. The method of difference is made most useful when considering the different factors that lead to disarmament, or the lack thereof.⁹ Comparative methods of difference use asymmetric causal inferences in this study to identify successful and unsuccessful militia disarmament, typically within the framework of a change over time.¹⁰ Many cite excerpts of speeches of noteworthy actors in the given circumstances, survey research conducted by third-party organizations, and governing documents of particular regimes. The case of Lebanon's militia disarmament helps to illustrate the conditions under which they choose to disarm voluntarily, as there are examples of many militias that chose to voluntarily surrender during its lengthy civil war.

9 Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen. "Armed Conflict, 1989-2006." *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 5 (Sep 2007): 625.

10 Alex Vines. "Disarmament in Mozambique." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (Mar 1998): 193.

Using qualitative comparative analysis through a method of difference is ideal to examine the militias of the Lebanese civil war and examine the variables that lead to the discrepancy in the outcome of voluntary or involuntary disarmament. By utilizing case studies on militias and a collection of archival records, this study will corroborate its claims through conducted interviews with two militia members who were active during the civil war in order to provide additional support to case study discussions. The significance of including active militia members in this discussion stems from a desire to communicate the reality of the day-to-day that militia members engaged in, and a unique perspective offered by looking back upon the years in which they engaged in conflict, especially after so long.

The period of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), therefore, is most effective in understanding the DDR process. This study will seek to examine that it is not simply the access and use of small arms and light weapons, religious disparities in a power-sharing ethnoconfessional system, and foreign actors that determine voluntary disarmament. Rather, this study will argue that it is the commitment to a state's domestic structure, whether or not it is a fractured or ethnoconfessional in nature, or a commitment to a larger regional patron state's interests to engage in the international sphere that dictates the likelihood of voluntary disarmament. This study will do so through a narrative discussion of many militias that were present during the war period. This study carries vital implications in small arms and light weapons reduction for militias currently embroiled in civil war. Implications of this study can strengthen current understanding about what incentivizes militias to disarm in a unique manner, broaden the discussion on

the effective and ineffective elements of DDR for use in future civil war negotiation, and impact public policy geared at militant non-state actors more broadly by discussing the competing elements of state preservation and external regional partnerships.

Additionally, no existing studies have successfully distinguished between the act of disarmament and a *desire* or choice for militias to disarm. Authors discuss that for certain DDR approaches, alternative strategies geared at achieving peace can be approached only through a formalized peace process, such as in Afghanistan where disarmament is suggested as being unlikely due to the security dilemma that imbues the conflict.¹¹ While accurate to the predicated understanding of militias not ever being disincentivized to disarm in general, it does not describe or detail any form of voluntary disarmament, as it is assumed to be useless or pointless in its conception.¹² Others argue that a concrete measure of security in communities with active militias is necessary to create even a basic willingness to disarm, however, it is again assumed that there is no willingness to disarm outside of the realm of formalized processes or any factors external to the classic interpretation of the security dilemma as applied to the DDR process and to achieving peace among warring militias.¹³ Most importantly, this incorporation of choice and decision-making elements into the mix of militia disarmament literature is what makes the approach distinct from current literature. With the violent implications of small arms, a microscopic approach is a far more productive aim at a comparative analysis. It

11 Alpaslan Özerdem. "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from a Cross-Cultural Perspective." *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (2002): 963.

12 Ibid.,

13 James Bevan. *Crisis in Karamoja: Armed Violence and the Failure of Disarmament in Uganda's Most Deprived Region*. Report. Small Arms Survey, 2008, 63-64.

is a counter-intuitive and interesting phenomenon to examine why a militia, which has control over means of coercion, would voluntarily choose to surrender it in a post-conflict environment and engage in the DDR process. This article seeks, in a broader scope, to further distinguish that simple disarmament - i.e., getting rid of guns - is not the same as the DDR process, nor is it the same as voluntarily disarmament.

Among many possible lenses with which to examine disarmament in terms of a civil war, many examples are fitting, but that are not included for this study. While other civil wars have many similar components to those highlighted in this research, Lebanon provides a notable example to understand the process of disarmament, or otherwise, due to the sheer number of militias that existed concurrently during the Lebanese civil war. With a vast number of militias operating during the civil war, for similar or unique reasons, the case of Lebanon allows us to explore an environment in which these many militias all executed their various strategies and achieved different outcomes in the discharging, or lack thereof, of their weapons. Additionally, the Lebanese civil war has been resolved for many years, with a more complete historical framework where updated information about the militias can be found more readily. Lebanon also serves as a typical case that is generalizable to other sectarian conflicts in the MENA region, like Syria and Iraq.

Lebanon's civil war is atypical in many distinct aspects in terms of militias. While always being compared to the conflicts with Bosnia-Herzegovina and former nations of Yugoslavia on a surface level,¹⁴ Lebanon was drastically committed to a state

¹⁴ Florian Bieber. "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon: Historical Lessons of Two Multireligious States." *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Apr 2000): 274.

for at least two or three decades before engaging in civil war, making it an ideal choice to examine elements of this theory related to a commitment to an already existing state, and the domestic politics that come with it. The main conflict was how to integrate the many different ethnoreligious groups or "para-states" into a functioning regime in Bosnia. Bosnia had been faced with a decisive desire of many ethnic groups to leave the united collective state behind with the fall of Yugoslavia itself.¹⁵ While Lebanon had militias balancing each other out, the political system of Lebanon demanded that these militias included members of other ethnoreligious groups, despite being composed overwhelmingly by one religious identity at the time.

Additionally, the press reporting in Bosnia was controlled by internal state measures or the Communist parties, whereas Lebanon's press was controlled heavily by external and neighboring Arab states.¹⁶ While militias were similar in the ability to provide necessary social services to their bases, the case in which the Lebanese civil war is most distinct is due to the closest neighboring countries of Syria and Iran playing a hand in a particular militia, an element not found in the Bosnian example.¹⁷ While foreign intervention was most certainly at play in the fall of former Yugoslavia, Lebanon holds a more significant role in understanding the play between East and West, with many states in the Middle East eager to push Lebanon to fully commit to the ideology and heritage of the Near East.¹⁸ This has fundamentally imbued Lebanese politics with a question of

¹⁵ Ibid., 272.

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷ Ibid., 275.

¹⁸ Rana Jawad. "Lebanon: A Profile of Political and Welfare Institutions." In *Social Welfare and Religion in the Middle East: A Lebanese Perspective*, 69-84. Bristol, UK; Portland, OR, USA: Bristol University Press, 2009, 70-71.

commitment; in the case of active Lebanese militias, this question of commitment can be applied to either a larger regional hegemon or the state itself.

The Lebanese civil war was composed of several phases, with some militias active in different structures and alliances; however, all militias were participants to the Taif accords in some form or fashion, whether or not they experienced splintering. The narrative focus on these militias is placed on the outcome of all the militia groups before and after Taif negotiations. The militias in this study did not necessarily engage in combat or conflict with each other during every given year, nor did every militia group operate during the same time frame in the war. The militias did not have to coexist in order to arrive at the same negotiating table in Taif, and still, all militias active at any stage were ultimately involved in the Lebanese civil war's complex network. Most militias during the war had involvement with foreign actors, but not all were serving in the patron-client relationship between an external state and militia. Over time, some militias defected from their root causes while others had continued relationships with other regional actors. Focusing on the period leading up to the accords, the implication of Taif itself, and the continuity of the militias that chose not to give up their arms is significant in examining their decision to disarm or not. Disarmament was never certain under the terms of the Taif accords for any or all militias. Some occurred after continued pressure, while others chose not to follow the terms of the accords, or were exempt from the terms altogether.

This study chooses not to focus on the different military groups that fractured during the war, who chose to represent their respective association and ideological

alignments during the war rather than the institution of the Lebanese army as a whole. The Army of Free Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces were, at one point, a part of a larger state military; however, their legitimacy as an extension of the state makes them difficult to categorize as militias. Key figures represented them during the war - Colonel Antoine Barakat and General Michel Aoun, associated with their own military wings, were heavily involved in the civil war and political environment at the time but their involvement, while adjacent to the militias, does not constitute their military arms as paramilitary groups or violent non-state actors.¹⁹ Additionally, while a dominant violent non-state actor in the civil war, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is not included as a militia group in this study.

After the literature review, theory, and methods sections, the discussion will go as follows. First, this study will address the contextual history of Lebanon. Second, this study will discuss the history of the militias and their disarmament in the post-war peace settlement, clearly defining their goals as either domestic or regional in nature. Lastly, the discussion of the results will address the theory of this study and its validity examined across rival theories.

¹⁹Nader Moumneh. *The Lebanese Forces: Emergence and Transformation of the Christian Resistance*. (Hamilton Books, Maryland, 2019): 159.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of disarmament is rather complex and is more than the mere act of disarmament as gleaned from its contextual understanding. The process of DDR is necessary to achieve peace and - without all three components of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration - it is impossible to put an end to civil war truly.²⁰ The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) defines disarmament as, "...the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population."²¹ The simple disposal of arms, however, does not imply a willingness to surrender them. DDR is a linear process that becomes increasingly more complex as time passes in its efforts to create a negative peace in any given conflict, with a focus on an immediate restoration of stability. It is beholden to the desire to achieve that peace or else renege on terms, or bypass them altogether through strength. The linearity and timeline of disarmament of a militia group - decommissioning the fighters, and reintegrating them into society at large - is of utmost significance when the process is used and is what most significantly distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary disarmament.²² The most paramount focus of DDR is to reestablish a state's monopoly of force. Some argue that the primary goal of DDR is to create security at the community level and, in order to

²⁰ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards." (2014)

²¹ Ibid.,

²² Angel Rabasa et al. *From Insurgency to Stability*. Rand Corporation, 2011: 53.

achieve effective and long-lasting peace, DDR must focus more on community groups in the post-conflict period. Communities are better receptive to peace when they feel safe that crime and the continued acquisition of arms is being controlled without the threat of the state abandoning their protection.²³ The incentive for a militia to opt for peace rather than engage in costly conflict can only be secured through DDR, and engaging in the process is a firm commitment to voluntary disarmament. A significant predicated factor on the process of DDR is that some security will be achieved and will emerge after the negotiations,²⁴ since a guarantee of better and more secure outcomes will allow militia members to develop a level of trust in hopes to permanently cease hostilities.²⁵ This process of DDR can only be established after a basic cessation of hostilities, or an immediate-term ceasefire is reached. Militias worry that, after the processes of disarming and demobilizing, their loss in bargaining power can be turned against them without an indisputable guarantee of security.²⁶ To combat that temptation, a form of reintegration in DDR called rebel-military integration (MI), allows many former militia members to become a part of state or other occupations within the framework of a given society, such as the state military, or jobs adjacent to the state's military structure.²⁷ Integration can also occur outside the context of former militia members joining the state military.

23 Willemijn Verkoren et al. "From DDR to Security Promotion: Connecting National Programs to Community Initiatives." *International Journal of Peace Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010), 2-4.

24 Michael G. Findley. "Bargaining and the Interdependent Stages of Civil War Resolution." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (Oct 2013): 908.

25 Rabasa, et al., *From Insurgency*, 54.

26 Vellodi, M A. "Problems of Disarmament." *India International Centre Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (July 1979): 210.

27 Katherine Glassmyer and Nicholas Sambanis. "Military Integration and Civil War Termination." *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 3 (May 2008) 365-366.

Another popular strategy of reintegration occurs under the terms of giving up arms in order to reintegrate into society at large, and terms of peace settlement can include reinsertion assistance, which can include a “restart package” of funding or additional resources to start businesses and establish an alternative way of maintaining a living outside of the structure of a militia.²⁸ The goal of the DDR process is to reinforce the notion that peace is a favored outcome for all members involved in militias, whether at the community level or in the context of the ideological stance that their militias defended. Reconciliation is proven much more difficult when hostility is high, with hostility defined as (1) the number of warring militias, (2) whether the war is ethnoreligious or confessional in nature, (3) the extent to which “ethnic fractionalization” is pervasive,²⁹ and (4) the total amount of deaths and displacements.³⁰ Reconciliation can be achieved with substantial ease when there is an economic incentive for former combatants to undergo the DDR process.³¹

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are not often the subject of international efforts to decommission weaponry.³² Despite their pervasiveness and being the most often used weapons in conflict, and despite the ability for SALW to be transported discreetly from one conflict to another with ease and the lack of extensive and intensive training needed to operate them,³³ SALW are often overlooked in broader international

²⁸ Verkoren et al., “From DDR...,” 1-2.

²⁹ Craig R. Whitney. “Ruling Arms.” *World Policy Journal* 29, no. 4 (2012/2013): 91.

³⁰ Glassmyer and Sambanis, “Military Integration...”, 368

³¹ Ibid., 367.

³² David B. Kopel et al. “Micro-Disarmament: The Consequences for Safety and Human Rights.” (2005).

³³ Vines, “Disarmament in...,” 194.

discussions of disarmament, with weapons of mass destruction holding a more prominent role in disarmament treaties and discussions.³⁴ The proliferation and removal of SALW from insurgent groups is integrated into a process of security sector reform, which would allow for voluntary small arms and light weapons collection and destruction.³⁵ These frameworks became important elements of MI and SSR processes during the 1990s; however, these frameworks are rarely contextualized by international organizations outside the discussions of individual peacekeeping missions.

When members of different ethnoreligious communities can come to an agreement and band behind a collective entity in an attempt to consolidate interests, reconciliation has a more improved chance of being implemented.³⁶ Reconciliation, however, is made difficult when the war in question is ethnoreligious in nature and when ethnofractalization is more prevalent, with a pervasive difficulty in consolidating like interests. A region with many conflicting rival groups wanting to exercise control over a state is considered fractalized, and even smaller fiefdom-like communities of a heterogeneous combination of people will be most difficult to reconcile with under the terms of formalized negotiation.³⁷ Negotiations with multiple militia groups are fundamentally more difficult to be reconciled when the goal is to divide the state during times of civil war, with more success being found when militia leaders come to a consensus of preserving the state as a whole entity.³⁸ Ultimately, civil wars are far less

³⁴ Joseph Mayer. "Disarmament." *Social Science* 38, no. 1 (Jan 1963): 12

³⁵ Ibid., 13.

³⁶ Florian Bieber. "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon: Historical Lessons of Two Multireligious States." *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Apr 2000): 273

³⁷ Ibid., 270.

³⁸ Ibid., 272.

likely than international wars to come to any formal agreement, with more than a third of active civil wars reigniting within only a few years of settled peace agreements. This can be due to the lack of power militia groups will experience when they disarm, losing their hard power bargaining tool, leaving the state to default on previously agreed upon terms. This attitude makes militia groups hesitant, enabling them to quickly rearm and continue expanding violent action and hostilities. The relationship between state and militia, as well as the relationship between militias, then, is due for acute scrutiny, especially considering that it was determined that in 2006 there were thirty-two ongoing civil conflicts that lasted for over three years.³⁹

³⁹ Glassmyer and Sambanis, "Military Integration...", 365.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY

The framework that this theory occupies lies in between the structure of comparative politics and international relations as a result of the nature of militias to be active and present in both discussions, and that the processes with which militia disarmament is discussed often borrows theories from international relations and other internationally applied theories⁴⁰ despite the state-centric nature of militias. This study argues that the militias that are more invested in restoring the domestic state and negotiating the grievances that led to civil war are more likely to elect to disarm as their interests lie primarily in resolving their domestic tensions. Militias that are deeply invested in regional rivalries and involvement in broader area conflicts are less likely to voluntarily disarm. Militias devoted to repairing the domestic regime are more likely to accept the DDR process, no matter their relative strength or weakness in negotiation. All militias recognize that participating in civil war is costly and that peace is a more desirable option. They will opt to willingly engage in DDR and reintegrate into the state in various roles, be it through joining the military or accepting other means to create an alternative livelihood, even if it means surrendering arms and being open to personal violent attack.⁴¹ We expect to see militias more involved with foreign entanglements less likely to choose to disarm, as their interests lie beyond the narrow scope of mending

40 D. B. Subedi. "Security Dimension of Post-conflict Recovery: Nepal's Experience in Disarmament and Demobilisation of People's Liberation Army Fighters." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 28, no. 2 (2015): 145.

41 Clayton, "Relative rebel strength...", 610.

internal disputes, but rather engaging in conflict outside of the ideological and territorial borders of the given state. While many scholars point to understanding disarmament as simply the first part of the DDR⁴² processes that militias engage in,⁴³ it is more salient than ever to consider the impact of the domestic political sphere and its place in any particular regional disputes under the international system beyond simply considering security guarantees that militias face and how “attitudinal” and commitment issues undermine the peace process.⁴⁴

Simply examining the aggregate, normative, and operative successes⁴⁵ of the DDR process lacks consideration of the role that larger systems play in the success and failures of disarmament, as well as the negative peace that is sought after when engaging in the process of DDR. Militia disarmament can be applied to the various systems or Waltzian images within the structure of peace negotiations. When war, according to Waltz, “promotes internal unity of each state involved,”⁴⁶ it begs how this understanding of unity in war can be applied to a militia in its para-state role. Can internal unity be promoted at Waltz’s interpretation of the second image within a state, when paramilitary groups and militias operate in a middle ground between the second and third image? If the second image is the state and its domestic structure, and the third is the international system at large, a militia or paramilitary group would then seek to operate in both:

42 Mark Knight and Alpaslan Özerdem. "Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace." *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (2004): 501.

43 Özerdem, “Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration...”, 962.

44 Glassmyer and Sambanis, “Military Integration...”, 368.

45 Subedi, “Security Dimension...”, 145.

46 Kenneth N. Waltz. 1959. *Man, the state, and war: a theoretical analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 81.

existing without the legitimacy of an internationally recognized state to be discussed in the context of the third image exclusively, and beholden to the second image and the state a militia exists and operates within. Considering the superstructure of these different levels of analysis in the field is necessary to understand the framework within which disarmament occurs, and is often found missing in most discussions about disarmament and DDR discussions more broadly. Extrapolating internal unity within a state to apply to the internal cohesion and solidarity within a militia group is surely appropriate, as militias operate in between systems. From where, however, is such a unity derived if not from political components associated with a state, such as identity politics and regime type, or components that rest in the international sphere, such as alliances and sheer military strength? It is the *actions* taken by a militia in the pursuit of their interests and their *conception* of where such actions will be applied that provides clarity, delineating their operation as more pertinent in one image than the other that can create dramatic differences in the way that militia disarmament scholarship is discussed, and voluntary disarmament achieved. It is not simply that political science uses these levels of analysis to discuss the state of global politics and study it in theory. This study implies more broadly that the Waltzian images and levels of analysis are the only way that the collective international body and all of its states have operationalized policy solutions to global political problems, and further that militia violence poses a stark obstacle to this understanding as the role they fulfill is at odds when interpreted within just the state system or just the international system. When considering that the foundation of DDR concepts applied to the cessation of state civil war are derived from preexisting

international relations theories which emphasize the role of strategic bargaining and the security dilemma in defensive realism,⁴⁷ it becomes clear that the manner in which international political solutions have been prescribed and administered are unable to accurately operate in simply one system to resolve militia violence. It also suggests that the role that militias play in both systems has not only posed a challenge to theorists when approaching civil conflict cessation, but that it has also proven to be complex for the international system through this theoretical framework to address and resolve global political issues at both levels, and for the state system to provide adequate force to immobilize militias in particular. Therefore, the framework in which the political world operates today, unable to account for the nature of militias to occupy both systems, suggests that militias operate successfully between systems because international efforts have been ineffective in addressing militias as para-states, leaving them virtually without any direct, targeted consequences for their actions. It is not that militias do not experience consequences, but rather that they still manage to persist in the wake of consequences administered forcefully or legally, which is where concepts such as DDR that borrow from international relations theory become useful according to scholars.⁴⁸ Militias do not inherently act as para-states to avoid being targeted by consequences that are levied upon them, however, without enough sheer force by the state or without accurate understanding of their complexity from the international system, they are still able to operate relatively unaffected. Without any formal framework to address militia violence

47 Kenneth N. Waltz. 1979. *Theory of international politics*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 57.

48 Glassmyer and Sambanis, "Military Integration...", 368.

from just a state-up or international system-down perspective, militias have by virtue of today's inefficacious approaches taken advantage of this gray area to embolden their actions. Simply, militias have continued to get away with their actions as their actions defy any one particular effort. Militias, as I argue, do prefer or subconsciously choose a system in which to operationalize their interests, within the confines of existing between the state and international system. Militias who I theorize voluntarily disarm do so in service to the state and its domestic apparatus, while the militias who do not disarm are at service to the international system. It simply is how militias adopt the frameworks to achieve their goals. This study proceeds under such theoretical assumptions.

Scholars have discussed the militia in a variety of conceptions, as being state-supported or simply an rebel or insurgent group.⁴⁹ While militias can often become “controlled or co-opted” by the state or its representatives, militias are clearly able to and have historically acted independently pursuing their own interests relative to their state, even if it means their interests attempt to supersede the state.⁵⁰ If a militia is gaining its legitimacy as a valid actor by simply existing in its capacity within its home state, I theorize that it is likely to voluntarily disarm, and if a militia is gaining its legitimacy from another international actor, it is likely not to voluntarily disarm. The key to understanding voluntary disarmament comes from the legitimacy issue of militias, the same legitimacy issue at the core of every discussion in the international community as it seeks to administer solutions to eliminate violent militia, paramilitary, or terrorist groups

49 Jentsch, et al. “Militias in Civil Wars..”, 756-757.

50 Ibid.,

as illegitimate actors in the international sphere, while such militias receive strong domestic support.⁵¹ The legitimacy of certain groups in Africa, such as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, grew from its ability to mobilize and militarize in an incredibly formal and organized fashion into surrounding regional activity by mimicking traditional army techniques.⁵² While it is undeniably true that the politics of inclusion plays a large role in mobilizing militias across state borders and into the larger regional discussion, it is not enough to state categorically that ethnic groups divided across arbitrary state lines drawn by imperialist powers is the sole reason that certain militias mobilize across state borders into regional territories to unify. I theorize that it is further support, monetary or ideologically, from regional influences seeking to achieve their own interests in a given state and region that provides the legitimacy certain militias hope to borrow from an external legitimate state operating in the Waltzian third image that is the key to understanding voluntary militia disarmament, or lack thereof.

Voluntary disarmament is not just simply the product of security dilemma consequences being applied to militias instead of states in the international system. The para-state roles that militias can serve in providing services and security to a given population while simultaneously lacking the ability to maintain a monopoly of force over a territory means that they are not able to be evaluated simply as states in the international system. Applying the framework of the security dilemma concept that inherently imbues DDR processes generally⁵³ can be helpful in navigating bargaining

⁵¹ Clayton, "Relative rebel strength...", 610.

⁵² Simeon H.O. Alozieuwa. "Rebel Movements, Militia Groups and the Problematic of Contemporary African Political Leadership." *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 2 (2014): 16.

⁵³ Subedi, "Security Dimension...", 144.

dilemmas and achieving peace, and is what makes examining voluntary disarmament in militias distinct and worthy of discussion. War is, again, costly to all. If a militia can transcend the terms of a security dilemma struggle however, as **Theory 1** suggests, simply by being able to exert more military force than other parties,⁵⁴ there is no incentive as to why any militia under any circumstances would want to disarm at all; there would be especially no incentive to disarm voluntarily. This is often the pitfall of DDR according to scholars.⁵⁵ Most important in understanding this phenomenon is that voluntary disarmament would require willingly giving up the SALW that had enabled previous defensive or offensive military action, leaving a given militia broadly open to attack. In this line of thinking, a militia has independently come to the conclusion that leaving themselves open to vulnerability is somehow advantageous to their interests. The key, however, is to understand whose will a militia is leaving themselves vulnerable to, the host state or regional influences - respective to which level they seek to achieve their interests at. As authors discuss alternative examples, Afghanistan, Uganda, Nepal and others,⁵⁶ none discuss what would incentivize voluntary disarmament or even distinguish it apart from simply a willingness to agree to terms of peace and disarm, a step that already exists in the normal DDR process.⁵⁷ I theorize that an innate, and potentially ideological, commitment to a domestic state apparatus is the key to transcend the security dilemma in these cases, irrespective of inherent militia strength. If a militia's goals are

54 Clayton, "Relative rebel strength...", 620-621.

55 Knight and Özerdem, "Guns, Camps...", 501.

56 Özerdem, "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration...", 965.

57 Subedi, "Security Dimension...", 145.

the preservation of the domestic structure and regime of the state, a militia will as a result be willing to agree to an altered or adjusted status quo, especially if it implies that a militia can enjoy the retention and maintenance of as much of the pre-war status quo as possible. It is the status quo that is most significant to such militias that voluntarily disarm, even if it is practiced as simply adherence to a domestic ideological practice, or even if they believe they are fighting *against* the status quo; this study implies that capitulation to the state, willingly, indicates an ideological commitment to some ever present form of regime operations or system of government. Simply put, a commodity inherent in the state as it was prior to the outbreak of conflict is deemed as worth fighting for by militias, and it is possible that this commodity is at the core foundations of a state's regime, or heritage and ideology that permeated it perhaps.

This is precisely when militias will be likely to voluntarily disarm, because a domestic structure plays a significant role in the legitimacy that a state can maintain and bring to an international stage, whereas a militia can only ever operate under its looming shadow even if it attempts or hopes to supersede it. Militias that are unlikely to voluntarily disarm, however, are those whose interests are intending to do just that: supersede. It lies at the heart of state legitimacy. A militia who is likely to voluntarily disarm is therefore doing so in the service of the state, demonstrating the significance of sovereign and international legitimacy that no militia, no matter how hard they try, can bypass or overcome without enormous regional and international system modifications. If a militia is operating in broader efforts to restore state processes, willing to accept a modified status quo as success, committing to the state's legitimacy and choosing to

capitulate may be the only way to achieve success in their efforts and purpose.⁵⁸ This can occur even after acknowledging that there is no method in which achieving peace can lead to any semblance of the former status quo pre-conflict, but that the state regime's existence, especially in regions where states only have relatively young national histories,⁵⁹ can represent a status quo of sorts, especially in the long term history of the region and the forces who occupy it.⁶⁰

Success, for militias that are invested in the domestic political structure, can therefore be understood as maintaining the status quo is as close as it was previously, not to the benefit of the state necessarily, but to the benefit of the militia itself. This leads to a discussion of particular interest: how militias strive to maintain a semblance of status quo in the wake of a conflict within the confines of a state with a fractured, power-sharing system of government.⁶¹ It is such a government structure that creates domestic rifts capable of igniting support for militias that seek to accomplish their ideological goals and maintain a favorable domestic status that the members of a militia enjoyed pre-war. They seek to maintain their interests through the system as a pre-existing state structure, or an ideological unity and commitment to common identity that is concurrently reflected at the core of a state's ideology or regime. This dedication to the state, I argue, would compel a militia to lay down arms in the face of even potential harm. I theorize that it is not a power-sharing system at odds with a monopoly of legitimate force that creates the

⁵⁸ This can be especially true if a militia's purpose is ideological in nature and relevant to pre-existing state structure.

⁵⁹ Alozieuwa, "Rebel Movements...", 15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁶¹ Glassmyer and Sambanis, "Military Integration...", 368.

dichotomy between the actions of militias who choose to disarm and those who do not.⁶² It is also not simply the exploitation of a power-sharing political system that endows militias dedicated to regional rivalries to choose not to disarm.⁶³ I argue, rather, that various militias are engaging in conflict due to different *conceptions* of power-sharing or legitimate force monopoly, exacerbated as a result of the middle ground that militias occupy in the world as too consequential to be ignored at the international level, but not legitimate enough to be a state in its own right.

If it is accepted that a militia likely to voluntarily disarm is by extension fighting for state unity, it can be accordingly theorized that it is fighting against militias who believe in the dissolution of the current regime or state itself potentially in service to another dominant regional power's interests or larger regional ideology. Militias who voluntarily disarm have, therefore, simply served as an extension of the state to some capacity. Allowing a state to engage in conflict against militias who serve other interests outside the preservation of the domestic status quo, through a proxy group with less legitimacy than that of the state that is nonetheless dedicated to its continued existence, provides the state an opportunity to achieve its interests. A state will be able to rival less favorable militias without suffering the global consequences of exercising a disproportionate use of force against select groups less favorable to its own interests, and liberates a state from condemnation for any brutality enacted by such militias. This would allow militias invested in maintaining the state structure to confront other militias that do

⁶² Subedi, "Security Dimension...", 144.

⁶³ Dingel, "Hezbollah's Rise and Decline...", 74.

not have a commitment to the state and have broader regional aspirations and interests. While these militias committed to the domestic sphere, virtually allow it to fight for itself in this illegitimate arena against what the state views as other illegitimate militias, such a relationship is not simply a state-sponsored militia fighting against non-state sponsored militias. A militia that voluntarily disarms is therefore further demonstrated to be a conception of an ideological purpose that can be militarized and is incentivized by maintaining or fighting for a status quo and an existing system. Of course, a state is able to recognize with rigorous risk analysis if sponsoring a militia will be favorable to its fundamental existence or not, but it is possible that a particular militia dedicated to a state status quo is simply unaware that by fighting for the status quo, they are inherently fighting for the state in the face of other militias whose intentions are more broadly regional. Fighting for a united state identity within any country could further be inherent to the very state's status quo itself.

Militias dedicated to the whims of other state sponsors or broader regional conflict, external to the state, are less likely to voluntarily disarm as the conception of a state status quo is not only ignored, but likely in the process of being actively undermined. Militias often are, however, acting independent of their home state and towards their own interests.⁶⁴ A militia's commitment to a state can then be interpreted in two ways for the purpose of this study: as the remuneration of external state sponsorship and the interests of the patron state, or inherently drawn from a commitment to the domestic system and regime native to the state it operates within. Such a commitment can

⁶⁴ Jentzsch, et al. "Militias in Civil Wars..", 756.

certainly stem from an ideological motivation on the surface but ultimately stems from a desire to seek the maintenance of the status quo or its complete subversion. The conflict between the levels of analysis and its relation to this theorized middle sphere between the domestic and regional/international images where militias operate is not lost on the understanding of militia goals. While a militia may not inherently recognize that it is operating in this middle ground to the extent that the literature underscores it, the dichotomy between status quo and its subversion clearly demonstrate that militias, through ideology or otherwise, seek either a binding of security and stability for members and a commitment to a state, or a broader promise of regional political power and influence.

Theory 1 posits that relatively strong paramilitary groups, relative to that of the state, are liberated from the strategic bargaining elements of negotiations, therefore, making peace less likely to be achieved.⁶⁵ By extension, such militias will choose not to disarm due to their ability to transcend settlement terms; these militias have significant leverage over their counterparts, and can still hold out when the government can potentially renege on settlement terms. Relatively strong militias may overinflate their capacities and rely on a perception of strength and capability, leaving other militias up to the whims of the relatively strong militia. While there is a significant discussion on the role of mediation being more likely to lead to peace the more powerful a militia group is,⁶⁶ I argue instead that it is the *intentions* of the militia group at the precipice of

⁶⁵ Clayton, "Relative rebel strength...", 620.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 614.

disarmament that can make even the most relatively capable and powerful militias choose to lay down arms willingly, and not simply the ability or militant strength that a militia would bring to negotiations. Enabling any semblance of the status quo to return and maintaining a principal commitment to the state structure is enough to allow a militia to willingly risk the consequences of disarmament if it capacitates their interests within the domestic structure and their larger ideological interests thereto, even if such a militia is the most militarily capable and powerful with potential to supercede negotiations.

Theory 2 claims that insurgent groups rely on a fractured domestic system of politics; militias will seek legitimacy by exploiting a power-sharing and deeply divided regime structure to shield themselves from broader international condemnation to disarm, and to be perceived as an active member of the state's civil society. This can be established as a method to maintain its presence in the state after negotiations while maintaining their collection of arms and the potential for future militarization, with the best likelihood to achieve their goal through domestic political means rather than maintain the support of other states and regional actors.⁶⁷ While this theory is incredibly accurate to the examined case of Lebanon in the years following the war, its application to the understanding of civil war contexts at large lacks a discussion on international legitimacy. I argue that the militia groups that choose not to disarm, in their inability to seek the legitimacy inherent to statehood, are outwardly approached and contracted by other regional actors to advance their own interests, providing a stronger sense of legitimacy in its desire to subvert the status quo and act upon their regional rivalries and

⁶⁷ Dingle, "Hezbollah's Rise and Decline...", 74.

interests. The inherently fractured nature of a power-sharing system cannot provide robust legitimacy when the interests of a militia lie in the regional and, as a result, the international realm. Support and funding for action by a regional patron allows for militias to borrow legitimacy from regional hegemons to accrue more perceived power, arms, and other tools needed to achieve their interests. This transactional relationship between militia and patron state allows regional powers to occupy the middle ground between the state sphere and the international one and to shield a militia's international status. This legitimacy borrowing can possibly shield a militia from broader international disapproval, however, it can also paradoxically magnify its actions globally becoming more recognizable in the international sphere and more at risk to open condemnation by other global powers.

Scholars point to other examples of militia disarmament processes. Many states struggle, given a power-sharing system, on how to structure a united government regime while accounting for categorical differences. In considering Nigeria, even among their many non-state actors during their civil war, none were acting on behalf of another state, and none of the actors, generally, were acting out of foreign influence or in the interests of another state specifically. Additionally, many civil wars experience "systematic" disarmament of militias, where disarmament can vary in different fashions among the actors themselves, and where the understanding of various different types or groups of militias were deemed structurally distinct from one another.⁶⁸ A general similarity in all other cases is that at any given time during their civil war, they did not experience

⁶⁸ Kirsten Schulze and Mike Smith. "Getting Rid of Guns." *The World Today* 54, no. 10 (1998): 260-262.

multiple⁶⁹ distinct militia groups where the argument for the unification of a state was placed in contrast to blatant regional influence and infiltration. Acknowledging these cases allows for more variables to be controlled when examining the independent variables in the presented case.

⁶⁹ Multiple, meaning at least two in this case.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS

This study examines seven distinct militias operating during the Lebanese civil war, utilizing the method of difference approach to determine the causal relationships between commitment to a domestic structure or regional involvement in determining whether militias choose to voluntarily disarm or not. The choice of militias for the purposes of this article is best suited to understand the different interests in choosing to obtain arms and militarize during the civil war, ethnoreligious ties to Lebanese people, and use of the existing Lebanese regime structure during the civil war to achieve their respective interests.⁷⁰ There are categorical elements that underscore what a militia in the context of the Lebanese civil war is defined as. They will be continuously observed across all examined militias in this article. They will be used to make clear the strong similarities among all militias in an attempt to account for any other factor as a possible alternative to this study. They include militia's access to SAWL and fractured power-sharing domestic regimes.

The first component of note is the access and use of small arms and light weapons (SALW), weapons that can be considered sold, traded and purchased among people, states and organizations. The second component is a fractured domestic political system, in which a power-sharing structure is emphasized among many different rival

⁷⁰ For example, Hezbollah's interests were to bolster Iran's regional influence through expanding Shia influence through the region by adopting an Arabist appeal (despite Iran not being an Arab nation) by fighting against the most substantial threat to the united Arabian mindset. Other militias, on the other hand, were attempting to maintain their representation and influence in government and deter any power grabs from other, mostly religious, groups. These militias eventually evolved into political parties and entered the Lebanese political sphere, another defining characteristic that determined the choices of which militias were to be included in this research.

ethnoreligious groups. This can be as simple as maintaining quotas in parliaments for gender or other identity-related labels, however, in this case, it is best defined as a system in which many parties, adherent to a given ideology, kin group, or ethnicity, all struggle to agree to a fair regime structure in which to advocate best for their interests.⁷¹

The independent variable is foreign involvement and backing of militias by an external, and in this case regional, state. Foreign involvement and backing will be understood as ideological, monetary or military support, tacit or explicit, by another state in order to achieve the state's own benefit. For this research, this study excludes other non-state actors such as the PLO⁷² and focuses solely on legitimate regional states, including Syria and Iran. The variable will serve in examining the maintenance of support before, during, and after the DDR process and the agreement on a peace settlement. Foreign involvement can be wildly varied; however, sticking to the concepts of the maintenance of foreign entanglement during and beyond the DDR process is key in analyzing this variable.

While the main variable of question is the foreign entanglements of militias or lack thereof, this study takes into account examination of ethnoreligious questions as inherently important to the discussion of a power-sharing system. Ethnoreligious subdivisions are nuanced in Lebanon, but for the purposes of this study, these groups will be considered ethnically Arab, as ethnicity is difficult to define.⁷³ Lebanese militias were largely and significantly composed of a particular religious group, with some other

71 Paul Staniland. "Militias, Ideology, and the State." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 781.

72 Muhammad Ali Khalidi and Diane Riskedahl. "The Road to Nahr al Barid: Lebanese Political Discourse and Palestinian Civil Rights." *Middle East Report*, no. 244 (2007): 28.

73 Christian groups often identify as ethnically Phoenician.

members of different religious groups being incorporated into a militia with a different religious identity at times.⁷⁴ These militia groups will be associated with their dominant religious makeup and identification.

The dependent variable is voluntary or involuntary disarmament. Disarmament is defined as a “process that targets a determinate number of combatants, whether as individual or groups, belonging to the Armed Forces or armed opposition groups, in order to disarm, demilitarize and reintegrate these persons into civilian life, the Armed Forces or the police.”⁷⁵ It is concerned with the process of giving up SALW, including any explosives or additional ammunition.⁷⁶ To operationalize voluntary disarmament, this study defines it as a process by which militia groups voluntarily opt to hand over their collected small arms and light weapons and accept reintegration, without being pressured to do so by another state outside the realm of formal negotiation processes.⁷⁷

74 Florian Bieber. "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon: Historical Lessons of Two Multireligious States." *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2000): 269-81.

75 Angel Rabasa et al. *From Insurgency to Stability*. Rand Corporation, 2011: 52

76 Ibid., 53.

77 George W. Downs and David M. Rocke. "Tacit Bargaining and Arms Control." *World Politics* 39, no. 3 (Apr 1987): 311.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY: THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR AND ITS ORIGINS

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement were initiated at the hands of the League of Nations. France exercised control over the territory of Syria and Lebanon in the Levant. France's deeply rooted fiscal and friendly relationship with the Maronite Christians of Mount Lebanon, even prior to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, inspired the Maronites to align with the West as they continued the process of state formation. When creating the new borders of Greater Lebanon, incorporating other Muslim-majority territorial holdings, a Census was taken in 1932 to survey the population breakdown of the territory of the future Lebanese Republic. The questions asked ranged from standard questions such as age and sex; however, the most essential and noteworthy question was that of religion. Looking at the results, 227,800 respondents identified as Maronite, 178,100 identified as Sunni, and 155,035 identified as Shia, thus making the Maronites the dominant religious population. The totality of the Christian population constituted around 51% of the total population, by incorporating Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Protestants, and other smaller religious sects.⁷⁸ With the creation of the state, the rights of immigrants to vote was revoked, and a parliament of 55 seats was established, 30 allocated to Christians and 25 allocated to Muslims.⁷⁹ This 6:5 ratio of parliamentary seats would become the most hotly contested issue in the civil war to come. The unwritten National Pact of 1943 was then agreed to by a handshake

⁷⁸ Rania Maktabi. *The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese?*, (Oxford, Taylor and Francis, 1999), 222.

⁷⁹ Adam Zagorin. "A House Divided." *Foreign Policy* 48 (1982): 113.

between Christian and Muslim politicians, with France's ultimate authority. The pact called for a Maronite President, a Sunni Prime Minister, and a Shia Speaker of Parliament.⁸⁰ On November 8, 1943, the Chamber of Deputies passed many acts formally undoing the verbiage of France's sole authority, changed the official language back to simply Arabic, and adopted the modern-day Lebanese flag design. Thus, Lebanon was an independent state, engaging in a complex power-sharing regime structure. Tensions after the establishment of the state were present, but not in stark prevalence. A firm commitment to the state with its newfound independence was assumed,⁸¹ despite Syriac nationalism on the rise in the eastern and southern regions. As Israel declared its independence in 1948, the population of Palestinians migrating to Lebanon was visibly tipping the scale of religious composition in the country to favor Muslim interests. Tensions steadily rose until the mid 1970s, when the Palestinians were expelled from Jordan and set up in Lebanon. This led to the formation of many militias actively trying to expel, or sustain, the PLO.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid.,

⁸¹ Florian Bieber. "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon: Historical Lessons of Two Multireligious States." *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Apr 2000): 279.

⁸² Ibid.,

CHAPTER SIX

MILITIAS AND DISARMEMENT

The formation of the Lebanese Forces came as a result of the unity of many different Christian militia factions,⁸³ two of which being Tanzim and the Kataeb. Fighting among the many factions was common until Bachir Gemayel united the Maronite militias into one paramilitary group later on in the war.⁸⁴ Marada was also a member of the Lebanese Forces until it defected and allied closely with Syria. The Kataeb, notably, were focused on fighting the PLO, which was the sole impetus for its creation - the CIA stated that the ultimate goal of the Kataeb was "...to maintain an independent Lebanon under Maronite hegemony and thus ensure that Lebanon will never be dominated by Muslims or absorbed into the Arab world."⁸⁵ As militia member 1 states: "When we joined, we were worried about the power the [Maronite] Christians would lose if we did not act. Our influence would vanish if more and more mostly Muslim Palestinians would come across the border. It would have tipped the political scale." Critically, the Kataeb were dedicated to a Lebanese state.⁸⁶ They were also the most powerful militia at the time, well organized with around 40,000 members. While its relationship with Israel is not disputed, Israel's interest in eliminating the PLO is in line with the interests of the Kataeb, but for simply different reasons. Seeking international support for a domestic cause, the Kataeb

83 Marie-Christine Aulas. "The Socio-Ideological Development of the Maronite Community. The Emergence of the Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (1985): 2-5.

84 Ibid.,

85 Central Intelligence Agency. "Directorate of Intelligence - Lebanon: The Lebanese Forces Militia." (Nov 1982).

86 Frank Stoake. "The Supervigilantes: The Lebanese Kataeb Party as a Builder, Surrogate and Defender of the State." *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 3 (Oct 1975): 222-223.

focused on the Christian/Muslim divide, discussing the incompatibility of “Muslims, who are consciously allowed to live only in an Islamic state ruled by Muslim law...with Christians as second-class citizens.”⁸⁷ This demonstrates that the support from regional states does not theoretically imply a larger commitment to external rivalries and tending to the interests of a regional patron. Israel and the Kataeb had a common enemy, but for drastically different reasons. The Kataeb were simply dedicated to the domestic sphere and were clearly acting in commitment to a status quo of maintaining Christian hegemony and representation in the Lebanese power-sharing structure.

Alongside them, the eager and disciplined forces of al-Tanzim proved themselves to be of utmost importance to war efforts. Their skillfulness in war was extremely well-regarded, and they were an incredibly strong militia, with 14,000 organized and trained members.⁸⁸ They also advocated for the elimination of the PLO in the same way that the Kataeb as well as Israel wanted, bolstering an extremely efficacious relationship. Militia member 1 states, “They were so well trained. [The] first gun us hillbillies had access to was a revolver from Venezuela that a Tanzim guy convinced the Maronite Patriarch to bring back on a flight inside of a food processor box.” Unlike the Kataeb who had always relied on a singular figurehead for power, al-Tanzim was very dedicated to creating a council for decision making within the militia - the first of its kind seen in any Lebanese militia. This was intended to provide power to the largest number of people.⁸⁹ Al-Tanzim was made up of mostly Maronite and few Greek Orthodox fighters; it demonstrates

87 Oren Barak. “Intra-Communal and Inter-Communal Dimensions of Conflict and Peace in Lebanon.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (Nov, 2002), 623.

88 Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 42.

89 Add tomorrow

clearly that while the Christian groups fought for mostly Maronite hegemony, Maronite Christians had to seek alliances with other Christian groups to advance their interest of eliminating the PLO, the main disruptor of the status quo.⁹⁰ Al-Tanzim's singular purpose was to eliminate the PLO, and at times was frustrated with working with the Kataeb due to a perception that they were not "doing enough."⁹¹ Their creation, splintered from the Kataeb, was due to their desire to see active military exercises of the Lebanese in their militia to "counter the Palestinian threat," while they perceived their Kataeb counterparts to be dragging their feet.⁹² After reluctantly accepting weapons from whomever they could, including Syria, al-Tanzim along with all other operating Christian militias determined after the Tal-al-Zaatar siege (1976) that organizing together under one large militia would be the most effective method to achieve their goals of maintaining Christian hegemony and by extension a commitment to a Lebanese state.⁹³

Unlike the other Christian militias I examine, Marada is a distinct case, and it is included to highlight that religious affiliation is not a confounding variable in the choice of whether or not to voluntarily disarm. A band of security guards for former president Suleiman Frangieh, Marada's militia branch, also known as the Zgharta Liberation Army, is in this manner distinct in its ideological stance and ultimate goals from the other Christian groups. While at first allied with other Christian militias, Marada's funding eventually became solely provided by Syria in a transactional relationship.⁹⁴ In

⁹⁰ Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 40-42.

⁹¹ Siklawi Rami. "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 4 (2010): 607.

⁹² Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 42.

⁹³ Ibid., 57.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 176.

Frangieh's attempts to secure the Zgharta fiefdom, where he was from and personally connected to, he felt that the only way to see his local community secured during the unsteady nature of the civil war was to engage in a transactional relationship with Syria, particularly after critiquing the activity between other Christian militias, made particularly pertinent after Christian forces killed his son, Tony Frangieh, and his family.⁹⁵ This made him particularly weary about a future Lebanese state, and he had incentive to believe that his community could stand to benefit from regional intervention in the long term as a result.⁹⁶ Marada's relationship with Syria was noted officially in the record after Tony Frangieh's assassination, and is demonstrated clearly when Rifaat Assad and Abdel-Halim Khaddam, the Syrian Special Forces commander and Syrian Foreign Minister respectively, apologized and, "offered official condolences on behalf of Syria and President Assad to Suleiman Frangieh." Syrian troops then advanced into Northern Lebanon, cornering the Christian militia stronghold, and exacting revenge on behalf of Frangieh. Syrian troops entered into villages in the north of the Bekaa Valley and dragged "thirty-six Lebanese citizens, twelve of whom were Kataeb members, out of their beds 'for questioning.' The very next day, villagers found the horrifically mutilated and mangled bodies of the arrested young men with their hands tied behind their backs in the nearby bush of Wadi al-Rayyan."⁹⁷ In remarking on the tragedy, a speech by former president Camille Chamoun stated, "that those who carried out the operation are neither

⁹⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁹⁶ Ibid.,

⁹⁷ Ibid., 63.

Lebanese nor civil.”⁹⁸ It is precisely such support and revenge from Syria exacted on behalf of Marada that demonstrates an action of clear support from a regional influence towards a militia. In return, Marada was loyal to Syria and acted within pro-Syrian interests throughout the duration of the war in the name of Tony Frangieh. Marada had been promised larger influence in the country post-Taif by being allied with Syria; Syria’s occupation of Lebanon post-Taif served as the most powerful evidence to Marada that the right decision to abandon their Christian compatriots was made. With the heavy Syrian influence on the Taif Accords, their arms were maintained well beyond the end of the peace treaty. While they visibly did agree to DDR terms, they were able to do so knowing that their patron was holding the reins.⁹⁹ The Kataeb and Tanzim, on the other hand, quickly agreed to a Taif settlement and engaged wholly in the DDR process. While their willingness to voluntarily disarm stemmed from many reasons, including the infighting between the groups demonstrated above and the ultimate goal of seeing a Maronite Christian president of the state was maintained, Marada’s personal reasoning for maintaining regional patron support in spite of their other Christian militias was due to its newfound “privileged relations with Syria,” seeking to undermine the Lebanese state and subvert the status quo in favor of a Syrian controlled state.¹⁰⁰

Amal was the preeminent Shia Muslim militia in the civil war landscape. Its original function was serving in a political role to advocate for the poor, predominantly

⁹⁸ Ibid.,

⁹⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 122-123.

Shia, communities in Lebanon that were not receiving adequate social services.¹⁰¹ This comes as a direct result of their lack of inclusion into the discussions of the national pact¹⁰² during state creation. Additionally, any desires historically of trying to unify Shia communities in solidarity were systematically crippled due to the geographic distance between major Shia strongholds.¹⁰³ With support from Syria, Amal fought in the civil war against the PLO and against Hezbollah, an organization that grew after defectors from Amal were dissatisfied with leader Nabih Berri's influence and refusal to back the PLO, all while advocating for broader Shia respect and representation.¹⁰⁴ Amal's process of disarmament was unique. When it agreed to the terms of the Taif Accords, Amal was able to maintain its arms through some Hezbollah support in private. Amal is considered to have voluntarily disarmed when over half of its former militiamen willingly joined the Lebanese Army in the year after Taif was negotiated.¹⁰⁵ They ultimately completed the DDR process willingly due to their desire to reintegrate into the army and dedicate themselves to the state structure, a dedication founded from their interests to advocate for the Shia population. Their goal was to provide for the downtrodden of Lebanon, and therefore demonstrate dedication to the state and domestic affairs over regional

101 Rami Siklawi. "The Dynamics of The Amal Movement in Lebanon 1975-90." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2012): 4-6.

102 France's mandatory influence in state creation of Lebanon purposefully pushed various Christian sects to bind together while advocating for subdivide between Muslim populations in an attempt to aid their own interests. As a result, Muslim communities, especially those with Shia Muslim beliefs, were excluded deliberately in the power-sharing structure from well before the civil war era.

103 Siklawi, "The Dynamics of The Amal Movement...", 4-6.

104 Melani Cammett and Sukriti Issar. "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon." *World Politics* 62, no. 3 (2010): 401.

105 Rami Siklawi. "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 4 (2010): 15.

rivalries.¹⁰⁶ Militia member 2 stated, “...they were really conflicted. It took them a year or so of going back and forth and trying to determine if they wanted to take the [jobs with the army]. They did what was best for them when they all joined the military, but Hezbollah held their weapons, almost as a show of Shia solidarity. That solidarity really went far for them.” It was the Amal Movement’s ability to advocate for the representation of Shia interests by willingly disarming and joining the military that indicates their actions were committed to a Lebanese state, despite Syrian military support demonstrated in the same fashion as Israeli support for the Christians.

The Mourabitoun were a part of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), and were a Nasserist and Pan-Arabist militia group, predominantly composed of Sunni and some Shia Muslims; however, its ideology was to maintain a secular Lebanese state, and by extension, a secular Middle East. Members adhered strictly to the wisdom of Gamal Abdel Nasser, but were not committed to the Egyptian state, as it sought to see Lebanon be a strong part of the Arab world, rather than affiliating with the West. Their commitment to the state is best seen in their vehement opposition to former president Camille Chamoun, an advocate of maintaining the Christian political hegemony in Lebanon.¹⁰⁷ The goal of the Mourabitoun was to bring secularism to Lebanon, and they did so by advocating a pan-Arab ideological secularism.¹⁰⁸ Their commitment to the Lebanese state was more substantial than their commitment to Egyptian thought or other Arab states, evidenced by their appearance to the Taif Accords and engaging in the DDR

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁷ Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 54.

¹⁰⁸ Faten Ghosn and Amal Khoury. “Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace?” *Middle East Journal* 65, no. 3 (2011): 387.

process willingly. Additionally, they militarily engaged Kataeb forces most notably in 1976 and partitioned East and West Beirut to indicate their dissatisfaction with religious intervention in the war and to bolster their ideals that secularism, not religious zeal, was to be the most effective way to resolve tensions and administer the state after tensions cooled.¹⁰⁹ Their most significant victory at Taif is the phrasing that now rests in the Lebanese constitution, “Lebanon is an Arab country, both by kinship, and identity.”¹¹⁰ This state identity that was so key to their mission clearly demonstrates their commitment to a Lebanese state, and additionally a Lebanese government, and is ultimately why they chose to voluntarily disarm.

Hezbollah’s existence as an organization in Lebanon is as a result of an offshoot of the Amal movement, which members of Hezbollah deemed as too secular. Militia member 2 claims,

“Hezbollah was able to apply a religious zeal that Amal was lacking. Amal was committed to a Lebanese state, but Hezbollah’s success came from its desire to undermine the state. It was able to use the Shia people’s desperation and poverty and commit them to their ideology disguised as strict adherence to faith. The Christians did that too, I felt the same commitment to Christianity, not as a faith, but as a commitment to a Lebanon ruled by those who believed as I did. Psychology plays a role in this, and Hezbollah used that psychology to pull supporters from Amal. It was revolutionary, in the same way that Khomeini was a revolutionary in Iran.”

¹⁰⁹ Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 54.

¹¹⁰ Nader Moumneh. *The Lebanese Forces: Emergence and Transformation of the Christian Resistance*. (Hamilton Books, Maryland, 2019): 167

Such statements further demonstrate the desire for undermining the status quo, seeking to achieve broader international interests, or at the least willingly assist in helping the Iranian state achieve their own. Additionally, the reasoning for the breakaway from Amal serves as direct support to their regional interests: a direct result of Ayatollah Khomeini's desire to see Shia Muslims fighting Israel at the southern Lebanese border and placing a militia in the role of a para-state to act beyond the borders of Lebanon itself.¹¹¹ The dedication of Hezbollah to serve as an Iranian puppet militia firstly, and Shia secondly,¹¹² only serves to reinforce the theory at the center of this research: that their unwillingness to disarm is linked to involvement in regional rivalries between Iran and Israel. It is as a result that during the Taif Accords, Hezbollah was not even considered a "militia," but rather, a group of freedom fighters, or, "Pro-Khomeini street mobs."¹¹³ This categorization was purposeful: it masked Hezbollah's intentions as a militia with international intentions, and Iran's influence in the Taif negotiations¹¹⁴ ensured that their role was not even considered committed to either a domestic Lebanese state or a regional power, and its categorization as simply a group of armed bandits, with some publicly vague association to Iran allowed it to remain armed. It was Iran's influence that secured such a status for Hezbollah, demonstrating yet another method of support that foreign patron states provide militias in their transactional relationship. At the time, Hezbollah's strength was, "limited to what guns Syria let Iran pass over the border," recalls militia

111 Dingle, "Hezbollah's Rise and Decline...", 76.

112 Ibid.,

113 Central Intelligence Agency. "Directory of Iranian Officials." (2011)

114 Augustus Richard Norton. "Lebanon after Ta'if: Is the Civil War Over?" *Middle East Journal* 45, no. 3 (1991): 469.

member 1, further highlighting the notion that it is not simply an issue of bargaining capabilities, but rather intention that determined Hezbollah's global perception when it was party to the Taif negotiations. Hezbollah chose not to disarm, the only militia to do so in a visible manner.¹¹⁵ Most importantly, it was exempt from having to disarm at Taif categorically, however, it was due to its patronage from Iran that allowed it to supersede disarmament, and not its military capacity or exploitation of the fractured domestic system.

The Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), while considered secular, is composed of an almost entirely Druze membership. Their paramilitary wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was known to rival the Christian militias actively and was considered their counterpart in terms of sheer strength. Their involvement with the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) bonded the PSP to Syria. Much like Marada, the PSP voluntarily disarmed and entertained the DDR process, however, its commitment to the negotiations was limited to just that: entertaining the notion while secretly pursuing its interests with regional support.¹¹⁶ PSP's relationship with Syria allowed it to maintain these weapons covertly, and receive constant support from Syria considering their role in the peace process, and while these weapons were maintained in private, it was an open secret that they were maintained in the very same fashion as Marada. Syria's influence and capacity to secure the PSP's arms in such a commitment to Syrian interests demonstrates further that foreign entanglement allowed them to usurp disarmament, and choose to not

¹¹⁵ Brent J. Talbot and Heidi Harriman. "Disarming Hezbollah." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2008): 51.

¹¹⁶ Moumneh, *The Lebanese Forces*, 67.

voluntarily disarm while maintaining the image of having simply done so as a part of agreeing to Taif negotiations.¹¹⁷

Table 1.1. Matrix of Militias, Religious Affiliation, Foreign Support and Disarmament

Militia	Religious Composition/Affiliation	Foreign Support	Regional Relationships	Disarm?
Amal	Shia Muslim	Yes	Syria	Yes
Hezbollah	Shia Muslim	Yes	Iran	No
Kataeb	Maronite Christian	Yes	/	Yes
Marada	Maronite Christian	Yes	Syria	No
Mourabitoun	Sunni Muslim/Secular	No	/	Yes
Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)	Druze/Secular	Yes	Syria	No
al-Tanzim	Maronite Christian	Yes	/	Yes

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

It is evident that some militias who clearly voluntarily disarmed had support from international actors, however it is important to restate that there were intentions by certain militias to usurp the domestic regime of the state, as well as intentions in acting upon interests of militias to see a maintained power-sharing Lebanese government and, more broadly, a preservation of the Lebanese state. Within the complex network of a civil war such as Lebanon's with other violent non-state actors and legitimate state supported army groups, international support was readily given to almost all groups, but as I have proven, it is the *intentions* of the militias that delineated voluntary disarmament or choosing to maintain arms and not simply the support given that determines disarmament in such fashion. The Kataeb and Tanzim were fighting against an enemy clearly demonstrated to have been seen as a perceived risk in the change of the domestic status quo, irrespective of the Israeli and Western support both militias received. Furthermore, Amal's commitment to the state apparatus despite its generalized support from Syria is what caused it to ultimately voluntarily disarm; its commitment to the Lebanese state was simply stronger and deemed more useful to achieve its interests. As a result, the domestic status quo was perceived to be the most effective way to advocate for the Shia population underserved by the government and to achieve their interests within the structure of the state.

All militias clearly managed to acquire weapons or had them provided by an international actor. It remains consistent, however, that the intention behind the use of such weapons in fulfilling militia interests is what led to the voluntary or involuntary

disarmament among Lebanese militias. While some militias that voluntarily disarmed were provided weapons by regional and in some cases non-regional actors, it was still the interests of militias that determined disarmament, even if provided weapons by a foreign state. Simply providing weapons is not enough to assume a transactional relationship with a patron state or a particular interest in the subversion of the domestic structure. Nevertheless, in the case for the militias who did voluntarily disarm and had weapons provided by external states, the intention was determined to be in maintaining the state system and its accompanying status quo.

When considering the power-sharing structure of Lebanon, ethnoreligious conflict was of course present, however, religion was not determined to be a confounding variable in the militias who did and did not voluntarily disarm. Militias found to voluntarily disarm were not exclusive to one ethnoreligious group, with both Muslim and Christian groups found to have done so. Religion was not determined to be a variable of note in examining a militia's choice of voluntary disarmament. Eliminating its potential confounding nature to the discussion adds credence to the theory that it is not the makeup of the militia, nor the religious conflict between such groups in a power-sharing system that determined voluntary disarmament, confirming that indeed it is the manner in which states approach their interests in commitment to domestic state structure or broader regional interests and subverting the state itself that determines whether militias chose to voluntarily disarm.

If we expected that a militia had interests most closely associated with the domestic political sphere according to this theory, we should have observed that these

groups chose to disarm. Mourabitoun, Amal, Tanzim, and Kataeb voluntarily disarmed in the formal DDR process. Since we observe that the Mourabitoun, Amal, Tanzim, and Kataeb did voluntarily disarm during the Taif Accords, therefore, the theory is confirmed. If we expected that a militia had interests in line with regional rivalries and disputes outside the boundaries of the given state, then we should have observed that Hezbollah, Marada and the PSP choose not to disarm. Marada and the PSP diplomatically stated they disarmed, but, in fact, chose not to do so, while Hezbollah chose not to disarm entirely. Since we observe that these militias did not disarm, therefore, the theory is confirmed.

In opposition to Theory 1, the right-wing Maronite Christian Kataeb were dedicated to disarming, and, as has been mentioned, chose to voluntarily disarm, despite being the most powerful singular militia. If we expected a militia to be strong enough to overcome the bargaining issue within a peace settlement, then we would expect them to choose not to disarm. We observe that the Kataeb were by far the most capable of overcoming the bargaining issue because of their strength, but we observe that they chose to disarm anyway. Therefore, rival **Theory 1** is disconfirmed.

If we expected a fractured domestic system of government, then we should see a militia actively involved in regional rivalries to use the domestic structure of a country to maintain their arms. We observe that Hezbollah, Marada and the PSP were involved in regional rivalries and maintained their guns, but did not use the fractured political system to maintain their arms, and rather relied on external state influences to maintain their stronghold. Therefore, rival **Theory 2** is disconfirmed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

This study examined the conditions under which militias choose to disarm, and posited that under the conditions of a militia being more dedicated to the realm of domestic politics rather than wrapped up in regional rivalries and external conflict, we should expect to see such militias choose to disarm. Since it is observed that the Mourabitoun, Amal, Tanzim, and Kataeb did choose to disarm during formal negotiation processes to end the war, whereas Hezbollah, Marada and the PSP did not, this theory is proven correct. Additionally, while some militias publically disarmed while maintaining a meager stockpile of arms, they ultimately chose to disarm to receive the benefits inherent to a commitment to the state that would be gained by accepting the terms of the Taif accords, such as Amal.

Limitations of this study can be found in the sample selection of militias. While many militias existed in different iterations of the war, and while alliances came and went, additional investigation of other larger militia alliances such as the Lebanese Forces could glean more insight on the topics explored. Inclusion of other smaller militias could also enhance the discussion, as there were as many as nineteen different militias operating throughout the civil war years in various iterations. Additionally, The Army of Free Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces were key militant groups in the civil war, and while they were not militias in the same manner as the others discussed, notably due to their officially state-sanctioned practice, the politics that underpinned their actions was similar to that of the other militias discussed in the study. The PLO was also an enormous

influence in the proceedings of the war, but was excluded from study as it operated as a pseudo-state within Lebanon with its own external motivations beyond the state itself and no singular commitment to the state at any capacity. Future areas of research could be hypothetically focused on the arrangement of militias and the agreements and defections of alliances within the civil war.

It is also possible that other confounding variables may be missing from this analysis. While these variables were selected to optimize the understanding of civil war militia disarmament, there can be many ways that voluntary disarmament is defined. While there is a plethora of circumstantial evidence in many articles written during the civil war of militia disarmament, the only way to understand voluntary disarmament in concrete terms of engagement is within the DDR process. If a militia's ultimate goal was to enjoy the benefits of the reintegration aspects of DDR, it can be understood as voluntary since terms of reintegration and involvement in the domestic political landscape are directly linked. In using a method of difference, this comparative approach allowed narrative case study discussion to be incorporated into the disarmament literature. This approach can be applied to the understanding of disarmament in civil wars, and would be less asymmetrical than assuming that the failure of disarmament is due to a lack of a particular cause that led to the success of disarmament later in time. In order to do this, it is necessary to examine militias in coordinated timelines. The implications for the willingness to disarm voluntarily can prove effective in creating more advantageous disarmament strategy and influencing policy choices in the future. Further study is, however, still necessary.

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