Civil-Military Relations and militarisation of humanitarian aid and disaster response: rethinking old and emerging patterns

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Introduction

The utilisation of armed forces for providing humanitarian aid and responding to civil emergency situations—caused by natural or anthropogenic disasters such as wildfires, floods, epidemics or nuclear accidents, among other phenomena—has become a structural first-response state resource (Kamradt-Scott et al., 2015; Simm, 2019; Kalman, 2019; Erickson et al., 2022; Acacio, et al., 2023), encompassing both democratic and authoritarian regimes (Caforio & Kümmel, 2005). The militarisation of humanitarian aid and disaster response (HADR, hereinafter) is part of a worldwide militarisation dynamic in the 21st century (Bayer et al., 2023), in which global crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic have led to the identification of lessons advocating for the definitive contribution of armed forces in these roles (Rod & Miron, 2023).

The study of these militarisation processes has been analysed from multiple analytical and theoretical perspectives: affected policy areas, political dimensions, or roles, and tasks of the military, among other typologies (Thee, 1977; Naidu, 1985; Adelman, 2003; Schofield, 2007; Kuehn and Levy, 2020; Manchanda, 2022; Bayer et al., 2023; Hochmüller et al., 2024). One possible theoretical lens is their examination through civil-military relations (CMR, hereinafter). From the *huntingtonian* perspective of the ideal of a military solely devoted to the management of external violence (Huntington, 1957), the performance of the military instrument in roles related to HADR can be framed within the so-called "improper missions". That is to say, the extension of military roles in functions of public security, border control, infrastructure construction, provision of public services, or surveillance of correctional facilities; their performance in missions within the country that do not strictly respond to national

defence needs and deviate from the classical functions of deterrence and defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity (Martínez, 2022a).

The redefinition of military missions corresponds to a broader reconfiguration of the concept of CMR following the end of the Cold War (Moskos et al., 2000). We observe that this transformation —which has been never definitively closed— has been accompanied by various policy issues debates: firstly, the sectoral scope of redefining roles within the framework of CMR; secondly, a pragmatic perspective of security policies seeking to utilise the "hammer" that is the armed forces; equally, profound changes in the assessment and composition of risks and threats affecting national security without substantially adapting the actors involved; and lastly, the securitisation dynamics observed since the 1990s.

All these discursive frameworks have, consciously or unconsciously, contributed to increasing/normalising militarisation. Thus, the military monitor the New York subway amidst a wave of violence, patrol in Paris following jihadist attacks, participate in bolstering public security in Italy, collect garbage in the city of Montevideo, oversee maritime routes vulnerable to drug trafficking in Spain, build public infrastructure in Colombia, fight tropical diseases in Guatemala, and generally take on a leading role in response to disasters and natural calamities in many countries. From our perspective, the issue regarding civil-military relations arises when the consistent allocation of responsibilities extends beyond the military's defence mandate or tasks limited to a specific timeframe (Desch, 1999; Shemella, 2006). When the missions are outside the scope of the roles, it may be a case of a force of last resort; when this is systematic, we are facing militarization. At the moment that exceptional becomes habitual, abnormal militarisation occurs.

Each militarisation dynamic is characterised by its own circumstances that explain it —such as the history of each country, social and political perceptions, previous policies, etc. In turn, CMR are affected in a feedback process, in matters such as perception of military image or prestige, generation of doctrine, or creation of hybrid structures. Despite the academic and policy-oriented relevance of this reality, insufficient research has been observed regarding the causes and implications of the growing domestic role of armies (Kalkman, 2019), or general reflections on the proliferation of singular case studies (Martínez, 2020; 2022b; Wilén & Strömbon, 2022). Following an inductive strategy, after reviewing academic literature on armed forces in civil emergences and new roles, we have identified four possible specific

causes of the militarisation of HADR, which draw from the aforementioned debates: (i) militarism; (ii) discursive militarisation; (iii) wildcard administration; and (iv) reverse *khakiwashing*.

Therefore, this chapter aims to develop this theoretical effort by conceptualising these four causes of the militarisation of civil emergencies, which we understand to stem from old and new patterns of militarisation in HADR. It is structured as follows: firstly, before explaining these four debates that frame the terrain for militarisation, it delves deeper into the relationship between CMR and military roles. Next, it elucidates the four explanatory causes of specific militarisation situations, providing examples from around the world. It finalizes with some conclusions that also anticipate future lines of research.

2. The roles of the armed forces as core element of CMR

For many years, civil-military relations (CMR) have been understood as the mechanisms through which to establish and maintain control or direction over the military (Feaver, 1999). It was premised on the idea that "military institutions are inherently undemocratic because they are hierarchically organized" (Desch, 1999: 5). Consequently, studies of CMR share the notion that "civilian control of the military is a necessary condition for democratic governance" (Kuehn, 2008: 871). This potential threat of the military to political power and society would be weakened, according to Duverger (1955), through: (i) conscription, to prevent the isolation of the military establishment; and (ii) fostering among military personnel a sense of obedience to the State. Hence, the identification of CMR with -objective or subjective- civil control (Huntington, 1957).

However, CMR go beyond this principle, as they allow for the explanation of the position and functions that the armed forces develop within the political system and their potential areas of autonomy. Therefore, even though civilian control is a central concern of CMR, it is erroneous to solely identify CMR with civilian control (Pion-Berlin & Martínez, 2017). As Feaver argued: "the change in civil-military relations is: to be able to reconcile a military strong enough to do what citizens demand of it with a military subordinate enough to do only what citizens authorise it to do" (1996: 149).

Levy (2012) demonstrated that the subordination of the military arises from the combination of two exchange relationships that must maintain internal balance: what

citizens receive in exchange for the sacrifice of the military, and military subordination in exchange for resources to fulfil their functions. The literature, under various labels, has distinguished four models of CMR as strategies of 'coexistence' (Luckham, 1971; Bebler, 1990; Mares, 1998; Fuentes, 2000; Trinkunas, 2000; Smith, 2005): a) dominance of the military in the relationship; b) civilian dominance; c) collaboration between both; d) division of competencies between civilians and military.

Drawing from this theoretical evolution, Huntington (1995), in his analysis of the future challenges facing the field of CMR, advocated the need to (re)think the missions of the armed forces, i.e., the roles to be performed in service to society. An issue that Dandeker (2000) already integrated into two dimensions: (1) the interaction of the armed forces with their society, marking areas of convergence or divergence and tensions between them; and (2) the interaction of the armed forces with governments, where control of coercive force, determination of missions, and levels of professional autonomy are decided. Regarding these new roles, two of the questions posed by Owens (2017 [2010]) as key in contemporary debates on CMR are essential: "what is the appropriate role of the military?", and "how effective is the military instrument?".[1]

3. Discursive frameworks

a) The extent of mission (roles) redefinition.

Determining the natural roles of the Armed Forces should be straightforward, given that they are born with a clear purpose: to defend and deter. However, the debate about redefining their activity broke with that tradition of Prussian functions and expanded the spectrum of their roles. Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux (2000) developed a taxonomy around two variables: scope and location (Figure 1).

[1] The other three questions Owens (2017 [2010]) considers are: "Who controls the military?"; "What degree of military influence is appropriate for a given society?"; "Who serves in the military?".

Figure 1. *Missions and Operations. Scope and Location.*

	Scope of Mission/Operation	
	Restrictive	**Expansive**
External	National defense, international peacekeeping	Humanitarian relief abroad, electoral supervision
Location of Mission/Operation	Border development, security	Drug interdiction, migration control
Internal	Counterinsurgency, arms manufacturing	Crime control, anti-subversion, civic action, disaster relief

Source: Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux (2000: 418).

In their view, the core missions of the Armed Forces would be the restrictive-external, and growth towards the extensive-external could be accepted; however, they noted that the internal missions, in both scopes, were expanding, which did not overly concern them as long as the military remained as decision-takers. Problems arose if they assumed the role of decision-makers. Pion-Berlin (2004), in addition to missions of external security such as peacekeeping operations (PKO), border surveillance, and combating arms and human trafficking, expanded this framework by understanding that potential areas of military intervention in the internal location included security, development -civic action, natural disasters, environment, poverty alleviation-, and governance. Internal security missions, especially in Latin America, continued to grow, integrating counter-narcotics operations, public security -combating common and organized crime-, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, public order, and stability of public spaces (Pion-Berlin et al., 2010).

On the other hand, Dandeker (2020), when analysing the redefinition of missions abroad, warned that the Armed Forces must undertake three roles: guaranteeing the protection and security of the territory, even in the absence of threats; securing against external threats to the State and its allies; and contributing to broader security interests such as peacekeeping and international stability. This ultimately places us in four types of missions currently performed by the Armed Forces: defence, internal security, natural disasters, and social programs (Pion-Berlin, 2016).

In summary, the redefinition initially aimed to expand external security missions from restrictive to expansive; however, other missions began to emerge, including development, internal security, and disaster assistance, leading to the emergence of multitask armed forces, which represents a growth in militarization. There has been a resurgence of militarization since the beginning of the 21st century, even in countries like most European ones, where the military faced a crisis of public opinion, discredit, lack of acceptance, or legitimacy. Part of this recovery is attributed to new humanitarian missions, emergency responses, etc. (Kernic, 2023).

All administrations have the constant need to modernize, and often, to reinvent themselves; after all, the two greatest fears of any bureaucracy are falling into obsolescence or sterility, what Martinez (2020) has identified with the metaphors of the lamplighter or the elevator operator. The problem is that with this drive for modernization, two myths are activated that do not withstand empirical falsification. The myths of efficacy —the military can do everything and do it all well— and of efficiency —any function attributed to the military will be economically impeccable, more profitable to the treasury—. This, according to Martinez(2022a), can lead us to roles, also metaphorical, of veterinarians —professional intrusion; military acting as firefighters, police officers, etc—, and scarecrows —so many improper missions outdated them in terms of equipment and training for the true role they should occupy, defence—.

b) The pragmatic perspective.

There is a pragmatic perspective that, acknowledging the shift in security environments and the absence of conventional conflicts, advocates for armed forces to undertake missions other than traditional ones. “Where the military is supposed to deploy, it is not needed. Where it is needed, it is not supposed to deploy” (Pion-Berlin, 2016: 18). Indeed, in extraordinary and extremely serious situations of natural or anthropogenic origin, such as earthquakes, floods, epidemics, or fires, the state is authorised to utilize any available resources —public or private— to address the crisis. When the state's means to resolve the situation are overwhelmed, inadequate, or non-existent, it is also legitimate to utilise, in an auxiliary or supplementary capacity, another state resource

that may not be competent in that issue but can cooperate with a certain degree of effectiveness.

When we talk about auxiliary it implies two senses: used if there is a problem with the main and giving help or support. Indeed, one specific possibility is the use of the military, where the armed forces are called upon due to their logistical capabilities or territorial distribution throughout the country, among other factors. But anything that exceeds the auxiliary role (supplying and supporting) is inappropriate because it exceeds what 'auxiliary' implies.

Some of the arguments used in favour of this expansion of the military role (Janowitz, 1960; Benitez Manaut, 2005; Pion-Berlin, 2016) can be summarised by the idea that armed forces must serve dual purposes, being valuable in both wartime and peacetime scenarios. It's a notion that defence missions alone are a luxury of affluent nations. They are summoned in times of dire urgency, either by societal demand or when the state lacks the capacity to manage certain crises effectively. Societal discontent often points to inefficiencies, corruption, and complicity within the police force, suggesting that they may exacerbate problems rather than solve them, hinting at potential alternatives. Despite criticisms, armed forces are believed to uphold human rights and possess robust organizational and logistical capabilities. Their inherent ethos of loyalty, hierarchy, and obedience facilitates their adaptability and unconventional usage. Moreover, armed forces exhibit versatility, able to undertake various tasks beyond combat, showcasing their resilience and adaptability to adverse circumstances. Their size and distribution enable them to address issues at a local level, confront larger organizations, and swiftly respond to national crises, even in non-war scenarios.

On the contrary, other authors have expressed their concerns about the military expansive role inside the nation (Desch, 1996; Goodman, 1996; Serra, 2002; Alda Mejías, 2012; Jaskoski, 2012; Müller, 2013; Solmirano, 2016; Pion-Berlin & Martínez 2017): the reform and modernization of armed forces should prioritize specialization in military matters, particularly external military aggression, rather than social, economic, or police issues. Neglecting essential functions leads to rejection within the military ranks. However, armed forces may accept non-traditional missions if they offer benefits such as maintaining size, increased budgets, or political influence. Nonetheless, if temporary solutions become permanent fixtures, it can pose challenges to democratic governance. Engaging in missions beyond their traditional scope risks securitizing social agendas and militarizing security. Such actions also encroach upon the

responsibilities of other institutions, leading to potential dysfunction. Historical instances, like military dictatorships in Latin America, illustrate the dangers of internal military missions on civil-military relations. Moreover, political clientelism remains a significant factor in some hybrid regimes in Latin America and Asia, extending into areas such as public security provision and policing, thus the expansion of military missions may exacerbate these dynamics.

c) Changes in national security threats.

Security is structured around an unquestionable triad: hostile agent —threat—; asset to protect —material or immaterial—; coverage —modes and means to respond—. The transformation of the international political system and societies have meant both that the assets and rights to be protected are also different and that, finally, the tools -coverage- traditionally used to provide security —armies— are no longer as effective or are no longer valid. National security governance systems have identified multiple threats, where there is a clear expansion of the issues thus identified. Table 1, which displays the analysis of national security strategies —or analogous political-strategic documents— of Western countries and organizations, reflects how, in addition to the threats traditionally contemplated —security and defence-related—, others are increasingly occupying a larger space on security agendas, as well as new emerging threats.

However, these profound changes have not necessarily been accompanied by a transformation of the actors, but by the accommodation of traditional tools such as the armed forces. Therefore, debates about how to respond to this new landscape have not confronted institutional inertia, but have understood that the armed forces —by virtue of their logistics, organization, or deployment, among other reasons— can be a mechanism for first response or even structural response to many of them. Many of these missions can be understood in terms of threats linked to climate change, energy security, migration flows, non-belligerent threats from third parties, etc. (Table 1). Of course, humanitarian aid and response to civil emergencies have been expressly included among these new tasks.

TABLE 1. *Types of threats defined in security strategies in Western Europe, UN, NATO, and EU.*

Threats	EU 2003	UN 2004	DE 2006	NL 2007	EU 2008	DE 2008	UK 2008	FR 2008	UK 2010	NATO 2010	DE 2011	ES 2011	NL 2013	FR 2013	ES 2013	UK 2015	IT 2015	EU 2016	DE 2016	ES 2017	FR 2017	NL 2019	UK 2021	ES 2021
Climate change		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Pandemics and epidemics		X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X		X			X	X	X		X	X
Inter-state conflicts	X	X	X					X	X		X	X	X		X				X	X				
WMD	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X
Transnational organized crime	X	X	X		X		X	X	X			X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Internal conflicts		X																						
Terrorism and radicalization	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cyberattacks			X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Failed states	X						X				X			X					X					
Energy security			X	X	X	X					X	X			X		X		X	X	X			X
Border vulnerability				X				X						X			X	X		X	X			X
Hybrid threats																	X	X				X		X
Non-military third-party threats							X	X							X			X						
Migration						X					X	X			X		X		X	X	X	X		X
Disasters and emergencies							X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			X				X
Espionage								X												X				X
Critical infrastructures								X						X			X			X		X	X	X
Economic/financial instability			X														X			X			X	X

Permanent Growing Emerging

Source: Martínez (2022c).

d) Securitization and HADR.

The idea of securitization entails the construction of certain issues or objects as "security threats" (Buzan et al., 1998). Securitization theory emphasizes the role of language, rhetoric, and discourse in framing security threats, rather than focusing solely on objective conditions or material capabilities. Essentially, securitization involves portraying a particular issue or object as an existential threat to a referent object, such as the state or society, thereby justifying extraordinary measures or policies to address it.

In the context of HADR, securitization dynamics involve the narrative that certain natural events or civil emergencies pose an existential threat requiring a militarized response, or that the armed forces constitute one of the best tools available for addressing these crises. Current securitization dynamics reshaping HADR agendas have implications for processes of militarization (Brzoska, 2009; Giovanello & Spray, 2012; Frenkel, 2019; Conteh-Morgan, 2019; Pereira Covarrubias & Raju, 2020). If, additionally, social and development agendas become securitized within the political system, not only will issues unrelated to security—such as poverty, misery, illiteracy, etc.—become securitized problems, but the already prevalent militarization of security may potentially extend to economic and social issues.

4. Four causes of the militarisation of HADR

All this conceptual and policy puzzle —discussions about role redefinition, changes in threats, securitisation processes of the social agenda, multitask army— serves as enablers of an increasing militarisation. In this sense, we define militarisation not as the existence of a political military power, but rather as the normalisation of the use of the military for the development of services that are alien to military roles. Here, we limit the concept of militarisation to “adopting and applying the central elements of the military model to an organisation or particular situation” (Kraska, 2007: 503). Furthermore, we assume that militarisation is not dichotomous, but that different degrees of militarisation can occur in different sectors (Bayer et al., 2023).

When we refer to the militarisation of HADR, we specifically refer to the use of the armed forces to mitigate its direct effects —humanitarian aid, search and rescue, salvage, infrastructure support, etc.— or to alleviate or address its second-order effects

—provision of healthcare, education, or social services, construction of public infrastructure, etc.— either by deploying regular units from different branches of the armed forces to these tasks or by developing specific military capabilities. The latter implies, strictly in military terms, the existence of specialised human resources and organisations, the establishment of infrastructure, the development of doctrine, teaching, and specific training on these operations, and the provision of materials. Some authors add to this dynamic of militarisation a cultural dimension as well, in terms of the adoption of certain symbols, language, etc. (Kraska, 2007).

Nevertheless, from various critical perspectives, the concept of militarisation has been criticised: Critics argue that it implies an unrealistic starting point where military/militarisation is not present until reaching a final state where institutions or policies have been militarized.; the persistence and permeation of the military in our societies make such an eventual development misleading, they affirm. Hence, they propose the term 'martial politics' (Howell, 2018; Leander, 2022; Bilgin, 2023). In response to this argument, we maintain that the focus of this chapter is to analyse the functions within the polity, the political system, and CMR, and from there, specific public policies and different ways and means of militarisation, without delving into ontological questions.

Therefore, to examine the role of the State in civil emergencies, the concept of militarisation serves as a rigorous organising notion that helps us to think more clearly about the appropriate role of the military. Through these analytical lenses and premises, we have inductively identified four specific causes of militarisation of disaster response, which are reflected in the situations outlined in Table 2. However, we recognize that these causes could go beyond the framework of HADR to also explain the militarisation of other sectors and improper missions.

Table 2. *Causes of militarisation of HADR and subsequent situations.*

Causes	Situation
Militarism	Political-military dominance—as a veto player—decisively influences decision-making processes regarding HADR
Discursive militarisation	Armed forces non-defensive in tasks, linked to the extension of the use of force; in the case of HADR, primarily the militarisation of policing and law enforcement
Wildcard administration	Missions that call upon their logistical and operational muscle (territorial deployment, mobility, transportation)
Reverse *khakiwashing*	Strengthening their auxiliary profile and reducing their military component, demilitarising military activity to enhance their social acceptance

Source: Own elaboration.

a) Militarism.

One initial explanation is that the militarisation of HADR occurs because the political system is characterised by militarism. Militarism advocates for the use of armed forces as the primary solution to problems, prioritising military power, hardware, organization, operations, and technology (Kraska, 2007: 503). In current systems, militarism, as military political power, does not exist in a pure shape, but it can appear in derived forms, such as praetorianism —it refers to abusive political intervention by the military, a military that remains in power by force or threat where no one has called them (Perlmutter, 1969, 1977; Haro Ayerve, 2015)—, corporatism —linked to secondary (military academies) (Abrahamsson, 1972) or primary (family) (Martínez, 2007) socialisation—, or that of the "moderator role" (Stepan, 1971), where the military is not at the forefront of political power, but nothing is done without their acquiescence.

So, in this sense, the militarisation of HADR is not the prelude to political-military power, but the consequence. It is an example of how militarism and the production of security are co-constitutive (Mabee & Vucetic, 2018). Diamint (2022: 36) highlights the detrimental impact of this kind of military empowerment, which leads to moments of militarism where the military exerts significant influence over political decision-making, normalising its involvement in state affairs. It does not even imply that the armed forces automatically assume this role because they may not even consider such risks or threats, but it is a mechanism that is activated whenever a civil emergency unfolds. The entire development of national security doctrine in Latin America was a clear example of this, where the armed forces were involved in HADR tasks —as was the case in Guatemala or El Salvador.

Similarly, this predominance of the military in government and politics in general may correspond to a society that desires it, which wants strong and powerful armed forces both to defend itself and to govern the country and address citizens' problems. It is favoured by a society that also prioritises a problem-solving instrument over democratic issues. For example, in the case of Latin America, it is evident how, on average, around a third of the population in each country is in favour of or has nothing against authoritarian solutions as long as they perceive that their problems are being solved (Latinobarómetro).

Estas situaciones se ven representadas en casos de militarismo en amplias regiones como Middle East o Asia, donde los regímenes autoritarios, militaristas o pretorianos en sus casos, asumen las funciones de HADR como parte de sus everyday occupations (Visweswaran, 2013; Abrahamsen, 2018). Algunos estudios han señalado que procesos de respuesta militar a HADR, tanto en regímenes democráticos como autoritarios, han exacerbated pre-existing conditions and problems in the democratic governance of the security sector (Croissant et al., 2023). En el caso particular de América Latina, envuelta en un proceso general de militarismo (Diamint, 2015), no se observa una relación directa entre la preocupación por el cambio climático y su militarización ex profeso (Santos et al., 2023). Si bien, casos como el de Venezuela (Jácome, 2011) o Guatemala (Bueno & Martínez, forthcoming) sí serían indicativos del militarismo como driver de militarización del HADR.

b) Discursive militarisation.

Kuehn and Levy (2020) distinguish between 'material militarisation' and 'discursive militarisation'. With the former, which they measure through *coups d'état*, they refer to military influence on the formation and dissolution of governments, and the relative weight of military resources in society. Indeed, “large segments of the literature seem to equate civilian control with the presence of a civilian supreme commander and the absence of overt military intervention” (Kuehn, 2008: 871), although “the absence of coups is not sufficient for civilian control” (Croissant et al., 2010: 954). So, in that sense Kuehn and Levy’s concept seems to be a term close to the classical notion of militarism.

In contrast, discursive militarisation develops a narrative that legitimises and justifies the use of armed forces in areas of security that are not traditionally within the military's domain. In this case, militarisation involves the intense and extensive

involvement of the military, at the government's behest, in tasks that are not strictly their responsibility but for which they are legitimised. This militarisation ultimately results in the armed forces becoming the preferred tool for addressing all kinds of security threats. Therefore, there is a connection between these processes and cases where there is a strong debate about the securitisation of certain issues.

Militarisation is thus an incremental process of legitimising and justifying the use of the armed forces. It is not merely a matter of armies taking on an increasing number of roles and missions, but rather of acknowledging that this security tool —and its procedures— is the most appropriate among those available to the state for addressing certain problems. There are no objections to its —at times indiscriminate— use by political authorities, nor is there any significant protest from the public. Both political authorities and society believe that its employment is right and beneficial. This aligns with studies that highlight the prestige and trust placed in the military.

Chile provides an example of this, where the response to civil emergencies in the last decade has been accompanied by the deployment of the armed forces and the carabineros in public order tasks, primarily; this effort was framed within a process aimed at improving the image and legitimising the activities of these institutions (Figueroa, 2022). Nonetheless, there are also cases where they are linked to civil emergencies more closely related to security, as is the case in Italy (Mazziotti di Celso, 2024).

c) Wildcard administration.

In a scenario of poor governance and weak state structures, the presence of a significant military structure that is neither modernised nor resized, nor engaged in any defensive activities, means that it is used as a wildcard tool of the government for a wide range of very different activities. These are not missions that call for shortcuts to 'order', but rather large-scale activities by volume, by space, or by difficulty of accessibility. In short, military personnel who are not considered a defence administration, as this is not the type of mission that will be required of them in the majority of cases, but rather those whose use of force is reduced and whose value is placed on elements such as their size, adaptability, versatility, hierarchy, discipline, availability, rapid reaction, and territorial deployment; they are therefore treated by governments not so much as an

armed institution, but as a 'wildcard administration', a term coined by Jenne and Martínez (2022).

Table 3. *Position of the armed forces in Latin America in the face of HADR and environmental protection.*

Mission \ Country	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Colombia	Chile	Cuba	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	Nicara-gua	Paraguay	Peru	Dominican Republic	Uruguay	Venezuela
Legal cover																	
Catastrophes and disasters																	
Operational Reality																	
Specific military unit	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Armed forces' role	supplementary	main	supplementary	main	supplementary	main	supplementary	main	main	main	main	main	supplementary	supplementary	main	supplementary	supplementary
Environmental protection																	
Fishing																	
Forests																	
Mining																	
Hydrocarbon																	
Hydrological sources																	

Constitutional provisions

Provisions established by law

Provisions in policy documents

Source: Martínez & Bueno (2023).

The problem in this case is that there is a perverse effect. According to Jenne and Martínez (2022: 74-77), the military is not solely responsible for the lack of civil capacity throughout Latin America, but it has indeed been an obstacle, among other factors, to developing states capable of providing basic services. Furthermore, feeding into this dynamic, the same weakness of the state has created favourable conditions for internal military deployment. The vast majority of Latin America reflects this type of scenario, where the weakness of the state is compensated by the overwhelming work of the armed forces, which are also involved in HADR. Table 3 illustrates this dynamic.

d) Reverse khakiwashing.

We observe another phenomenon that relates both to the comprehension of threats and to the perception of the armed forces themselves: on one hand, conventional threats for which armies were originally established are perceived to have become less relevant. On the other hand, the social rejection of the military institution is mitigated by redefining and diversifying the roles of the armed forces through assigning them activities unrelated to their traditional defensive role but with significant social impact, as is indeed the case with civil emergencies. This builds a scenario where militarisation occurs without the presence of a militaristic political system or a weak state structure, yet there is also no specific legitimisation of the military vis-à-vis other state administrations —such as firefighters, health services, etc.

In this case, the militarisation of certain sectors, such as HADR, occurs due to the loss or intention to diminish the "military nature" of the armed forces themselves —a paradox that nonetheless illustrates these dynamics beyond straightforward explanations. These are armies expected to rely less on the use of force in the multitude of tasks they are assigned. This constitutes a uniqueness that is not captured by concepts such as the idea of desecuritization (Wæver, 1995) or those of demilitarisation (Møller & Cawthra, 2019). We cannot speak of demilitarisation because we are not discussing dynamics that imply the withdrawal of the armed forces from certain areas, they traditionally controlled. Nor can we speak of desecuritization because it would entail reclassifying issues and problems that could and should have been resolved in other ways, but which were, at the time, securitised, into non-securitised matters. Instead, it refers to a process of reducing the military component of the armed forces, where the military is prepared not for combat but for other types of missions, where classic

military platforms are replaced by civilian materials, as it is understood that the former are not necessary and may even represent a superfluous expense.

If emergencies benefited from the prestige of having the military take charge of them, we could, paraphrasing the phenomena of 'pinkwashing' (Blackmer, 2019) or 'green washing' (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020), speak of *khakiwashing*. If emergencies benefited from the prestige of the military taking charge, we could, paraphrasing the phenomena of ‘pinkwashing’ (Blackmer, 2019) or ‘green washing’ (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020), speak of *khakiwashing*. But here it is not the military who help others to clean up their image, but rather they themselves who clean up their image by accessing activities that enjoy enormous social prestige, hence the idea of reverse. In addition to helping them project a more friendly image, as we have noted, there is also an ambition to erode their warlike nature.

We identify this phenomenon in the case of the Spanish Emergency Military Unit, a military unit devoted to HADR (Bueno & Martínez, 2023). A specific military capability was created within the Spanish Ministry of Defence in 2005 and now it is an integral part of the Spanish civil protection system. As a result, the military component of a portion of the Spanish armed forces has been reduced, but at the same time, these functions have been militarized. The need to improve the image of the Spanish armed forces by reducing their military component, as well as the understanding that conventional armies were a relic of the past, are at the origin of this unit.

Conclusions

The militarisation of HADR is a global phenomenon, observed across a spectrum of political systems from authoritarian regimes to democracies. The involvement of armed forces in these non-traditional roles marks a significant shift in the conceptualisation of CMR since the 1990s, necessitating a thorough examination of the debates and underlying causes driving this militarisation. involves multifaceted dynamics.

We outline four crucial debates fundamental to justifying the military's involvement in HADR, framing their participation as necessary and appropriate: the sectoral scope of these new missions, pragmatic policy alternatives, the recognition of emerging threats to national security, and the dynamics of securitisation. Moreover, employing an inductive strategy, we identify four specific causes that may induce

processes of militarisation, closely linked to CMR: militarism, discursive militarisation, wildcard administration, and reverse *khakiwashing*.

Thus, the presence of the military as a key actor in a political system, whether through praetorianism, corporatism, or assuming a moderating role, may predispose towards militarising any area, including civil emergencies. It is not that militarisation leads to militarism, but rather that the latter is a necessary condition. In a world experiencing authoritarian regression, this can become a fundamental factor in processes of militarisation. Discursive militarisation marks a distinct process from material militarism and highlights the specific legitimisation processes of the military: narratives are constructed to justify the use of armed forces in non-military domains, portraying them as indispensable actors in addressing civil emergencies.

Furthermore, wildcard administration arises where weak governance structures and a lack of civilian capacity exist. The armed forces, with their logistical capabilities and territorial reach, are utilised as a wildcard tool by governments to address a wide range of challenges, irrespective of their traditional mandate. Lastly, reverse *khakiwashing* reflects a paradoxical situation where efforts are made to de-emphasise the military nature of the armed forces while expanding their role in HADR. While the armed forces are tasked with non-combat roles such as disaster response, there may be simultaneous attempts to reduce their traditional defence capabilities. This signals a very specific process of reducing the military component of the armed forces and thus militarising other areas traditionally under civilian purview, such as emergencies.

Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers and scholars to navigate the evolving role of armed forces in addressing contemporary security challenges, while also considering their implications for defence institutions and society as a whole from the perspective of CMR. This theoretical framework would benefit from further theoretical and case-study-oriented exploration. Additionally, we observe that these causes of militarisation may extend beyond the framework of HADR to also explain the militarisation of other sectors and inappropriate missions, such as law enforcement or public security. Regarding the causes of discursive militarism and reverse *khakiwashing*, at least in the case of Europe, the question for further research that arises is whether now, with the re-emergence of conventional conflicts—primarily with Russia, but not exclusively—the armed forces should return to their strict mission. Our tentative hypothesis would be that they should not, as the other frameworks

continue to exert influence, and the four aforementioned discursive frameworks remain equally relevant.

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