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## The armed forces role in emergencies in Brazil: a case of conservative securitization

El papel de las fuerzas armadas en situaciones de emergencia en Brasil: un caso de securitización conservadora

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## The armed forces role in emergencies in Brazil: a case of conservative securitization

El papel de las fuerzas armadas en situaciones de emergencia en Brasil: un caso de securitización conservadora

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**ABSTRACT.** In this article, we analyze the role of the Brazilian armed forces in emergencies based on discussions about the securitization of development and militarization. We argue that the military response to emergencies is a process strongly characterized by the conservative history of the organization, assimilating humanitarian actions and activities directed at the population within conceptions of the use of force concerned with internal order. We analyze contemporary legislation and the Army's doctrinal production on civic-social activities, support for civil defense, and disaster assistance. We consider this to be a sui generis process of militarization in the context of military action in emergencies because although certain climatic events are less common in Brazil, we observe that these activities have been part of a broader set of militarization in the country.

**KEYWORDS:** armed forces; Brazil; disaster relief; militarism; militarization; securitization

**RESUMEN.** En este artículo analizamos el papel de las fuerzas armadas brasileñas en situaciones de emergencia a partir de discusiones sobre la securitización del desarrollo y la militarización. Argumentamos que la respuesta militar a las emergencias es un proceso fuertemente caracterizado por la historia conservadora de la organización, asimilando acciones humanitarias y actividades dirigidas a la población dentro de concepciones del uso de la fuerza preocupadas por el orden interno. Analizamos la legislación contemporánea y la producción doctrinal del Ejército sobre actividades cívico-sociales, apoyo a la defensa civil y asistencia a desastres. Consideramos que se trata de un proceso sui generis de militarización en el contexto de la acción militar en situaciones de emergencia porque, aunque ciertos eventos climáticos son menos comunes en Brasil, observamos que estas actividades han sido parte de un conjunto más amplio de militarización en el país.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** ayuda en caso de desastre; Brasil; fuerzas armadas; militarismo; militarización; securitización

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## Introduction

Establishing mechanisms to restrict the range of action of the armed forces has been a considerable challenge. In most cases, initiatives in this regard could have been better. In general terms, states arm themselves to face their homologous counterparts internationally. However, when endowing a social segment with armed power, many societies see their military power turned to the domestic realm. This has raised numerous questions, including the concrete problem of establishing sufficient control mechanisms to limit military action while preserving sufficient combat capabilities in conflicts where force is expected or even necessary.

This article aims to analyze aspects of this challenge for Brazil. Taking as a reference the more general questioning of the special issue, the military's role in managing emergencies, we argue that in the Brazilian case, this role is secondary and episodic. In contrast, military action in the domestic sphere is recurrent, permanent, and functional for preserving a particular social order.

In military normative documents, actions that deviate from traditional tasks of the armed forces are named subsidiaries. It is a way of depoliticizing the phenomenon of regular domestic use of the armed forces, conceiving them as complementary activities. We seek to reverse this interpretation, showing that subsidiary actions are deeply linked to counterinsurgency and pacification activities and are central to the mentality and doctrinal field of the armed forces in Brazil.

For the present work, we assume a decolonial perspective as a theoretical guideline, tensioning interpretative frameworks that have little verisimilitude with the historical experience of Latin American countries, specifically Brazil.

It should be noted that in an essential portion of Latin American countries, particularly in South America, the national armed forces were directly involved in struggles for political independence at the beginning of the 19th century. While these conflicts took place, the situation in Imperial Brazil differed. The skirmishes for independence were limited, and, on the contrary, the Army's actions were marked by the direct involvement in struggles for quelling social movements, driven mainly by widespread dissatisfaction against poverty and social inequality. However, throughout the 20th century, there was a convergence in the actions of the armed forces of Latin American countries, which, with rare exceptions, acted to take political power by force.

On the other hand, the armed forces of central countries were busy with colonization processes or engaged in territorial expansion projects, therefore with a clear external orientation. As a backlash, it has been producing a phenomenon of militarization of the police and policing of the armed forces in these countries (Bigo, 2006).

The European perplexity with the armed forces' domestic deployment differs from what has been introduced previously for Latin American countries. For this reason, we consider that parameters used to analyze central countries are insufficient to understand specif-

ic historical processes, making it necessary to mobilize other theoretical bases. Therefore, the option for decolonial perspectives, since each category used to characterize the Latin American political process, has always been a partial and distorted way of looking at this reality (Quijano, 2021).

The paper is structured into three sections, including this brief introduction and final regards. We begin with an analysis of securitization and the symbiosis between security and development produced by the armed forces in Brazil. Next, we focus the analysis on civic-social actions (ACISOs, in the original), a complex and recurring phenomenon in military tasks. Finally, we present the military doctrinal guidelines for deploying the armed forces in situations of emergency and humanitarian aid, as well as recent cases in which the military has been mobilized for this purpose.

## Securitization, security, development, and armed forces

In the fields of civil-military relations, military sociology, and in studies on military missions, discussions about the expansion of the tasks performed by the armed forces – or the irruptions of military multifunctionality as discussed in this special issue – are often accompanied by debates on securitization (Rodrigues, 2016; Vitelli et al., 2021) and the relation between security and development (Maciel & Gusmão, 2019). This is not without reason, as both bodies of discussion deal with the phenomena that circumscribe (but are also informed by) military action in the contemporary scenario: the socio-political processes of threat production (Buzan et al., 1998; Balzacq, 2010) and the intertwined mobilizations of security and development as drivers of interventions and operations for stabilization, peacebuilding/maintenance, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and the like (Duffield, 2007; Stern & Ojendal, 2010).

In general terms, international security agendas that connect poor development conditions (social, political, economic) with the greater possibility of violence and threats to peace (corruption, crimes of different natures, terrorism, formation of militias, degradation, migration, among others) has involved security professionals in various activities beyond classic warfare that may or may not involve an armed conflict itself. Increasingly, forces have been mobilized in a preventive manner to avoid the escalation of situations, coordinating with other agencies and acting directly with the population in peacebuilding activities – support for political institutionalization, economic recovery, civil and health structures, educational, among many others (Sedra, 2014).

Military organizations compose these phenomena in different ways. On the one hand, the mobilization of armed forces to deal with issues that are not strictly military may indicate ongoing securitization processes, as they would attest that something – e.g., socioeconomic, urban, or environmental issues, including catastrophes – are being regarded as threats to be faced through exceptional actions (Sanahuja, 2005; Frenkel, 2019). On the other hand,

observing the forces' behavior concerning these issues – e.g., training, technological innovations, doctrinal and normative adaptations, and budgetary decisions – is another way of understanding how their practices contribute to framing these issues as threats (Balzacq et al., 2017). The same occurs with the issue of development. The use of subsidiary or auxiliary actions, such as emergencies, civil construction, and distribution of food and medicine, can be seen as a response to political agendas. However, it can also come from the forces' arrangements as a strategy.

Although these issues are closely associated with the post-1990s context, military action beyond classic warfare directed toward society and the association between security and development are constitutive elements of the Cold War. More specifically, they were (and remain) part of military counterinsurgency strategies, in which the records of officers at the time are explicit in defending the adaptation of armies to act closer to the population with social measures to enable the conquest of hearts and minds, facilitate intelligence and promote order in the long term (Trinquier, 1964; Galula, 2006).

For this historical reason, organizations such as the United Nations constantly seek to distinguish agents and spacers responsible for war and policing activities from those aimed at assisting the population in preventing, precisely, the counter-insurgent logic of assistance and aid serving a specific objective of 'conquest.' This distinction is never fully observed, as there are situations in which police and military forces act in coordination and cooperation with civilian agents and the local population. As pointed out in this dossier, most countries legally provide some auxiliary action to the armed forces outside the UN environment. Normative attention is to guide this action so that it remains, in fact, auxiliary and resorted to only in specific situations. Distincting development from warfare is based on the premise that the latter is primarily associated with peace, which is assumed to be non-violent (Duffield, 2007; Stavrianakis, 2010).

However, the formation of states, more precisely, the organization of legitimate violence, is deeply marked by notions of development. Exertion of power and domination throughout history mobilized ideas and concepts of wealth, progress, growth, civilization, and promotion of well-being, along with ideas and concepts of security, order, predictability, conservation, and stability (Stern & Ojendal, 2010). The accumulation of wealth and military conquests – in Charles Tilly's terms (1985), capital and coercion – defined state formation and guided the violence of colonization. Over the centuries, these notions continued to guide imperialist movements and superpowers' ordering projects during the Cold War and are currently part of the operationalization of global security (Maciel & Gusmão, 2019). In other words, the provision of development, inseparable from the provision of security or insecurity in terms of Alliez and Lazaretto (2021), informs the exercise of politics in modernity, in which the meaning of development has always been in some way oriented according to the idea of improvement which goes far beyond strictly considered economic growth. The UN Sustainable Development agenda is an example of the scope that the 'development'

dimension can achieve.<sup>1</sup> It encompasses political-institutional functioning, education, inclusion and gender equality, sanitation, energy, innovation, and industry; in short, a whole set of factors that permeate social forms of organization and production.

Returning to the involvement of military organizations in this dimension of development, an issue must be considered based on the sociopolitical differences produced by colonization. This process resulted in a brutal concentration of resources, primarily for the benefit of the European dominant classes (Quijano, 1992). The concentration of resources required the regular and constant use of force to subjugate civilizations and communities in Africa and Latin America. It is essential to consider such sociopolitical differences to understand the role played by the armed forces in different contexts.

Experiences in the contexts of political independence, particularly during the Cold War, rescue the issue of pacification with a more explicit military doctrinal contour marked by counterinsurgency. In French doctrines, civic, structuring actions that promote progress and development are highlighted as defining the success of counterinsurgency.

Convincing the population is essential to a) facilitate actions on the ground and b) undermine support for opposing forces, garnering support for the force itself, including aiming for former guerrillas to change sides, who, over the years, may become the forces responsible for maintaining order in the long term. Thus, every counterinsurgency demands plans that associate the neutralization of guerrilla forces with social projects and other propaganda actions for the local population. Some of these social projects to be undertaken in pacified areas may be building schools, paving and repairing roads, creating camps to welcome refugees and people forced to migrate, as well as promoting economic development so that the local population can reach a means of subsistence (Trinquier, 1964, p. 81). In other words, the operation's politics will mobilize these services to convince the local population to join their efforts and collaborate with long-term pacification.

Galula (2006) lists values to counter the appeal of the rebel ideology, highlighting humanism, cooperation, social progress, and economic development. Furthermore, the official directly states that counterinsurgency is an example of the carrot-and-stick approach. Counterinsurgency gradually provides the social services necessary to support social progress and economic development, as the population that receives these services collaborates in maintaining a stable environment. In this context, the Specialized Administrative Sections (SAS) of the French forces were created, units dedicated to carrying out these assistance and educational services, which will also be used as examples for the Brazilian forces in the design of ACISOs (Motta, 2014). All of this has significant impacts on territories such as South America. In the Brazilian case, specifically, the relationship between military force and development is unique, as we will explore in the following sections.

1 See <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

## Security, development, and subsidiary activities in Brazil

In the Brazilian case, military subsidiary actions are historically linked to pacification (Souza, 2008). This term may have different meanings depending on where and how it is used. For this article and regarding the military, we mobilize this concept as the process of manufacturing and preserving the liberal social order through laws, policing, and war combined (Neocleous, 2013; 2014; Rodrigues et al., 2021). It is no coincidence that Brazil has known the term pacification as an intrinsic part of its military organization since the Empire in the 19th century. In this context, the figure of Duque de Caxias – called the *pacificador* – was built as the Army's patron due to his participation in quelling regional revolts. These stabilizations, Souza (2008; 2009) reinforces, were politically successful precisely because of the Army's ability to act as police, that is, patrolling the streets, observing the socio-political and cultural dimensions of the places, imposing the Law, and providing structures and benefits over areas that were considered vulnerable.

In the following period, during the republican Constitution, another very significant example of this type of military enterprise was led by Marshal Rondon, responsible for expeditions to the interior of the country, installation of telegraphs, and construction of highways, organizing and categorizing Indigenous communities as friends/hostiles, and exerting government authority by incorporating them into national registration systems (Souza Lima, 1995). In other words, in this process in which the Army is being formed as an organization along modern lines, the armed institution is responsible for exerting basic power mechanisms of political administration.

In addition to serving as a form of dissemination of military authority over the country's most remote areas and enabling actions to register the population, especially indigenous communities, the action led by Rondon marked a change in the expeditions carried out until then as, for the first time, these explorations were oriented towards bringing civilization and promoting national integration (Brazil, 2003).

The military logic of occupying the territory and establishing social, economic, and political relations close to local populations is the primary substrate of civic-social actions, which aim to produce an atmosphere of complicity (Marques, 2007, p. 104) between forces and the population. This logic is similar to the assistance actions in emergencies in which the armed forces are involved in the contemporary context.

Despite being called ACISO only since the 1960s, this logic has been reproduced since the first republican decades, mainly from the 1930s, when the security-development binomial became part of the National Security ideology, its legislation and, later, the military doctrine (Coelho, 2000; Kalil & Guzzi, 2010). It was in the process of reorganization of the Army and Navy, still during the Estado Novo regime (1937-1945), that the ideology of the military organization was established as a provider of security and development.

In this sense, the scope of development would be broad enough to encompass everything that was part of the national life (Coelho, 2000): economic policy, industrial and

agricultural policy, the communications system, international policy, all the branches of activities, production, and collective existence, including the instruction and education of the people. This scope of development in the military conception is essential to build the idea that they are the organizational model of the Nation, so everything that improves and innovates the military would also benefit the country, and vice versa.

By linking development and progress, this perspective rescues the previous perception that strength is necessary for the country to progress toward the fullness of its economic, industrial, moral, political, and military capabilities. This perception is even more visible in “Strategic Planning” (Couto e Silva, 1981), in which General Golbery brings together a set of speeches, lectures, and classes given at the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG), in which he emphasizes the importance of understanding development as a broad-spectrum process, combined with continuous intervention planning towards progress. It is interesting to note that Goldberg understands intervention as synonymous with state political action – mobilizing all State’s resources, public and private –which aims at social control without “falling into the dirigisme of totalitarianism” (Escola Superior de Guerra, 2000, p. 407)

Arguing that the strictly material conception of development is of Marxist inspiration, Couto e Silva (1986, p.410) advocates development as a set of hardening, maturation, and improvements in the education, morals, and health of the people, as well as their values and political institutions. It indicates a sense of progress, which assumes a civilizational essence insofar as the object to be developed is the collective and the people who supposedly make it up. And yet, military thought reinforces and reiterates the very notion of security and development as order and progress, as General Geisel<sup>2</sup> himself has presented that security and development expanded and updated Brazil’s flag’s order and progress motto (Duarte, 2009). This is emphasized by another critical figure in establishing the National Security Doctrine. The most general statement of the conceptions of General Golbery, a mentor and organizer of the National Security Doctrine, is to institute a set of actions that counter the possibility of the expansion of Marxism, aligning the country with Christian-capitalist-Western principles, which is the ideological basis of the military coup in 1964.

It is no coincidence that ACISOs were institutionalized during this period and were maintained after the transition to democracy in the 1990s. Unlike Law-and-Order Assurance Operation (GLO) operations, which need to be authorized by the presidency, civic-social actions are part of the military routine, and it is up to each force to carry them out in specific cases. The Navy, for instance, performs constant civic-social actions with riverside communities through hospital ships. ACISOs also compose broader operational environments, such as GLO, Peacekeeping operations, and operational training.

2 General Ernesto Geisel. He held the Brazilian presidency from 1974 to 1979 during the authoritarian regime.

Civic-social action operations aim to provide assistance and aid to communities, promoting citizens' civic and community spirit in Brazilian territory or external contexts, such as peace operations (Brasil, 2009). These are actions of a humanitarian or assistance nature, such as the delivery and distribution of food and hygiene items and the provision of medical services carried out regularly by different security forces (military and police) around the world in different contexts, from recovery from disasters to counterinsurgency conflicts and UN peacekeeping operations.

There is an explicit concern by ACISOS to “discourage or weaken the support of community members for illicit activities or activities contrary to national interests and the interest of the force” (Brazil, 2009, p.9). Practices concerning the population generally unfold along the axes of Justice, Transport, Hygiene and Health, Well-being, and recreation, which imply different actions, from assistance with legal demands, construction and execution of public constructions to a series of community programs. These activities expressly aim to win over public opinion and spread the military presence over the population, mediated by providing relief, assistance, and education measures.

While civic-social actions are responsible for each military force, other subsidiary actions of the armed forces were institutionalized. In this sense, we briefly summarize the normative frameworks governing Brazil's military tasks. Two years after the end of the authoritarian regime in 1985, the National Constituent Congress was installed to present a new federal constitution. In 1988, the current Constitution was promulgated. Article 142 defines the functions of the armed forces, and its first paragraph provides that a “complementary law will establish the general standards to be adopted in the organization, preparation, and employment of the armed forces” (Brazil. 1988).

These dispositions were formalized only in 1999 by Complementary Law 97 (CL 97), enacted by Congress and sanctioned by President (at the time) Fernando Henrique Cardoso. This complementary Law preceded the creation of the Ministry of Defense, which was established in the same year. The sole paragraph of the first article of Complementary Law 97 states that “without compromising its constitutional purpose, the armed forces are also responsible for fulfilling the subsidiary duties explained in this law.” (Brasil, 1999).

This text is followed by another Complementary Law in 2004, CL 117, during the first government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This new Law specifies that in the case of military deployment in operations to enforce Law and order, “operational bodies of the armed forces will be mobilized to perform, episodically, in a previously established area and for a limited time, the preventive and repressive actions necessary to ensure the result of operations in assuring law and order” (Brasil. 2004).

It also provides that “once the use of the armed forces in enforcing law and order, it will be up to the competent authority, through a formal act, to transfer operational control of the public security bodies necessary for the development of actions to the authority in charge

of operations” (Brasil, 2004). In other words, in cases of domestic deployment, operational control is under the exclusive responsibility of military authority.

Beyond this operational aspect, three other issues characterize the legislation concerning the domestic use of military force. First, it emphasizes the security-development nexus by providing that “it is up to the armed forces, as a general subsidiary attribution, to cooperate with national development and Civil Defense, in the manner determined by the President” (Brasil, 1999). Second, a recent change in the Military Penal Code (Law 13.491) facilitates military autonomy in the judiciary sphere because it is the responsibility of a Military Court to judge crimes against life committed by a soldier against civilians during these types of deployment. Finally, it formalizes the extensiveness of military activities by framing actions against transnational crimes and operations in border areas as subsidiary duties.

In 2010, CL 97 and CL 117 were amended by Complementary Law 136, sanctioned in the second Lula da Silva administration. This Law expands the range of subsidiary activities on border areas towards the sea and inland waters, allowing the military to carry out patrols and searches on land vehicles, vessels, and aircraft and perform arrests. It also applies to operations of personal security for national and foreign authorities on official missions (Brasil, 2010).

In summary, the legal-normative apparatus expanded and supported domestic military tasks in a crescendo of attributions and legal protections for cases in which intentional crimes against civilians have been committed since the promulgation of the new Federal Constitution. It should also be noted that there is no specific legislation for cases of military deployment in emergencies, which is addressed in doctrinal manuals, as will be presented in the next section.

## The Brazilian Armed Forces performance in emergencies: a sui generis militarization

Legally, military action in emergencies and assistance to the population are provided for in CL 97 as part of the general subsidiary attributions that contribute to “national development and civil defense.” From then on, how military organizations perform this kind of operation varies depending on the situation, and they are also open to the specificities of crises as they present themselves.

As the actions in these fields are marked by improvisation, by constant adaptation (or adaptive cycles, in military vocabulary), and by the frequent juxtaposition of activities, there is significant interchangeability between humanitarian aid/assistance and civic-social assistance in these spheres of national development and civil defense, mainly when associated with other operations already underway, such as peace operations or GLO. In general terms, considering current definitions (Brasil, 2015a; 2015b; 2023), the armed forces act in situations of a) interagency cooperation efforts specifically launched for humanitarian purposes,

commonly called Humanitarian Operations, b) efforts by the military themselves – individually or inserted in interagency efforts that can be carried out within operations already underway – normally referred to as Humanitarian Assistance, c) initiatives by the military themselves of the type of Civic-Social Actions, which are not considered Operations, insofar as they configure practically actions routine, and may or may not be part of ongoing operations, d) other actions in cooperation with civil defense, such as environmental protection.

The Brazilian Army recently published the Humanitarian Operations Campaign Manual (2023), rescuing a set of expertise acquired over the last two decades that facilitates the visualization of military action in these situations. This manual also allows us to observe the breadth of activities performed and its relationship with the number of diverse operations in which the armed forces are involved. According to the Manual, some of the identified causes of crises and catastrophes that required (and continue to demand) military action are 1) collateral/additional damage, 2) natural disasters, 3) anthropogenic activities, 4) political, economic, or psychosocial instability, and 5) health crises. Table 1 systematizes these categories with their respective descriptions; activities carried out, and associated operations.

**Table 1.** Military actions in crisis and emergencies

Description	Examples of actions	Operations
1. Damage to people and property/ structures caused by firearms, explosives, landmines, terrorist acts, among others	Engage in other operations (peace or GLO): provision of aid and rescue in collapsed structures, assessment of infrastructures of interest, re-establishment of mobility on roads considered essential for providing basic conditions for a given population (especially with the repair and construction of bridges, cleaning of unexploded explosive devices), and carrying out humanitarian demining.	Mine Clearance Assistance Mission in South America (MARMINAS); Mine et al. in Central America (MARMINCA); United et al. in Haiti (MINUSTAH)
2. Natural events that cause damage to people or property	Coordination in civilian matters; transport of donations, personnel, and material; convoy security, search for missing people; clearing roads and restoring mobility; specialized engineering reconnaissance to assess infrastructure and work needs; construction of bridges; protection of affected slopes; preliminary assistance to injured, coordination with agencies, social, psychological and religious assistance, use of boats, damage control and water supply	Operation México, in the context of the earthquake in 1985; Operation Petrópolis; Operation <i>Verde Brasil</i> I and II; Operation <i>Amazônia Azul</i> ; Operation <i>Ajuda Humanitária</i> during MINUSTAH ( earthquake, em 2010, and Hurricane Mathews, in 2016)
3. Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear contamination, dam collapse, industrial fires, and others	Transport of donations, personnel, and materials; convoy security; search for missing people; clearing roads and restoring mobility; specialized engineering reconnaissance to assess infrastructure and required repairs; protection of affected slopes; preliminary care for injured people; coordination with agencies, social, psychological and religious assistance, use of boats, damage control and water supply.	Operation <i>Brumadinho</i> , as a result of the collapse of the dam with the same name in 2019

Table continues...

Description	Examples of actions	Operations
4. Genocides, persecution of ethnic, religious, and political groups, human rights violations	Establishment of a security perimeter, with the isolation of a supply distribution area; the protection and establishment of convoy escort or protection of physical installations, such as warehouses; the repair of basic infrastructure, with the carrying out repairing works to restore water treatment, sewage, and energy generation facilities; the recovery of roads, ports or airports; supporting the population with specialized workforce training; assistance to the population, with search and rescue, environmental health, surveillance and control of endemic diseases, immediate assistance with water and food and provision of health support; support for displaced people and refugees, with actions aimed at assistance and protection.	Operation Welcome
5. Endemic, epidemic and pandemic diseases	Vaccination campaigns, combating vectors of disease, emergency care for the sick, hospitalizations, distribution of prophylactic medicines, burials, isolation and decontamination of areas, recognition of Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear contamination, transportation of donations, personnel and material, social, psychological and religious assistance, or other needs, according to the analysis of the operational environment	Operation COVID-19

Source: own elaboration.

One first question to be raised is the social scope of the activities in which the military is involved. For instance, the Army points out social, psychological, and religious assistance in support scenarios for natural disasters, disasters caused by human activities, or health crises. The document does not explain what is meant by psychological assistance, but it defines social and religious assistance as:

Provide well-being to the population in humanitarian aid operations, encompassing welcoming the vulnerable, articulating available public policies, mapping the local social assistance network, community and territorial activity, articulation, and promoting psychosocial support to the target audience. Religious assistance, in turn, consists of assistance to displaced people/refugees, the sick, and the execution of religious ceremonies, including funeral services. However, it is interesting that, whenever possible, we seek to accommodate all religious beliefs and prioritize ecumenism (Brasil, 2023, pp. 4-17)

The document, as well as most military guidelines for engagement in interagency environments, already provides for coordination/cooperation with other civilian agencies, whether national or international, to provide this type of assistance. This coordination, in Brazilian military vocabulary, called Civil Affairs (Brasil, 2021), dialogues with the perspectives of civil-military coordination and cooperation in spaces such as the UN and NATO and is part of the components of multifunctionality, as it inserts the armed forces into networks of civilian

communication, mobilizing social communication skills, knowledge about political functioning, etc. This coordination/cooperation may already reflect the pacification logic in the Brazilian military forces (Santos & Siman, 2022). However, what is expressed here is a direct action of the military institution on the population to provide this entire range of activities.

The second point is the examples of operations used to illustrate the Army's experiences in dealing with this situation. It is expected that MINUSTAH would be brought up as an example in Brazilian military documents since the experience in Haiti was, in fact, a significant process for the institution and its gain of expertise in these situations (Castro & Marques, 2020). Other prominent examples, still regarding natural disasters, are the *Verde Brasil I* and *II* operations, which marked a new modality of Law and Order Assurance Operations in the country that focused on combating environmental crimes aimed at illegal deforestation and fire outbreaks (Brazil, 2020). The MINUSTAH case and the GLO were not operations specifically planned to assist humanitarian crises, as they fall within stabilization and policing contexts.

The operations *Brumadinho*<sup>3</sup>, *Welcome*, and *COVID-19*, other prominent examples, are distinct because they were planned for specific emergency purposes, very different from each other. The military action in *Brumadinho* was, of these three, the most circumscribed, as the Army and Air Force acted as support forces for actions coordinated by the State Government, with air and land transport logistics, search activities, and Chemical, Radiological, Biological and Nuclear defense (CRBN). Another case was security support for the Israeli delegation (Army Department of Education and Culture 2019).

In Operation *Welcome* (*Acolhida*, in Portuguese), the scenario was different because although the armed forces had the task of providing logistical support through the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force, they also played a leading role in the operational coordination of the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee (CFAE), which gave the armed forces, notably the Army, a privileged position of command (Pereira et al., 2022). The operation was launched on an emergency basis to deal with the increase in the flow of migrants on the border with Venezuela in 2018, but it became permanent, and the military remained in the operational leadership, even with the presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Finally, Operation *COVID-19* was also launched as an emergency during the pandemic. It aimed at directing and coordinating the specific actions of the three Forces in facing *COVID-19*. The results of this operation are, to say the least, debatable. Organizationally speaking, it activated joint command centers for the first time, which was regarded as positive as it was a significant movement towards interoperability. The military forces were involved in vaccination campaigns, transporting oxygen, delivering food, water, and other products in

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3 The collapse of a large dam controlled by the mining company Vale, in 2019. It was a disaster of monumental proportions, with almost three hundred people killed and buried under the mud.

different regions, alike in civic-social actions. On the other hand, Operation COVID-19 did not, for instance, free up military hospitals to serve the civilian public despite having beds available. Furthermore, the military was directly involved in the Federal Government's set of harmful measures in managing the pandemic, such as the purchase and distribution of hydroxychloroquine and delays in transporting oxygen to regions such as Manaus, among other complications, especially when General Eduardo Pazuello took over the Ministry of Health. Pazuello, who it is essential to highlight, was also part of Operation Welcome.

Despite being episodic, there were cases in which Brazilian military resources were mobilized to assist during emergencies in neighboring countries. For example, the Brazilian Air Force transported Civil Defense rescue teams and a Navy field hospital to Chile in 2010 after a significant earthquake (Bonin, 2010).

It should also be noted that in Brazil, there are no specific military units designed to respond to emergencies, such as natural disasters<sup>4</sup>. In these situations, considering logistical capabilities, the military units closer to catastrophes are mobilized, mostly in cases of floods. In December 2023, the Brazilian Navy deployed a group of marines to support Civil Defense, which was planned to go on until March 2024.

We should also consider the interaction of the military with other security forces during responses to catastrophes, emergencies, and climate-related crises, such as the Fire Department. In Brazil, firefighters constitute a Military Fire Brigade. Like the Military Police (PM), it is auxiliary to the Army and subordinated to each federative unit's state government. Civilian firefighters in Brazil only work in the private realm, with companies, shopping malls, and events, while military firefighters are public servants. Their career and apparatus vary from one federative State to another. Even though there is cooperation between civilian and military firefighters in certain situations, military firefighters are responsible for responding to public demands in the face of emergencies<sup>5</sup>. In practice, the military character of the Fire Department means that it has organizational and operational similarities with the Army, which officers express as a positive and facilitating element when conducting interagency operations (Castro et al., 2023), representing most of the emergency cases.

The coordinating aspect of the armed forces stands out over other agencies involved in operations that respond to major emergencies. It is no coincidence that recent updates to the Land Military Doctrine (Brasil, 2019; 2022) have valued cooperation and coordination between agencies, including humanitarian aid situations and post-disaster relief to foster new capabilities. In other words, engaging in this type of action does little to change the general disposition of the use of the armed forces, but it is understood as a set of learning, under the umbrella of subsidiary activities, maintaining the military forces as a unit of command and management.

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4 We checked this information with military sources.

5 Brazil had 55,072 firefighters, see Forum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (2022).

## Conclusions

Military action in Brazil, particularly in the Army—the force with the greatest political involvement—is marked by a theory of the internal enemy, which has not been overcome even after the end of the Cold War. Doctrinal manuals from the 2010s highlight this perspective by adopting a lexicon specifically aimed at the securitization of social movements.

In this sense, claims on the multidimensionality of security effectively encompass the focus of military action in Brazil, which has been predominantly internal since the country's independence. From time to time, coups for political occupation flourished, followed by complacency and encouragement of military domestic deployment. In the Bolsonaro administration (2018-2022), the perspective was adjusted so that the armed forces were more strongly linked to political power, with positions in the Executive and with several military parliamentarians elected to the National Congress. Furthermore, military sectors are being investigated for their participation in the coup attempt, or conspiracy, carried out on January 8, 2023. High-ranking officers are targets of investigation by the Federal Police and may be held responsible for acts carried out using these data.

An essential mechanism in the conceptions of internal actions, civic-social actions, and Law and Order Assurance Operations is that they produce information about internal threats. During the last federal government, there were indications that the information was aimed at political opponents and was used entirely irregularly by the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN). The information bodies of the three forces make up the Brazilian Intelligence System. In this way, internal action establishes an expanded securitization, encompassing several internal dimensions aligned with the propositions of the International Security Doctrine, dividing them into political, cultural, economic, and psychosocial fields.

An important consequence of this preferably internal action is the change in the Law so that military personnel in internal operations will be judged by the Military Justice and not by the Jury Court in situations where crimes caused by military personnel against life and human rights occur. This is another point indicating that a form of militarization is taking place.

It should be added that frequent military deployment for domestic issues, especially in Public Security, with GLO operations, in civic-social actions, and operations against transnational crimes, is not just a domestic decision. There has been visible external pressure, especially from the United States of America, for the military apparatus to turn to the internal realm. This is the guiding concept of multidimensional security, presented as hemispheric security (Saint-Pierre, 2011).

However, these isolated pressures are insufficient to explain the internal use of military power. At the beginning of the 21st century, governments expanded this type of use of the military apparatus, and, for the most part, they were considered progressive governments.

We consider that military actions in emergencies are assimilated into the organization's historical practice of turning inward in a broader sense instead of encouraging the creation

of organizations specifically focused on activities aimed at acting in emergencies, combating drug trafficking, environmental surveillance, and other tasks. In other words, they dialogue with the military's quest to expand its capabilities in what is conventionally called a 'broad spectrum', which is especially sensitive to the Brazilian Army, a force that is guided by principles of flexibility and elasticity to deal with different types of situations.

Thus, we understand this is a *sui generis* militarization that converges with the indicated paths, especially with the widening use of force and the "wildcard" administration. However, it is a process informed by the specificities of the historical interventionist ethos of the country's military and the militarism present in Brazilian society. It converges with the extent of the use of force because, as we highlighted, emergency, humanitarian, civil support and civic actions are linked to engagement in more robust internal security operations. It is also associated with a wildcard-type administration because, in the Brazilian case, the armed forces tend to assume spaces of coordinating interagency environments, especially in actions that the Army listed as examples of humanitarian engagement, such as GLO operations, Peace Operations, and Operation Welcome.

Finally, in addition to militarization, in the sense of mobilizing military forces and equipment to deal with issues not linked to external defense, the constant use of the Brazilian Armed Forces in civic-social or emergency activities fosters two critical elements in the relationship between armed forces, State and society: a) the military self-image of superiority; b) strengthening of a militaristic social imaginary.

The first, Brazilian military identity, was structured around a narrative of technical and moral superiority, according to which it would be up to the military institution to control corrupt political elites, educate illiterate masses, and modernize the State, as detailed in the section on security-development nexus. In this sense, the recurrent mobilization of the armed forces for emergency activities strengthens the logic, dear to the identity discourse of the Brazilian military, that they are responsible for solving all the problems that civil institutions are incapable of solving, framing themselves as better prepared in technical and moral terms, in all spheres of public management.

This militaristic conception of glorifying military values and ways of acting through emergency response actions and civic-social activities reverberates in social expectations about the armed forces, encouraging a normalization of the solution to all state problems through the military instrument (Succi Junior, 2024). In addition to the Brazilian specificity, Martínez and Bueno (2023) indicate the relationship between the image of military superiority and the mobilization of the armed forces to deal with emergencies. The condition of moral and technical superiority has been highlighted by many authors in the Brazilian case, either as a result of the identity forged by positivism (Oliveira, 1990) or because of an identity that was strengthened in the 1930s and 1940s when the armed forces constituted themselves as the mainstay of the Estado Novo (Svartman, 1988). Or even because the military distin-

guishes the life of the barracks from the life of civilians, considering that their values and knowledge vastly surpass the civilian ones (Castro & Leirner, 2009).

In sum, the Brazilian case is relevant. The focus of military tasks has been recurrent internally, highlighting that this characteristic is functional to the political system. The justifications presented resort to the emblematic and mystifying explanation that only military actors have the appropriate means and doctrines to carry out broad and diverse tasks. The justification that makes up the available means hides the fact that there is no political willingness to face the military issue, a synthetic translation of military autonomy, and the revelation of accentuated militarism and extensive militarization of the social order.

It can be considered that Brazil has a conservative form of securitization. As defined by the Copenhagen School and later with the revisions of the Paris School, securitization consists of the situation in which securitizing agents present to an audience a picture of threats in which regular measures by existing political means would be insufficient to confront increasingly serious threats. Only the use of exceptional measures can stop constructed threats. In the Brazilian case, a social order that produces and maintains profound inequalities finds support in military power, a securitizing agent. Threats are those that present alternatives conflicting with military values. In another way, conservative securitization, aimed at preserving social order, is a form of counterinsurgency. If actions in emergencies are contingent, the process of conservative securitization, on the contrary, has been permanent.

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