

New forms of militarization: socialization by the military

Novas formas de militarização: socialização pelos militares

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INITIAL POINTS

Latin America’s authoritarian past persists. The traditional coups d’état that devastated the countries of the region in the 20th century have given way to other forms of militarization. The armed forces now appear as allies of the governments in power, summoned by the elected presidents. The military no longer carries out coups d’état. Military marches do not precede radio or television programs. They do not come to power through military autonomy guarded by a few civilian allies. They do not impose martial laws. Now the military is called upon politicians to secure their governments and push back civil demonstrations in order to prevent them from getting out of hand (Pion-Berlin and Martínez 2017; Mares 2013; Pérez-Liñán and John Polga-Hecimovich 2018).

Officers in the majority of the countries are dedicated to police tasks, propagating a direct link with society. The doctrines of the use of force have not been modified. There is talk of cooperative defense, of a comprehensive defense system, or citizen deterrence at a rhetorical level, without any of these concepts being translated into an explicit operational action (Diamint 2021). Democratic civilian control of the armed forces, a guiding principle in transitions to democracy, has been side-lined. During the twentieth century, the military ruled countries, eliminating their democratic institutions, and developing a strong repressive hold over society. Now, we witness, sometimes with horror, how men in uniform have assumed a renewed social presence. “The behaviour of political and mili-

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tary leaders and their respective interactions with society deserve more attention in civil-military relations scholarship” (Harig, Jenne, and Ruffa 2022, 477).

This paper seeks to expose a different phenomenon present in the region, to which I refer as the ‘socialization by the military’. Military socialization was previously defined as the values and practices assumed by the military. The ideas of obedience, hierarchy, order, uniformity, conservative values, and realism, were turned towards the society that from the military perspective was misguided (Gusterson and Besteman 2019; Jenne and Martínez 2021). “The armed forces no longer claim a direct hold on power but to a greater or lesser extent still ‘expect and seek to act’ in different areas of the state” (Jenne and Martínez 2021, 2). As a social institution, with a particular function that is forbidden to all the other members of society – the authorization to kill- the military had a special socialization process.

As a part of the process of building a direct relation with society, Latin American armed forces open places to women in operational tasks. The inclusion of gender issues is a way to show a democratic culture and to become closer to female citizens.

The aim of this paper is to examine a different aspect. The analysis suggests that the links between the military and society are different from the notion of militarism, which assumes the transmission of military ethics and values (from the former to the latter) (Lutz 2004; Mabee and Vucetic 2018; Stavrianakis and Stern 2018; Tickner 2022). “The term militarism has sometimes been used synonymously with the term militarization. Initially much narrower in scope than the latter, however, identifying a society’s emphasis on martial values” (Lutz 2004, 321–2). At present, clear process of militarization is occurring as the institution of the armed forces has assumed diverse functions, including safeguarding the civilian population in non-defense-related matters. The idea of socialization by the military in this context describes the relationship that is emerging between society and the armed forces when they are in charge of tasks that correspond to the state’s different jurisdictions. They perform as social workers instead of soldiers. The guiding hypothesis of this paper is that this kind of socialization by the military results from the weakness of civil-military relations, the feebleness of Latin-American public policies, and the manipulation of political legitimacy.

The first part of this text focuses on the concepts related to military socialization. Later, it argues that their tasks as social workers were broadened during the COVID-19 pandemic. The military once again became the saviour of the country, providing medical solutions and feeding poor populations. The following section deals with incorporating women into

the military career, which is present in most Latin American countries, as a false sign of the democratization of the armed forces. The article concludes with some reflections regarding the consequences that this social presence of uniformed officers has on democratic consolidation. What is and is not military socialization

The scholarly tradition on the subject, used to be oriented toward analyzing the problems and opportunities that arise for those who join a military institution. A hierarchical and patterned organization affects young people who join a military career. The socialization tactics predict newcomer adjustment to a disciplinary ambience.

The field of sociology has been pervasive, encompassing a large number of subdisciplines. One of which is military sociology. In this case, the literature does not discuss the primary socialization of the early years of an individual, nor the different groups with which a person engages during their life. The literature on military socialization suggests that a set of attitudes is imparted to professional soldiers that is appropriate to a military organization and differs from that of civilian citizens.

Moritz Janowitz (1960) was the traditional reference for military sociology. He highlighted a study about the military's role in modern society, and he developed that the professional soldier must develop professional skills. Janowitz believes that the more integrated the armed forces are with society, the better the latter will be at exercising its control by mobilizing its civil power. Moreover, Janowitz illustrates that the military is not a monolithic group. Furthermore, Janowitz details how the increasing role of technology in warfare affects military ethics. There is a fundamental difference between Huntington and Janowitz. Janowitz does not recognize political impartiality as a necessary characteristic of the military profession. Contrarily, Huntington suggests a theory of civil-military relations described by the variables of military professionalism and the military's participation in the political process (Huntington 1985). For Samuel Huntington, neutrality in politics is acquired through objective control, that is to say, the optimal means of asserting control over the armed forces is to professionalize them. Huntington trusts the political insight of the military leaders. Civilians and the military belong to distinct arenas of expertise. As for Janowitz, he was interested in identifying the socio-economic, political and cultural factors that the military shared with other sectors of the society to which they belonged (Travis 2017). He believed that the military organized and applied violence in tightly controlled and limited circumstances and retained close links with the society that they protected. This distinction is fully explained in Feaver's work: "[Janowitz's] findings on the changes in military career tracks, on the challenges faced by

military families, and on the nuances of military professionalism are of great sociological import” (Feaver 1996, 157).

Moskos and Burk (1994) observe that “the dominant change in military force structure is away from the mass armed force model, based on conscription, towards a smaller, voluntary, professional force” (1994, 149). Nevertheless, soldiers are still incorporated into the military organization and inscribed with specific cultural values, including loyalty, integrity, courage, determination, and commitment to duty. These are the fundamental arguments regarding military sociology.

Much of the literature of military sociology is related to what happens with the military when an individual comes to a hierarchical institution, with values and practices distant from civilian life. It registers attitudes and motivation for combat. Only a few articles interpret soldiers’ behaviour as the need to protect citizens from different forms of aggression. It is a profession that requires a unique expertise, a well-planned career, long-term training, and provides a fixed retirement. It also deals with the legal application of lethal violence.

Shield points out that “the ‘military and society’ field of study incorporates the spaces where society and military interact and influence each other” (Shields 2020, 2). Her analysis refers to civil-military relations, public opinion, and the armed forces. With reference to the last point, she notes that “the literature also asks questions about how the military is portrayed by popular culture, particularly by movies, television shows, videos, and music” (Shields 2020, 7). This text points out a different characteristic of military sociology.

Regarding to civil-military relations, Pion-Berlin and Dudley (2020, 2) allege that it is expected that the military “become political actors, undermining the system they are intended to protect.” They also argue:

The central dilemma facing all governments is how to maximize their political power over the military so that it serves the government’s interests while allowing the military to perform well, professionalize, and conduct the missions assigned to it. (Pion-Berlin and Dudley 2020, 10).

These authors address political control over the armed forces, rather than the relationship of the armed forces with citizens. Even when they describe military-society relations, their arguments rounded the gap between the values of the military and of society. They are interested in explaining how the military deals with politicians’ incentives or how it extracts policy concessions from elected officials (Pion-Berlin and Dudley 2020, 6).

According to Bardiès (2017), “limiting the sociology of military issues to the sociology of armies is to run the risk of forgetting that the military institution only has meaning, as a particular institution, because it is a political instrument” (2017, 3). This is a compelling point that supports my argument. Although the author develops a traditional vision of military sociology and a concern for war, she also incorporates the political action of said institution.

The elites shape state policy and repeatedly use the military to advance their support for the government and assure their stability. The relation between power and military participation in the new scenarios shows a commitment to the values and practices of the governments and not necessarily the principles of the armed institutions (Battaglini 2013; Diamint 2015).

Recently in Latin America, the military has been performing different security, humanitarian, and economic activities. The re-militarisation of Latin American politics and society is thus not a result of the military’s initiative but rather a consequence of democratically elected civilian governments which ‘pull’ soldiers into a variety of tasks (Harig, Jenne, and Ruffa 2022, 465). They can occupy the place of the police, rescue citizens from natural disasters, or supplant medical practitioners vaccinating the population. In concordance with this view, I won’t be focusing on the internal sociological culture of military institutions. Instead, the idea of socialization by the military is centers its attention on the relation between the officers and society in matters of daily life. Regarding the military’s assumption of the role of health workers, there are some coincidences concerning the effects of these decisions: the military is reinstated as the saviour of the nation (Harig, Jenne, and Ruffa 2022; Solar 2020; Kalkman 2020; Barany 2012; Jaskoski 2013).

In effect, there are interesting articles announcing the tendency towards ‘securitization’, referring to the militarization of policy responses by governments, and naturalizing the military involvement in social, political and economic problems (Smith 2000; Wæver 1995, 2911; McDonald 2008). In part, these approaches include how securitization affects society, as security can only be known in terms of the intersubjective social processes. These authors reflect European concerns. Looking at Latin America, the state-centric realist conception of security, does not invoke community. Due to the process of including the military in domestic insecurity, or a pandemic, the governments of the region allow the armed forces to develop a close relation with society. For the new generations that have not suffered military dictatorships, their presence in the streets means care, protection, tranquility. The process of creating a positive pub-

lic disposition towards the military, and towards militaristic ideas and ideals, is taken as a success of the military involvement with society. These relationships are not mediated by defense ministries. They are autonomous actions of the armed forces that reinstate the idea of the inefficiency of politicians and the superiority of military institutions.

The role of political leaders designating uniformed people to solve social problems is the way to connect the military with different populations. Society, forgetful of the political and historical context in which the armed forces acted in the past, acclaimed the orders and activities organized by the military (Evans 2017). “A militarised society – one in which most people have consciously or unconsciously adopted an ethos of militarism – also generates assumptions about how to engage with those people who are not part of that society” (Shepherd 2018, 210). With the purpose of persuading the audience that there is a need for order, they spread martial values and regain the esteem of the society that distrusted them on account of the dictatorships. Thereby, they recover their own self-esteem as superb saviors of the country. At the same time, a perceived threat for democracy is presented socially and politically, without taking into consideration the collateral effects of empowering the relation between the military and society.

The region has security challenges, such as gang violence and drug trafficking. Elected civilian governments turned to the military, despite the dangers of empowering the armed forces with internally-focused duties. The missions assigned to the military were broadened and as a consequence they gained significant political influence. Recent articles are appealing to this disfunctional focus. A better relation with society is not the same of as democratic military behavior (Kyle and Reiter 2019; Verdes-Montenegro Escanez 2021; Harig 2021; Corrales 2019).

In the following section, I will discuss some cases in Latin America that will illustrate the diverse aspects of the increasing influence of the armed forces on social life and how this causes society to slowly transform into an accepting partner of this military authority.

NEW SOCIALIZATION BY THE MILITARY

Since the concept first appeared at the end of the Cold War, crisis management has acquired legitimacy in society. The European Union does not consider it a problem to engage the military to take care of disease control. It understands that the military’s role was to assist the civilian management of COVID-19. Similarly, due to the pandemic, in all Latin American countries, the armed forces were engaged in protecting the soci-

ety from health problems. Contrastingly to the European Union, in Latin America, this engagement with civilians empowers the military and simultaneously deteriorates politicians because the region does not have strong institutions. Ultimately, the combination of citizen compliance and the rise of militarism can lead to a break with democracy. Martínez (2022, 1) alerts of the functional immobility of the armed forces in Europe, as they are not able to anticipate, or at least adjust to new realities. The changes exceed them. Martínez adds that a military that undertakes functions outside of their natural missions, some limits cannot be crossed, nor can they substitute other social groups capable of exercising them. In spite of this, several European writings remark that “wide range of tasks both within and outside of the state, with a significant variation in the use and level of violence. Faced with a swiftly changing security context, the military has thus proved to be a highly versatile organisation” (Wilén and Strömbom 2021, 2). These authors, as well as Harig, Jenne and Ruffa (2022), Cottley (2007), and Khorram-Manesh et al. (2022) consider that the use of the military to provide domestic security by patrolling airports and train stations to counter terrorism; combatting illegal immigration; and by providing assistance during natural disasters and pandemics do not weaken civilian democratic control. Notwithstanding, in most European countries, extreme care is taken therefore the armed forces do not develop social programs. “This military support is not threatening the civilmilitary balance, as other state institutions are capable of maintaining their authority in respective domains” (Wilén and Strömbom 2021, 13).

Given the UN suggestion, the Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) instale a dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies, to help humanitarian actors develop context-specific guidance. UN published several documents to guide the coordination in Asia and Africa. It suggest coordination in planning asking to share the same strategic overview; share information to validate plans; and coordinate task allocation to avoid duplication. Considering that this kind of cooperation improve the security of the population, there are also authors who distrust that current civil-military coordination models have not helped achieve security and development goals (Olson and Gregorian 2007; Delmonteil 2017; Braga 2010). The analysis of relevant publications in military and security policy or social science over the last few years clearly shows that different perspectives prevail. They advert that the intervention of civilian relief organisations in conflict zones can make them vulnerable to threats. Also they believed that military forces can also be sceptical about this coordination, as it does not represent their core values.

By difference, in Latin America, this involvement with society allows the military to obtain privileges. The new democracies install their militaries in a range of operations that are not related to defense functions. Often this intervention in the community is accompanied by security discourses that legitimize the use of military force as social workers, and legal to civilian politics (Pion-Berlin and Martínez 2017). This internal participation in missions not related to defense, appears as a window of opportunity that armed forces can use to increase their influence. The problem that arises is the fact that esteem for the armed forces is increasing among the population, as it can be seen by the applauses that have taken place in several countries. The precariousness of political institutions and organizations largely discredited in public opinion, the all-out extension of violence, crime and drug trafficking, as well as the rapid growth of migration are linked to this chain of deterioration of democracy, meaning the division of power, the respect for human rights and the preeminence of the law. This kind of militarization can be understood as the process through which military institutions and practices acquire significant influence over various aspects of the social, political and economic life of a society.

Although Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega lost power in the 1990 election, under his influence, the army began a process of depoliticization and became a non-partisan institution. After the democratic election of 2006 and the twenty years of Ortega's planned government, the armed forces became a central actor in presidential objectives. Ortega's years in power correspond to Levitsky and Way's (2010, 144–5) concept of a "competitive authoritarian regime" characterized by electoral fraud, judicial manipulation, and the intimidation of the opposition (Rhul 2019, 170). The Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) was formed in 1979 with the columns of guerrillas who participated in the insurrection that overthrew the Somocista dictatorship and his National Guard. "From the start, the institution claimed the "popular" origin of its members and its mission to defend the revolutionary political project" (Cuadra 2023). The Sovereign Security Law of 2015 granted the army power over all civilian governmental agencies during states of emergency. The White Book of the Pandemic (*Libro blanco* in the original Spanish, 2020) indicates that the Ministry of Health is formed by the Health System, the Nicaraguan Security Institute, the Army Medical Group, and the National Police Medical Service (47). The government has militarized the cities with permanent patrols by police, special forces and armed groups with paramilitary behaviour (Lissardy 2021). Under Ortega the military institution was oriented to community services, disaster prevention and humanitarian assistance, especially in health, gaining legitimacy before the population. The repressive tasks do

not point to ideological profiles but rather neutralize all those who oppose Ortega's rule. The military serve as their representatives to the population.

The Honduran armed forces have resumed their leading role in politics since 2009, when they participated in the execution of a coup d'état (Benítez and Diamint 2010). From that moment, they did not take over the government directly but acted as a source of support for three governments, thereby helping to weaken democracy (Argueta 2020). Public security was left in the hands of the military. And in order to gain the loyalty and support of the Honduran population, the military teaches the education program *Guardianes de la Patria* (Guardians of the Homeland) in all schools. The National Defense Secretary informs that said program is delivered by the military with the objective of imparting family values, Christian principles, healthy habits such as sports, respect, and abstinence from drugs. President Juan Orlando Hernández (2014-2022) proposed reactivating this program under the concept of taking the children to the battalions instead of the *mareros* taking them for their gangs. Several civil organizations have opposed the program because it violates the rights of children and adolescents in Honduras. "The government of Hernández Alvarado has used the audit boards as a mechanism to control union discontent and institutional precariousness, which has expanded military interference in public affairs" (Mejía 2021). The opposition to the government has criticized that the generals have become health managers, and military corruption in the purchase of medicines and supplies for the pandemic has been denounced. Mejía also quotes Leticia Salomón in his article:

The Armed Forces function as a company that sells services to the State with physical and human resources paid for by the State, and the government hires them as if they were a civil company. The collection includes transportation (gasoline, oil, depreciation), food for soldiers and officers, administrative and driving expenses, and others. (Mejía 2021).

But most of society has few resources to reject the extensive presence of the armed forces in public services. Another part of society, faced with police incompetence, resignedly accepts military dominance.

The Army enjoys a very high level of civilian support in Mexico, despite the human rights abuses and the forced disappearance of people committed by the forces. The militarization of public projects or the distribution of vaccines has turned the armed forces into the bureaucracy most loyal to the current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. This is reflected in López Obrador's speech: "The most important source of support that the government I lead has received is the one that the Secretary of Defence

and the Secretary of Navy has given me” (Agencia EFE 2021). President Lopez Obrador adopted the initiative commenced by the National Defense Secretary (Sedena), of observing a minute’s silence followed by a round of applause every day at noon to commemorate the victims of Covid-19 (Caso 2020). The Mexican military is increasing its presence in areas of the Federal Public Administration, such as ports, customs, the merchant marine, airports, or the construction of large infrastructure plants, in a process that establishes social control based on military values. At the same time, they provide jobs to society. López Obrador points out that it is not a militarization, but many indicate the arbitrariness of the uniformed men. The Mexican armed forces demonstrate that a coup d’état is not necessary for military institutions to exercise high power levels. Despite the fact that the intervention is carried out at the invitation of the president, the armed forces obtain benefits and autonomy to develop their institutional preferences. After the Mexican Revolution, the political system evolved into a civilian authoritarian hegemonic regime under the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI). From then onwards, the absence of civilian intervention in the internal matters of the military, such as promotions, discipline and assignments, helps to explain the military’s attitude towards politics. Weak federal police structures mean that both organized crime groups and the military are allowed to operate in a context of high levels of impunity. The use of the armed forces for policing and patrolling activities was not a planned program, but more a reaction to contain pockets of violence. Society lacks efficient resources to limit both the expansion of violence and of the armed forces. Through Plan DN-III and the Navy Plan for Covid-19, the Secretariats of National Defense (Sedena) and the Navy (Semar) were authorize to deploy the military throughout the country to help control the pandemic (Najar 2020).

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro branded as bioterrorists those who had tested positive for Covid-19. In 2021, Maduro commissioned the Bolivarian National Militia to design a particular biosafety plan to take care of the health of Venezuelans. The Venezuelan population is accustomed to a significant military presence in politics and the economy. The sectors related to the government see the military as the safeguard of their Bolivarian Revolution. However, the government has abused militarization, such as Operation Bolivarian Shield III Safe Health 2020, which was intended to develop a military operation to protect the population from COVID-19. This case does not merely reflect a population applauding the military. Rather, it represents the entire militarization of society. Jácome highlights the repressive nature of police and military actions to society:

The official isolation policy was applied in a repressive way, its implementation being in the hands of the military, militias, police and even paramilitary groups that forced citizens not to circulate, especially during the phases of ‘radical confinement’. It was a military perspective. (Jácome 2020, 9).

Due to their repressive actions, the Venezuelan armed forces are not acclaimed by all of the population. Still, under the Bolivarian governments, they have achieved an unusual social presence and extended their functions to areas of social activity.

The Brazilian armed forces have maintained an image of correctness and professionalism, which deteriorated during the government of former President Jair Bolsonaro: “it has also become clear in recent history that the military’s presumption of moral superiority is only a myth because the military is as human and corruptible as any other homo sapiens” (Fiori 2021, 4). Society saw in the military values of self-sacrifice, patriotism and efficiency, trusting that the military was less corruptible than a politician from the civilian sphere. The mismanagement of the military sector during the Bolsonaro government led the officers to distance themselves from government decisions. In this regard, Verdes-Montenegro and Ferreira Souza (2021) state that the “attempt by the military leadership to confront the actions of the government and preserve its image of moderating and efficient power was not successful” (2021, 12). However, the influence and leadership of the armed forces on the population remain high. The Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG), the Army’s leading think tank, has achieved broad political and geopolitical prestige among the political elites. Democratic civilian control of the armed forces was not shown to be a governance requirement, and society accepted that the Brazilian armed forces always behaved legally. Bolsonaro promoted that public schools be administered by the military forces, with agents in uniform in the corridors and courtyards of the schools, to mitigate the crisis in the educational system. The Civic-Military Schools were under the direction of a lieutenant colonel of the Brazilian army. Although President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has a historic opportunity to reassert civilian control over Brazil’s military, as he has named a civilian to the important post of Defense minister. There is still some concern regarding the lack of support among part of the military to the new government. The extensive presence of the military in political positions in this last government deepened the historical tendency to put the armed forces above the citizenry. As some academics explain, the military in Brazil operates as a political party (Alves Soares 2018; Adetunji, 2021).

During the pandemic in Argentina, the tasks for soldiers included preparing meals for vulnerable members of the civilian population. Serving food in soup kitchens, the uniformed men fed citizens who were marginalized by poverty and not by COVID-19. Many of these citizens, interviewed on television, thanked the soldiers. They were, once again, the saviours of the *Patria* (Fatherland). During the first years of democracy in the eighties, the military could not go out in uniform. The aberrations committed during the military dictatorship alerted society to the perverse nature of the institution. The evocation of the trials revealed the endless abuses against the citizenry. Thirty-nine years later, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Argentine society reacclaimed the military.

In Chile, female and male nurses were called combat nurses. The former Chilean Defense Minister, Alberto Espina, announced that 14,000 soldiers would help enforce the quarantine rules in the Santiago metropolitan region. In the Peruvian capital of Lima, residents from numerous districts -such as Miraflores, Surco and Barranco- formed a caravan of applause to commend the work of doctors, nurses, police and the military to safeguard public health. Until December 2020, the Bolivian government stated that they had 20,000 troops mobilized throughout the country to help combat the spread of Covid-19. Brazil reported that the Executive had arranged for 25,000 soldiers to intervene in the face of the pandemic, the same number assigned by former Minister Oswaldo Jarrín of Ecuador. In Mexico, President López Obrador indicated that 13 military units and 15 operational units would be converted into facilities to care for Covid-19 patients. The former Argentine Defense Minister, Agustín Rossi, arranged for 22,000 troops to be mobilized, which he described as the “most important deployment since the Falklands War.” There has been a large deployment of soldiers in the streets of Latin American cities. Citizens are thus accustomed to sharing public spaces with uniformed people. The unnatural becomes normal.

Colombia is a peculiar case. The history of violence and the active presence of guerrilla groups, that create bloody stability, were exacerbated over the presidency of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010). As a consequence, the conception of internal enemies still prevails in the armed forces. This scenario results the dismantling of the existing precarious democratic institutions, and the creation of mechanisms of coercion and persecution that became acceptable to public opinion. The popular uprisings in Colombia that started on 28 April 2021, fueled by the population’s discontent over economic measures and the probable privatization of health services, gave former President Iván Duque an excuse for violent repression. Demonstrators also identified their primary demands,

including “demilitarization” of their neighborhoods – meaning removal of police and military presence – and reparations and accountability for police violence. In the Colombian Defense and Security document form 2019, for example, dismantling organised crime is stated as an objective for both police and military forces, reflecting the blurred boundaries between the two. Despite this scenario, there were groups of citizens who supported the repression. Duque’s defense ministry noted that the members of the military are professional and patriotic, and citizens approve their demeanor. The government effort formally began on March 13, 2020. The Colombian Armed Forces organized a three-phase plan named “San Roque.” The Colombian Armed Forces deployed 29,000 people for the operation (Ignacius 2020). The covid-19 crisis has become a platform for the intensification of violence. Various human rights organizations stated that in Colombia, we have seen that the response to the pandemic has not only limited the exercise of democracy but has also restricted freedoms and has differentially affected populations that are already vulnerable (Colabora.lat 2021).

The direct relation between the armed forces and society is represented by the following European academics’ argument:

The military is increasingly trying to assert itself as the primary agency responsible for disaster response. However, this interest can also be critically evaluated, identifying less altruistic motives: support in crises improves their image. It offers training opportunities in the growing struggle for resources and relevance in decision-making. (Novo and Ponte e Sousa 2020, 116).

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) expresses its concern about the growing militarization of borders and restrictions on access to territories and protection procedures in Latin America (OAS 2021). This extended military presence, together with precarious and poorly institutionalized States, indicates a mismanagement of public policies and a high disagreement between national and provincial decisions. Public policies are inefficient, because many executive branch agencies are captured by militants loyal to the president, who are generally not trained to perform that role.

There are numerous works that focus on the increase in military presence during the pandemic (Acacio et al. 2023; Frenkel and Dasso-Martorell 2021; Diamint 2020; Calderón 2020; Isacson 2019; Kurtenbach and Scharpf 2018; Verdes-Montenegro 2019; Toledano 2020). All of these demonstrate the concern that the return of the military to the streets has generated in the region.

At the beginning of this paper, I claimed that Latin America's authoritarian past prevails despite the end of the traditional coups d'état which devastated the region throughout the 20th century. Several countries suffered long dictatorships under military rule. The doctrine of the Latin American armed forces has always focused on the concept that there is an external, neighboring enemy who is supposedly threatening state sovereignty. Nevertheless, while the narrative of the enemy was still in place during the Cold War, the armed forces turned against their own citizens instead of protecting them. This was accompanied by the imposition of military values, a clear allusion to militarism.

The concern generated by this return of the military to the daily life of its citizens is that the uniformed presence in the streets, hospitals, immigration agencies, soup kitchens, and train stations have become natural. There is only one step from there to a more intense presence in political decisions. The high military participation under the pandemic, was also a demonstration of the ineffectiveness of public policies. As Fuentes Saavedra (2019) indicated: The exceptional has become normal. The primary function of military institutions is denatured, because those who should fight fires are firefighters, those who should fight pests are health professionals, and those who should fight crime are the police.

The next section deals with the issue of gender in the armed forces. The perspective is oriented to show the capacity of the armed forces to assume new roles, which express the plurality of military socialization and its impact in society.

GENDER ISSUES IN THE MILITARY

Another topic that has received considerable attention from military sociologists is the role of women in the military (Badaró 2014; Bobea 2008; Lucero 2009; Iturralde 2015; Carreiras 2018). Around the world, there has been an increased demand for equity in the treatment of men and women in the workplace. Bobea (2008) has analysed this dynamic, explaining the incorporation of women in Latin America is evidenced by: "the invisibility of women's work and its difficulties in egalitarian incorporation into the labour market" (2008, 66). Feminist theories support the inclusion of women in the armed forces as a sign of equity (Dowler 2012). Since the 1960's, the role of gender changed in the military, modifying combat regulations and opening up new roles for women as part of the armed forces. Currently, the average female participation in the Armed Forces in Latin America barely reaches 5%. In some countries the percentage is much higher, as is the case of the Dominican Republic with 22%,

followed by Venezuela with 21%, And trailing in third place Uruguay with 19% (Lucero 2020). Some exclusions still exist, such as in submarines, infantry, and special forces.

Although there are still continuous debates about gender participation, the inclusion of women is generally taken for granted. The formation of professional armies in Latin America resorted to the traditional system of androcentric ordering based on the sexual division of roles and the exclusion of women from the public sphere. Currently, Latin Americans share the same concepts and challenges that appear in western countries. Starting in 2000, resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council managed to build the necessary framework for the gender issue to find a space on military agendas (Lucero 2020). I do not want to extend a discussion about women's integration into the military. I want to complement an aspect not fully considered by feminist fighters.

Most of the armed forces in Latin America have awful records in human rights. It was a concern to improve the image of the military in the eyes of society. One resource that the military chiefs found was incorporating women into the forces as a shortcut to present themselves as a democratic institution that adapts to current trends. This is a related conceptualisation to that of Carreiras (2018),

In many countries, the presence of women has catalyzed the convergence between the military and civilian spheres and has contributed to eroding the traditional isolation of the Armed Forces and, to a certain extent, democratizing military institutions. (2018, 131).

A traditional male culture hostile to women indeed persists in the Latin-American military. There is a praetorian order that surpasses military expansion. It is part of a patriarchal history where workplace harassment especially affects women. "The existence of invisible but effective barriers that allow women to reach positions or occupy positions only up to the middle levels of organizations" (Muratori 2021, 244; also Frederic and Calandrón, 2015). Although the insertion of women into the military sphere has grown gradually, it has been to a greater extent in professional bodies and in volunteering than in the command corps of the forces (Muratori 2021, 242). However, the fact that this gender disparity exists outside of Latin America indicates that the cultural remnants of the region's recent authoritarian past are not the only explanation. Masson, studying the tensions, difficulties or obstacles in the process of integrating women into the armed forces, demonstrates that gender identification takes a backseat in the exercise of their profession, and puts military identity in check as it was conceived in the Army (Masson 2020, 318–9).

Referring to situations of violence associated with harassment, against women within military institutions, we must acknowledge that almost two-thirds of women in the British Armed Forces have experienced bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination during their career (Townsend 2021). According to the American Civil Liberties Union, thousands of service members each year are estimated to have experienced some form of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment while actively serving the U.S. (Palmer 2022; Tritten 2022). As Tickner points out “in spite of the presence of some women in foreign and defense policy leadership positions, the term ‘woman’ is still antithetical to our stereotypical image of a ‘national security specialist’. War and national security are areas where it has been presumed that women have little important to say” (Tickner 2022, 44).

My argument does not dispute biological differences between men and women; if women are physically weaker than men; or if females are given the same opportunities as men to fulfil their civic duties; or — as Lucero (2009) explains: “if there is an institutional need to increase the number of troops within the armed corps, due to the decrease in the percentage of entry of male personnel (2009, 41)”. Female military integration is far from having materialized (Carreiras 2018, 134). There is an unseen subject that was disregarded by the gender literature: the hidden interest of chief officers to change the image of the armed forces in Latin America. As Jacqueline (1996, 321) showed, transitions from authoritarian military regimes to democratic politics coincided with the resurgence of feminist movements. The transitions to democracy functioned as political openings and revised the rules of the game. It was an opportunity to improve some democratic procedures inside the military institutions.

I have argued elsewhere (Diamint 2008) that the incorporation of women into the armed forces had the objective of showing an image of the flexibility of the military. In reality, it was about hiding a situation of tension with civil society. Now the opposite is true. The majority of society feels safer if the military is in charge of taking care of the population. The consequence is that this unfounded acceptance weakens the civilian democratic control of the armed forces. Numerous studies have established the historical prevalence of male dominance as consequence of their privileges, however most of the literature about gender in the armed forces highlights the segregation of women in operational activities.

Within military activities, the incorporation of women also has a socializing effect. Male soldiers naturalize sharing their tasks with the opposite gender. Military women show to the rest of society and their

own families the value of serving the country. Some suppose that women humanize the armed forces and the state's monopoly on violence. They have gone from dealing with tasks related to service, administration and communications, to being on the front line. Since Latin America currently finds itself in peacetime, the incorporation of women is more symbolic than effective. Heroism, selflessness, abnegation, temperance and other military values are familiarly spread, glorifying the virtue of the military. The professional, personal and community roles are integrated under the historical role of women. The words of a former colonel refer to a different aspect : "Today I don't know to what extent they incorporate it out of the conviction of achieving equality between the sexes or, exclusively, to have cannon fodder, with cheap labor" (Mansilla 2006). The issue presents edges of ambiguity. Military feminization seems more like a strategy aimed at demonstrating the will to change than a genuine attempt to leave behind gender differences and advance real processes of modernization and democratization (Bobeá 2008, 64).

Women are not the essence of democracy. It would be ridiculous to think that the incorporation of women guarantees the democratization of the institution. However, their incorporation forces the military corporation to rethink and make ideas and structures more flexible. The incorporation of women into the army is a sign of such democratization process, which is not the same as saying that the armed forces have incorporated democratic values. It is true that by including women, armed conflict is humanized, but it is also not a guarantee of democracy.

The integration of women is also an emblem of modernity. Social diversity is incorporated but there is not access to all social groups. Therefore, the sign of openness only reaches women. "The female presence leads us to reflect on the most intimate values of the military in a Latin American democratic context of the 21st century" (Lucero 2020, 331).

In short, the gender issue in the armed forces is a trend that can reveal positive aspects. Simultaneously, it is another tool to facilitate the links between the military and society. These relations exclude the civilian management of the defense sector. They are autonomous decisions of the forces themselves. It is in this sense that they also fulfill the role of socializing society under military criteria.

FINAL WORDS

Hidden among notions of efficiency and honesty, Latin American societies are exposed to a growing militarization of the public space. This affects society and significantly harms democracy.

This position may be criticized by saying that the world order has changed and that the end of the Cold War and new threats require a change in the role of the military. So, considering that Latin America is not facing war scenarios due to the absence of threats by neighbouring countries, it seems reasonable for the different governments to allocate its militias towards internal security problems, which affect citizen's daily life. Dandeker explained this several years ago:

Contemporary developments -less weapons technology and a growing impact of public opinion on government- will entail a further 'blurring' of the boundaries between the military and other professions engaged in maintaining the security interests of the state as closer links are forged between the diplomatic, economic and military instruments of policy (Dandeker 1994, 644).

The military instrument is costly. It requires a long period of preparation. Their equipment is pricey. It needs constant updating, especially now that the international scenario is relatively uncertain. In any case, using the armed forces for health or police tasks implies an alteration of the professional military role and a waste of resources. Their performance in civilian jobs leads them to lose professional efficiency. In the short term, officers may feel proud of serving their community, but their performance does not contribute to republican principles in the medium and long term.

Putnam (1967), when analyzing military coups d'état, stated that "the propensity for military intervention increases with the habituation of the military to intervention" (1967, 87). When democracy gets weaker and society shows increasing unrest with politicians, the military's role as a saviour for social problems represents a real risk. "Politicians can expect that increasing the armed forces' public security and political roles will be met favourably by the electorate (Harig, Jenne, and Ruffa 2022, 466). The intervention of the armed forces in civilian matters is naturalized, and people will be closer to embracing the armed forces as proper inspirers or leaders of the country. Citizens expressed little confidence in political institutions, and politicians' interests to remain in power have led to a 'vicious cycle', in which a constant increase of internal military roles appears to be a rational choice for decision-makers (Harig, Jenne, and Ruffa 2022, 466).

On the gender side, incorporating women into the military could be understood as a sign of challenging the hyper-masculine culture and contributing to both a more humane and a more women-friendly environment. At the same time, it gives the idea of a more democratic institution, better related to the community. It is also common to believe that women tend to alleviate conflicts, playing a role in the peaceful resolution of disputes. But, it is necessary to point out that the growing presence of women in the

armed forces also naturalizes the use of violence as a legitimate tool in society and helps to develop more aggressive and repressive attitudes. This discussion is related to the process of re-militarization that in the last ten years reappeared in Latin America and allowed soldiers to develop a direct and privileged relationship with society (Diamint 2020, 156). The naturalization of the social presence of the military in everyday life is a sign of the weakening of democratic practices in Latin America. Moreover, it gives the military bargaining power when facing against political leaders and allows them to extract concessions from the latter. Moreover, it gives the military better tools to bargain when facing political leaders in order to extract concessions from them.

Now that the armed forces provide health, technology, communication, and infrastructure, their interactions with society are reinforced. It is no longer a male issue, women join the military, and at the same time, they spread patriotic and militaristic values to their families and society. Nevertheless, it remains true that “militarism and the creation of military worldviews and logics [...] reinforce the primacy of hegemonic masculinity in various spheres of social, political and economic activity” (Tickner 2022, 2). The rulers resort to the military, an orderly institution that ensures the continuation of their power, while their own political parties disintegrate. The increase in public insecurity allows citizens who previously expressed their support for the restoration of democracy and the rule of law, to obediently accept that officers carry out police tasks. Defense policy is not inclusive. It remains a closed topic to the community. In Latin America, the transition to democracy had to be handled simultaneously with the expansion of the security agenda. The securitization of social and economic issues was parallel to the assignment of military subordination to the elected authorities. All these processes led to a greater military presence in everyday life. A socialization carried out by the armed forces that exposes us once again to the precarity of democracy.

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NEW FORMS OF MILITARIZATION: SOCIALIZATION BY THE MILITARY

ABSTRACT

The traditional coups d'état that devastated Latin American countries in the 20th century have given way to other forms of militarization. The armed forces appear as allies of the governments in power, summoned by the elected presidents. Officers in most of the countries of the region are dedicated to police tasks, propagating a direct link with society. This paper seeks to expose a hidden phenomenon developing in Latin America, that could be called 'socialization by the military'. This means a clear process of militarization when the armed forces assume diverse functions including safeguarding the civilian population in non-defense-related matters. Another aspect of this close relation with society is the incorporation of women into the military career as a false sign of the democratization of the armed forces. As the article elaborates, this kind of socialization by the military results from the weakness of civil-military relations, the feebleness of Latin-American public policies, and the manipulation of political legitimacy.

Keywords: Armed Force; Latin America; Socialization; Militarization; Political Participation.

RESUMO

Os tradicionais golpes de Estado que assolaram os países da região no século XX deram lugar a outras formas de militarização. As forças armadas aparecem como aliadas dos governos no poder, convocadas pelos presidentes eleitos. Na maioria dos países da região, os oficiais se dedicam às tarefas policiais, propagando um vínculo direto com a sociedade. Este artigo busca expor um fenômeno oculto que se desenvolve na América Latina, que poderia ser denominado como a "socialização pelos militares". Isso significa um claro processo de militarização quando as forças armadas assumem diversas funções, incluindo o atendimento à população civil em assuntos não relacionados à defesa. Outro aspecto dessa estreita relação com a sociedade é a incorporação da mulher à carreira militar como um falso sinal de democratização das forças armadas. Conforme elabora o artigo, esse tipo de socialização por parte dos militares resulta da fragilidade das relações civil-militares, da fragilidade das políticas públicas latino-americanas e da manipulação da legitimidade política.

Palavras-Chave: Forças Armadas; América Latina; Socialização; Militarização; Participação Política.

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