

Abstract

A small number of scholars and political leaders have praised the economic and social benefits of 'non-militarisation' – the policy of possessing no national armed forces. While 26 states currently practice this policy, the security implications of non-militarisation have, until now, largely escaped critical assessment. However, it is this very question of security in the absence of a military which is perhaps the decisive issue for any state considering non-militarisation. Barbey's (2015b) study suggests that, since World War II, non-militarised states have been immune to interstate war. However, since World War II, intrastate war has proven to be both the more frequent and destructive form of warfare. Using a mixed-methods approach this dissertation seeks to quantify and explain the causal effect of non-militarisation on intrastate conflict. It begins by testing the hypothesis that non-militarised states suffer less years of intrastate war than states with a military, using cross-sectional logit analysis on all country-years between 1989-2008. It consistently finds a sizable negative relationship, suggesting that in a given year the probability of intrastate war occurring in a non-militarised state is 5.26%, compared to 17.02% in a states which do possess a military, however the majority of models fail to reach statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Next, a comparative case study of the demilitarisation processes carried out in Panama in 1990 and Haiti in 1995 is undertaken. It finds four mechanisms by which non-militarisation reduced the probability of intrastate war in Panama. These were: reducing the feasibility of intrastate war by diminishing war-making capital; removing the necessary conditions for praetorianism within the security services; reducing the acceptance of military violence as a legitimate response to internal threats within the security services, political elite and wider populace; and, through reallocating military expenditure to social and economic development projects. Conversely, Haiti failed to harness these causal mechanisms through a combination of poor disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of its armed forces, and economic collapse, making it the only instance of a non-militarised state to experience intrastate war during the period of study. The dissertation concludes that although demilitarisation is a potentially violent process, non-militarised states are no more prone to intrastate conflict than their militarised counterparts. It finds that, at best, the presence of a military is ineffectual at protecting a state from internal violence, and that first-order assumptions about the ongoing necessity and utility of a military, grounded in realist theory, need to be reassessed.