Security *a la AMLO*:
An Evaluation of the Militarisation of Mexican Law Enforcement

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide an assessment of the militarisation of the Mexican *Guardia Nacional* (GN) under Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018-2024), as well as consider its societal implications in terms of citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order. This research finds its value in its preliminary and exploratory nature, resting on a relatively understudied subject. The study provides one of the first attempts at measuring the status of the GN, which has evolved into the principal national guarantor of public security in Mexico. The evaluation of the GN was carried out through the establishment a scale of measurement based on commonalities with the *Fuerzas Armadas* (FA), which was applied to four separate indicators: material, cultural, organisational, and operational. All four indicators were found to share a high number of commonalities with the FA. As such, this thesis deems that the GN is undergoing a process of militarisation, and can be currently considered as similar to a 'constabularised military'. The implications of this assessment can be seen in terms of citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order. It was found that while the GN had no impact on levels of violence or be seen to be moving away from a defined legal order, the body was identified as a growing participant in human rights violations, and a contributor towards a reduction in incentives for police reform. These results contribute to a growing body of literature on the militarisation of public security in Mexico. Due to its foundational nature, this study offers a number of avenues of exploration for future research. Its indicative base signifies it can be built on through other quantitative and qualitative work in order to offer a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the status of the Mexican GN.

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List of Abbreviations

AMLO   Andrés Manuel López Obrador

CJM   *Código de Justicia Militar* (Military Justice Code)

CNDH   *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Human Rights Commission)

FA   *Fuerzas Armadas* (Armed Forces)

FASP   *Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública* (Contribution Fund for Public Security)

FER   *Fuerza Especial de Reacción* (Special Reaction Force)

FERI   *Fuerza Especial de Reacción e Intervención* (Special Reaction and Intervention Force)

Fortaseg   *Programa de Fortalecimiento para la Seguridad* (Security Strengthening Program)

GN   *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard)

INEGI   *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)

PRI   *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

SCJN   *Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación* (Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation)

SEDENA   *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (Secretary of National Defense)

SEMAR   *Secretaría de Marina* (Secretariat of the Navy)

SSPC   *Secretaria de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana* (Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection)

1. Introduction

Interactions between civil institutions and militaries vary worldwide, ranging from cooperative partnerships which emphasise civilian control and respect for democratic norms, to contentious relationships marked by power struggles, institutional rivalries, and the potential erosion of civilian authority. In the case of Mexico, the situation resembles more the former, with its civil-military relations having been deemed "the most stable in Latin America" (Manaut 2010, 163). Representing an exception amongst a region fraught with democratic instability, Mexican civil institutions and the *Fuerzas Armadas* (Armed Forces – FA) have cultivated a longstanding relationship, based on a sense of mutual trust and interdependence. This civil-military "pact" can be traced back to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Following this event, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party - PRI) was established by victorious revolutionary armed forces. The party remained in uninterrupted power for over 70 years, with the first 30 years being headed by President-Generals (who had been prior generals during the Revolution). In 1946, the party relinquished authority to civilian leadership, requesting, in return, to retain its status as a key pillar of power and obtain various privileges.

Alongside these benefits came a prominent role in internal security. In practice, this signified that the FA were introduced to fight organised crime, particularly cartels involved in drug trafficking. With crime levels gradually rising and criminal groups beginning to gain a worrying amount of influence and power, the FA saw themselves morphing into a secondary police force, with public security being placed at the forefront of their duties. This shift in direction included roles close to the Mexican citizenry, such as disaster relief or providing free health care services.

While the FA were gaining in visibility and influence, civil institutions were experiencing the opposite. The worsening of the Mexican security situation led to the plummeting of institutional legitimacy, leading most governments to rely

heavily on the FA in order to give an appearance of capacity and efficiency. This was the case for a number of recent heads of state, including Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018), and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018 -).

The Calderón administration fully embraced this reliance, deciding to shape the official governmental discourse regarding combating organised crime around the use of force. The FA were a central pillar in this strategy and as part of Calderón's "war" on drugs, they unleashed havoc on drug cartels for six consecutive years. While a number of drug kingpins were taken off the streets, the retaliation of those being targeted devastated the country. Levels of violence took off at an alarming rate, with the number of homicides nearly tripling during Calderón's term (Flannery 2013, 182). While his successor, Peña Nieto, attempted to curb the violence and bring peace to an increasingly fearful population, little changed in the six years he was in power. In fact, his last two years in office have been characterised as "the most violent in recent history", with an average of over 2,000 murders a month (Amnesty International 2018a). With neither president managing to successfully resolve, or even stabilise the ongoing crisis, those running for the 2018 presidential election had a difficult task ahead.

Aware of the escalating insecurity and disillusionment prevalent among many segments of the Mexican population, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) made sure to carefully construct his electoral campaign around the wants and desires of the population. Contradicting his predecessors, in the run-up to the election, AMLO advocated against any reliance on the FA. Like his slogan "*Abrazos no Balazos*" (Hugs not Bullets), he stood out for promoting the return of soldiers to their barracks. Deviating from the usual narrative, this appealed to a great number of Mexicans, representing a glimmer of hope in a country slowly being overtaken by organised crime. However, soon after being elected in July 2018, AMLO's attitude began to change. It was only once he came to power

that the newly elect president realised the country could not tackle the rampant levels of insecurity without the support of the military. As a result, AMLO not only reinforced the role of the military, but created, or more so revived, a whole new security body – the *Guardia Nacional* (GN).

Finding its roots in the 1917 Mexican Constitution, the GN was created in 2019 with the intention of replacing the disbanded *Policía Federal* (Federal Police) and acting as the main authority carrying out public security on a national scale. While its inception raised some eyebrows, its civilian nature appeased those who feared a further expansion of the role of the military. Nevertheless, this reassurance was short lived as, soon after, the GN began taking on an increasingly similar structure to the FA. The body was soon considered as *de jure* civil but *de facto* military – while by law it was presented as a civilian institution under the *Secretaria de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana* (Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection - SSPC), in practice, it followed military structure, organisation and training. This military appearance was solidified in September 2022, when the GN was transferred from the SSPC to the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (Secretary of National Defense - SEDENA). In short, from civilian to military command.

This shift raised a number of alarm bells on a national and international scale, with organisations such as Amnesty International and the United Nations condemning the move, stating that it would "effectively leave Mexico without a civilian police force at the federal level, further consolidating the already prominent role of the FA in public security in Mexico" (Martínez 2022).[1] Following such criticism, it did not take long for the term 'militarisation' to begin appearing in debates concerning the GN shift. News articles were quick to catch on, with titles the likes of "Mexico's President is embracing militarization" (Flannery 2022). Other more formal publications characterised the situation as the "legalization of militarization in Mexico" (Amnesty

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[1] Translated by author.

International 2022) and the "deepening of Mexican militarisation" (Brewer 2022). It is within this multifaceted context that this thesis finds its relevance.

While the wider community is quick to employ the term 'militarisation', it is worth considering the extent upon which its usage has been contemplated. This thesis will offer such a reflection, presenting an exploratory research piece on the nature of the GN from 2019 to today (July 2023). The following research questions will guide this work:

> (1) What is the current state of the militarisation of the Guardia Nacional?

> (2) What are the societal implications of this militarisation in terms of citizen security, human rights, police reform and impunity?

By searching for commonalities between the GN and the FA through four separate indicators of militarisation (material, cultural, organisational, and operational), the level of militarisation of the GN will be evaluated. The implications of the assessment will then be considered in terms of citizen security, human rights violations, police reform, and impunity. As a number of studies have hinted that an increase in militarisation aligns with an increase in human rights violations and the other aforementioned elements, this thesis will aim to determine whether this is the case for the GN as well. Given the relatively recent establishment of the GN, academia has yet had the opportunity to fully explore its potential militarisation. As such, this thesis will be a first step in this direction, providing an in-depth analysis of the current situation. Understanding whether the GN is drifting towards militarisation is crucial not only to understand the current dynamics of the Mexican security realm, but also whether (and how) the phenomenon is indicative of a broader issue, which is the deeply entrenched dependence of the Mexican Executive on the FA.

The study will be organised in the following manner. Chapter 2 will be dedicated to introducing the academic debate surrounding militarisation and the

militarisation of law enforcement. Chapter 3 will present the theoretical framework, followed by the methodology in chapter 4. Combined, the two sections will present the backbone of this study, in defining the principal concepts and theories, as well as how these will be operationalised. Prior to delving into the results of the analysis, chapter 5 will offer a contextualisation of the theme in order to fully comprehend how the militarisation of the GN occurred. Utilising what has been previously presented, chapters 6 and 7 will seek to answer the two posed questions, first by displaying findings regarding militarisation indicators, and second by assessing their meaning in terms of societal implications. Chapter 8 will conclude the study, alongside limitations as well as potential future avenues of exploration.

2. Literature Review

This literature review will offer an overview of the existing scholarship on the militarisation of law enforcement through the broader theme of civil-military relations. After an introduction to some of the pioneering scholars in the field, the review will move on to presenting a background on Latin American civil-military relations. The focus will then shift to the academic debate surrounding the militarisation of law enforcement, first providing an overview of international academic work (although mostly U.S.-centred), followed by a zoom-in on Mexico, this thesis' focus. Through the presentation of previously conducted academic work, this literature review aims to identify the most prominent debates and underlying questions in the civil-military field, and ultimately single out a gap in said research. As will be shown in the following sections, while there appears to be a relatively solid research basis on the militarisation of law enforcement, no author has yet to scrutinise the recent case of Mexico under AMLO. As each and every civil-military relationship differs and evolves under new circumstances, in order to grasp the current state of militarisation of the country, a new analysis is needed. This gap will serve as the basis for this thesis.

2.1. An introduction to civil-military relations

The field of civil-military relations stretches far and wide. Taken broadly, it encompasses all and every aspect of the relationship between civilian society and the military. It covers anything from military funding, oversight, and limits on military influence, to themes of gender and human rights. The vastness of civil-military relations has meant it has been far from neglected in the academic realm. Research has delved into the theme time and time again, each time attempting to gain a further understanding of how we, as civilians, and institutions, interact with military bodies. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) was one of the first works to offer an insight into this relationship. His work propelled the debate forward, with most subsequent literature tending to, explicitly or implicitly, respond to his line of thought. Covering the themes of military organization and professionalization, his book more specifically discusses the best model for efficient democratic civilian control of the military, which he posits as being either subjective or objective control. That is, the integration of the civilian and military spheres or the strict separation. Seeking an answer to the question of 'who guards the guardians?', from the Latin, '*quis custodiet ipsos custodes*?' has troubled a number of other academics for decades. A straight answer has yet to be found, and the debate continues. Other themes that tend to dominate the field of civil-military relations are, but not limited to, the following: military coups, military compliance, changes in military role following processes of democratisation, and societal–military (dis)integration. Similar to civilian control, each one will vary depending on context and setting (Burk 2002, 1). Military influence or integration in an authoritarian regime will vary greatly in comparison to in a democratic country, for example. This is particularly true for the region of Latin America.

2.2. Latin American Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations often misalign. Friction is bound to arise at one point or another between the two bodies, potentially ranging from the simple military contestation of a public policy, to a more threatening and destructive military

coup. Latin America is one region that is no stranger to civil-military friction. In fact, it is more than acquainted with the most extreme end of the civil-military conflict scale, i.e., military coups. While the tumultuous relationship can be traced back to as early as the 1860s and 1870s, the mid-to-late twentieth century represented the height of military contestation. During that time, nearly all countries in the region found themselves subjected to military coups and subsequently military regimes. Academics were quick to follow with research, the causes and consequences of the coups were analysed, as well as the intricacies of the regimes themselves (Fitch 1977; Fitch 1998; Fossum 1967; Stepan 1988). Latin American civil-military relations continued to be studied during the period that followed, the third wave of democracy (Huntington 1991), with the focus shifting instead to the evolving role of the military during times of democratic consolidation, and how to assert effective civilian control over a military that has just relinquished power (e.g., Mainwaring, Valenzuela et O'Donnell 1992; Pion-Berlin et Trinkunas 2010; Trikunas 2005).

One of the ways in which the military saw their role reformed was in terms of public security. While traditionally a shift from an authoritarian to a democratic regime should result in the separation of police and military bodies, a factor which is fundamental in establishing democratic civilian control, Latin American countries have tended to neglect or reverse this transition. Other than a handful of exceptions, the militarisation of law enforcement is a growing trend in the region, with civilian police forces taking on militaristic tendencies, and the military taking on public security and general law enforcement tasks (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021).

2.3. The Militarisation of Law Enforcement

2.3.1. Measuring Militarisation

While there is no broadly accepted definition of militarisation, there are a number of indicators that academics tend to commonly refer to when attempting to assess the degree or extent of the militarisation of a law enforcement agency.

Kraska (2007) offers an interesting starting point to explore the array of indicators put forward by the academic realm. In his work, Kraska (2007) offers four dimensions of militarisation: (1) material, (2) cultural, (3) organisational, and (4) operational. Each one has received a fair share of academic attention, albeit some more than others.

Material-based definitions of militarisation utilise the presence of certain equipment to determine the level of militarisation of an agency. Numbers and the specific choices of different types of equipment are seen as indicative or evidence of the process. While Kraska (2007) mentions weaponry, equipment, and military technology as three sub-indicators of material militarisation, other academics may tend to concentrate on one of the three. Phillips (2014) looks at how patrol rifles may increase police militarisation, while Burkhardt and Baker (2019) centre on the impact of mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs). Other studies take a broader approach similar to Kraska, such as Bove and Gavrilova (2017) who look at if and how military-grade equipment provided to police has an impact on crime rates. They classify the equipment into four groups: weapons, vehicles, gears (e.g. communication devices and night vision equipment), and a residual category (e.g. office supplies, furniture). While employing material indicators to measure militarisation has its advantages, such as being easily measurable since information is often readily available and provides a ready quantitative measure (Bieler 2016), academics tend to point them out as over-simplistic or reductive. Simply looking at transfers of equipment does not necessarily say much about the actual practices of the entity up for assessment (e.g. a police department) since, for example, a police department could receive an influx of military-style weapons yet not actually use them. Even if they did use them, evaluating the impact remains difficult. As a result, relying solely on material indicators to assess the level of militarisation of a body provides an incomplete picture.

To compensate, other academics focus on cultural elements as indicators of militarisation. While some study more physical objects, such as uniforms (Paul et Birzer 2004) or insignia (Maguire et King 2004), others go a step further and look into the more abstract. Language, beliefs, and values are investigated for signs of military pattern or inclination. While these elements can be taken as they are, a handful of works consider them as more broader signs of not only militarisation, but also the ideology of militarism (i.e., the belief that military methods, such as the use of force and violence, are best suited for a country to remain stable, in control and achieve its goals). However, opposite to material indicators, cultural indicators appear much more difficult to measure. Due to their 'abstractness' or lack of quantification, these indicators require methods such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to extract significations.

The last two indicators of militarisation that are prone to receiving academic attention are the operational and organisational indicators. Those who evaluate militarisation by utilising operational indicators generally tend to look at how law enforcement operations and activities are conducted. Those making use of organisational indicators focus on the organisation's inner structure, hierarchy, or martial arrangements such as "command and control centers" as put by Kraska (2007). While characteristics of military organisation are rarely agreed upon, most perceive them as including "strict internal discipline" and "bureaucratic adherence to regulation" (Bieler 2016).

2.3.2. Results of Studies on the Militarisation of Law Enforcement

While the militarisation of law enforcement is no oddity in Latin America, academic literature appears to have only briefly glanced over the subject. Most literature on the matter is U.S.-centred, other than a few notable exceptions (e.g. Friesendorf et Penksa 2008; Murray et Taylor 2019; Roziere et Walby 2018), and tends to mostly focus on only one strand of militarisation – that of the police acting in a similar fashion to the military via behaviour, equipment, and tactics (Hall et Coyne 2013; Kopel 1997). This militarisation has notably been studied

through the context of the 1033 Program, which offers U.S. law enforcement agencies the opportunity to acquire excess military supplies and equipment. The results of the program remain contested, with certain studies indicating an effective end result, and others pointing out a rather long list of pitfalls. Some scholarship has equated the implementation of the program with a reduction in street-level crime (Bove et Gavrilova 2017), assaults on officers, citizen complaints, and an increase in drug-related arrests (Harris, et al. 2017). Others have found that militarised police forces translate into an increase in officer-involved shootings (Delehanty, et al. 2017), a failure to enhance officer safety or reduce local crime (Masera 2021; Mummolo 2018) and an increase in killings by the police (Lawson 2019; Masera 2021).

It is only when looking at the other side of militarisation, i.e., the military taking on the role and responsibilities of the police – also referred to as the constabularisation of the military – does the academic debate appear to stretch to the region of Latin America. The transition of the armed forces from duties of national security to public security has been well documented, particularly the cases of Colombia (Blair et Weintraub 2020), Venezuela (Galavís 2020), Brazil (Harig 2022), and Mexico (Deare 2021; Gaussens et González 2020; López-González 2012). Academics have studied the issue from a variety of angles, looking at both causes and consequences.

While the causes of the militarisation of the armed forces are in part always unique to a country, a few notable and relatively generalisable explanations have been put forward. Looking at the case of Brazil, Harig (2022) introduces the concept of 'negative convergence', which he defines as "a widespread acceptance of increasing the military's internal roles among political leaders, military elites and society" (466). Following this concept, there is a 'demand'- (the public) and 'supply'-side (decision-makers), both fuelled by a multitude of factors. In general, there is a growing lack of trust and perceived effectiveness in police forces, as well as in public institutions (Neto 2019; Hernández et

Romero-Arias 2019). To counter this lack of legitimacy, politicians tend to select 'high-impact strategies' which involve "theatrical demonstrations of punishment" (Hernández et Romero-Arias 2019, 91).[2] Placing the military on the streets will, on the one hand, provide the public with the illusion of institutional competency when it comes to the government responding to their concerns and tackling high crime rates, and on the other, will offer politicians a quick 'solution' to appease the public and gain legitimacy, as well as the option to satisfy their short-term interests. So what are the consequences of constabularisation, and why does it actually matter?

A handful of academics have attempted to offer an answer to this question, an answer which tends to conclude by portraying the process in a rather not-so-bright light. Indeed, similar to the outcomes of the militarisation of police forces, multiple studies have found direct links between the militarisation of public security and human rights violations (Blair et Weintraub 2020; Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021; Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2023; Gaussens et González 2020). Research by Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2023) suggests that complaints regarding human rights violations are higher in Mexican municipalities where the military is involved in public security tasks, rather than in areas without constabularisation. Also looking at Mexico, Gaussens and González (2020) employ the 2014 Tlatlaya massacre case (where Mexican soldiers killed 22 suspected criminals in a warehouse in Tlatlaya) to illustrate how a militaristic security approach tends to exacerbate human rights violations as well as fails to effectively contain crime. Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) list a number of other detrimental repercussions of constabularisation, namely the undermining of citizen security, police reform, and the legal order.

2.4. The militarisation of the Guardia Nacional

Having explored the broader scope of militarisation and the militarisation of law enforcement, it is now possible to turn to this thesis' central focus: the Mexican

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[2] Translated by author.

Guardia Nacional. With the law enforcement body only being in place since 2019, the academic field has not yet had the opportunity to fully delve into the intricacies surrounding its creation, development, and deployment. Notwithstanding, over the past few years, a handful of studies on the topic have emerged (Benítez Manaut et Gómez Sánchez 2021; Cárdenas Gracia 2019; Hernández et Romero-Arias 2019; Nateras González 2020; Ortega Ramírez et Morales Gámez 2021; Suárez Romero 2019). With the majority of the academic work being written soon after the inception of the GN, the research tends to be guided by a hypothetical line of thought. Authors attempt to discern the reasoning behind the setting up of the GN, as well as the repercussions of such a decision within the Mexican security system, as well as in Mexican society. Hernández and Romero-Arias (2019) tackle the first question. Their work attempts to answer the following question: why, in particular, was the GN created and chosen to combat crime and quell rates of violence? Using the theory of democratic public policies, they suggest that the GN was developed as a "last resort" in attempts to recover territorial control in areas taken over by organized crime, and respond to growing civilian dissatisfaction surrounding the previous security policies of the past governmental administrations (89).[3] Indeed, they demonstrate how when there is dissatisfaction with democracy in countries such as Mexico, these countries can experience the social legitimization of extraordinary measures (Ibid). The combination of the severe Mexican security situation and the periodic poor performance of governmental administrations has led to civilians tending to care less about the type of governmental response they receive – and whether it be harmful to their rights or not. As a result, to reclaim their legitimacy and appear to be providing efficient policies, politicians are tempted to lean towards "high-impact strategies" which put forward without considering the long-term consequences (Ibid).[4] They apply this to the case of the GN, detailing how, due to the

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[3] Translated by author.
[4] Translated by author.

inefficiency of the past two administrations and the dire security situation of the country, the AMLO government urgently needed to provide a quick, easy, and 'high-impact' policy. The GN was one option, enabling a new force to be deployed in high numbers across the country, thus providing civilians with the illusion of crime containment.

Other academics have offered a more critical perspective on the GN. Benítez Manaut and Gómez Sánchez (2021) explore the details surrounding the GN's inception, looking at budgets, personnel, laws, public perception and so on. One of the principal issues they delve into regards the military nature of the GN. At the time, it was conceived *de jure* civil but *de facto* military: while by law it was presented as a civilian institution (under the SSPC), in practice, it followed military structure, organisation and training (Benítez Manaut et Gómez Sánchez 2021, 37). In their final remarks, they conclude by asserting that the GN is nothing more than "an instrument of the Armed Forces to maintain the presence they have achieved in the last twelve years" (Ibid).[5] Taking a legal perspective, Suárez Romero (2019) comes to a similar conclusion, noting the split nature of the GN (civil and military). Nateras González (2020) shares a similar point of view regarding the militaristic tendencies of the GN, particularly placing an emphasis on how this phenomena will further undermine the civil institutions normally responsible for public security. She states that if they are not strengthened, the GN will take on the role as the central axis of Mexican security policy, i.e., making a military body chiefly responsible for national citizen safety and security. A handful of other studies attempt to quantitatively evaluate the efficiency or danger of the GN, seeing if the body contributes to a fall in crime rates, higher levels of violence (Carlos Merino et Aguilar-Antonio 2022), or human rights abuses.

Literature on the GN reaches one clear conclusion: the danger of the militarisation of the body. The GN in particular raises concern due to its strict

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[5] Translated by author.

role in public security. While this should be a space reserved for civilian law enforcement, i.e. traditional police forces, the infiltration of a body with militaristic tendencies poses a great danger. The upholding of the law, human rights, and levels of violence may all be at risk through this shift. While the presented literature provides an overview of the dangers of the militarisation of the GN, no study in particular delves into the process of militarisation. Academia has yet to deconstruct the features of the GN nor provide a formal classification of the body on a militarisation scale. This study seeks to fill this gap, by (1) quantitatively and qualitatively evaluating the militarisation of the GN and (2) exploring the implications of said militarisation on citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order.

2.5. Research gap

This literature review has offered a brief introduction into the field of civil-military relations, as well as presented the previously conducted research on the militarisation of law enforcement, and more specifically, on the Mexican case of the GN. It has identified recent research trends and developments which act as a valid starting point for this thesis. While the consequences of the militarisation of law enforcement have been looked into, varying from human rights abuses to an increase in rates of violence, they will always vary depending on form and consequence (Burk 2002). This signifies that in order to understand the ramifications of militarisation in a country at a certain time, a case study must always be conducted. While academia has begun to explore the recent case of Mexico under the presidency of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a full assessment of the militarisation of the body has yet to be conducted. Thus, a gap has been left in the literature – a gap which this thesis aims to fill. The importance of doing such research lies in the need to provide a well-founded assessment which will look into all aspects of militarisation, and rightly evaluate the ongoing process in the country. The current narrative surrounding Mexican militarisation is leaning towards labelling it as an ineffective, repetitive solution

which will all but threaten the rights of citizens and the general state of the country. This thesis will attempt to discern whether this narrative proves correct.

3. Theoretical Framework

The following section will introduce the theoretical framework that this thesis will base itself on. The chosen theories will be presented and developed, and the concepts central to the argumentation will be defined. Theories of militarisation, particularly concerning the increasing involvement of the military in public security, will be the principal guide for this research.

3.1. Militarisation: a theory

3.1.1. Defining militarisation

As with any concept, the defining of militarisation is far from straightforward. Definitions employed by academics vary in shape and form, with some taking its meaning for granted, and others tending to shun the concept entirely due to the confusion surrounding its conceptualisation.

One of the principal problems that arises when attempting to conceptualise militarisation is the tendency to take it as a static concept, with the notion that there are separate civilian and military spheres. Militarisation is perceived as a linear process which moves from one realm to the other (going from 'non-militarised' to 'militarised'), with no interaction between either sphere. However, as Howell (2018) points out, there was never "a peaceful domain of 'normal' or 'civilian' politics unsullied by military intrusion" (118). In reality, both realms coexist and interact in a dynamic, integral manner. Morales Rosas and Pérez Ricart (2014) share this vision and summarise this conceptualisation very well, defining militarisation as "the projection of two distinct but constitutive processes: one in which military institutions are constituted as central actors in the whole organizational field of public security policies, and another in which civilian institutions belonging to this field acquire military logics after the activation of isomorphic institutional change mechanisms."

(14).[6] This acknowledgement of the double nature of militarisation will act as a guideline for the conceptualisation of the militarisation of law enforcement, a notion which will now be introduced.

3.1.2. The militarisation of law enforcement

Based on the recognition that the military is naturally and historically embedded in many states and societies, "then the militarisation of policing and the pacification of communities is a logical extension of the state's means and apparatus in creating the boundaries of social order" (Stuurman 2020, 46). In more simple terms, this signifies that policing is, to some degree, inherently militarised. In recent years, this process appears to have accelerated, with the boundaries between the police and the military having become increasingly blurred. This shift is visible across the world, with research particularly centring on the United States (e.g., Bove et Gavrilova 2017; Lawson 2019; Masera 2021; Mummolo 2018). Regardless of their country of focus, all works support a similar theory: across the world, the military is experiencing a growing role in public security. This thesis will base itself on this idea, utilising the GN as a tool to investigate whether the country of Mexico is experiencing an increased presence of the FA in public security.

3.2. Adapting militarisation to the case of Mexico

3.2.1. A Definition for Mexican Militarisation

While a broad conceptualisation of militarisation has already been offered, this section will provide a more precise adaptation of militarisation in line with the Mexican case. Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) offer a starting point in the construction of this definition. Basing themselves on a number of Latin American cases, their work presents a general definition of the militarisation of law enforcement, being: "the process through which government agencies tasked with providing public safety adopt the weapons, organizational structure, and training typical of the armed forces" (521). This generous conceptualisation

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[6] Translated by author.

is useful for this thesis in the sense that it aligns itself with what has been previously established, being that it does not fall victim to the tendency to separate civilian and military spheres. Instead, it offers a continuum, whereby any institutional body can become militarised to any particular degree. This is illustrated through their distinction between four different types of militarised law enforcement. As Figure 1 illustrates, law enforcement agencies can be classified as either non-militarised police, militarised police, paramilitary police, and constabularised military. While most academics tend to solely make the distinction between militarised or non-militarised, the elaboration by Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) enables a more in-depth analysis into the process by placing it on a scale, and not solely offering a 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question of militarisation.

	Non-Militarized Police	Militarized Police	Paramilitary Police	Constabularized Military
Accountability	Civilian law	Civilian law	Civilian law (with some exceptions)	Military law (with some exceptions)
Weaponry	No access to heavier weapons and equipment	Some access to heavier weapons and equipment	Some access to heavier weapons and equipment	Full access to heavier weapons and equipment
Training	Maintain public order (focus on community development and use of force as last resort)	Maintain public order (non-lethal use of force)	Maintain public order (non-lethal use of force)	Engage and destroy
Organizational Structure	Low degree of centralization and hierarchy, bottom-up command, deployed in small groups	Medium degree of centralization and hierarchy, bottom-up command, deployed in small groups and formed units	High degree of centralization and hierarchy, top-down command, deployed in formed units	High degree of centralization and hierarchy, top-down command, deployed in formed units

Least militarized   Most militarized

Figure 1. Law enforcement types based on degree of militarisation. Taken from Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021): 521.

Nonetheless, certain alterations will be made to the conceptualisation offered by Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021). Firstly, the second part of the definition will be slightly modified to fit the aims and objectives of this thesis. Rather than relying on "weapons, organizational structure, and training" as indicators of militarisation, four more broader ones will be taken into consideration, courtesy of Kraska (2007). Thus, this research will define the militarisation of law enforcement as: the process through which government agencies tasked with providing public safety adopt the weapons, cultural, organisational, and

operational structure typical of the armed forces. Secondly, while the differentiation between the four types of militarised law enforcement by the authors offers a useful tool in the conceptualisation of the GN, the need to select 'either/or' appears rather restrictive. As such, the classification will only be applied to the GN in an indicative, and non-restrictive manner. This signifies that, dependant on findings, the GN will be seen as 'similar to' or 'possessing multiple characteristics' of one of the bodies, and not be categorised as one in particular. This is carried out as a further attempt to avoid being over stringent in classification, and in recognition of the difficulty in quantifying the militarisation continuum.

3.2.2. The Conceptualisation of Indicators: Material, Cultural, Organisational, and Operational

Kraska (2007) offers a set of four indicators to aid in measuring the process of militarisation: (1) material, (2) cultural, (3) organisational, and (4) operational. Each indicator complements the other in offering a full picture of the militarisation process. The following few paragraphs will offer a brief summary of each indicator and what is meant by them in the context of this thesis. Table 1 outlines and provides a summary of this discussion.

Table 1. Conceptualisation of Chosen Indicators

Indicator		
Material		
	Weaponry	Military-grade weaponry, equipment, and technology defined by firepower and utility
Cultural		
	Martial Language	Vocalisation of militarism
	Military Style	Uniforms
	Ceremonial displays	Ceremonial presentations including swear-in events

Organisational		
	Personnel	Number and origin of each member of the GN
	Chain of Command	Origin of commanders and sub-commanders
	Training	Nature of training stages and courses and instructors
Operational		
	Deployment strategy	Methods of deployment (extent and with/without Armed Forces)
	Missions	Nature of assigned duties
	Special Unit	Specialised-skills unit within the GN

Source: By author.

3.2.2.1. Material Indicator

When referring to material indicators, this thesis will be referring to military-grade weaponry, equipment, and technology. The differentiation between law enforcement and military-style weaponry lies mostly in their utility and firepower. Due to the opposing functions and directives of the police and military, there is a stark difference in the weapons held by each body. While law enforcement is responsible for internal security, i.e., maintaining law and order and preventing and detecting crime, the military deals with external security, i.e., fighting a foreign threat. Their directives are also noticeably different, with the police being trained to prioritise de-escalation, and the military being trained to eliminate the enemy. This signifies that in situations of conflict, while the police may use their weapons as a last resort, the military are trained to respond to violence with violence. As said, this contrast is reflected in their weapon repertoire. While every country is different, generally speaking, police tend to carry smaller and less lethal weapons, ranging from pepper spray to tasers, batons, and handguns (all but 19 countries equip their law enforcement with guns). On the other hand, most militaries possess much larger and destructive weapons, including pistols, snipers, shotguns, mortars, and machine guns. Weapons are thus indicative of militarisation due to the extent of their

destructive force and lethality. Police are provided with weapons on the lower end of this scale in order to privilege de-escalation and the maintenance of the peace, while military bodies possess larger weapons to attack and/or defend an enemy. A shift in weaponry and equipment thus signifies not only an increase in firepower, but also a shift in mentality.

3.2.2.2. Cultural Indicator

Culture can be seen as "a wide range of observable events and underlying forces that operate at … the visible surface level artefacts such as physical environment, order of dress, language, stories told, and observable rituals and ceremonies; and publicly espoused beliefs and values" (The Western Cape Department of Community Safety 2018, 11). While culture can refer to a number of elements or characteristics, in this thesis, three cultural factors will be focused on: martial language, military style, and ceremonial displays. Martial language will be seen as language alluding to military values, force, service, or other similar characteristics. In more specific terms, the vocalisation of the ideology of militarism will be sought after. Secondly, military style will be looked at. Put simply, this work conceptualises military style as the uniforms worn by the GN. Choices of pattern, colour, and insignia will be of particular significance. Lastly, ceremonial displays will refer to ceremonial presentations, swear-in events.

3.2.2.3. Organisational Indicator

The organisational indicator will include three elements: personnel, chain of command, and training. Personnel will be conceptualised as the number and origin of each member of the GN. Similarly, the chain of command will look at the origin of commanders as well as those holding slightly lower positions (Commissioners, Inspectors, etc.). When discussing the training of the GN, this will be in relation to the training process they undergo (stages and courses), as well as the origin of the instructors teaching said courses.

3.2.2.4. Operational Indicator

When discussing the operational indicator, this research will be referring to the GN deployment strategy, their missions, and the presence of specialised units within said body. More specifically, the deployment strategy will look at how the GN is deployed, and to what extent alongside the FA. The missions will concern the type of duties assigned to the body (whether they are tailored more towards public security or other fields such as the defence of the territory). Lastly, the specialised unit will be referring to a specialised-skill body with the GN itself, with particular training, weaponry, and structure.

3.3. *Evaluating the impact of militarisation*

The framework of this thesis relies on two components: four indicators to assess the level of militarisation of the GN, and a theoretical mechanism to estimate the consequences of said militarisation. This section will develop the chosen mechanism and the theoretical expectations that are expected to be encountered. Through their research on the militarisation of law enforcement in Latin America, Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) have developed a set of theoretical expectations for increased militarisation. According to their research, they find that higher levels of militarisation in four areas (accountability, weaponry, training and organisational structure) have important consequences for four key features of Latin American democratic governance: citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order.

Firstly, they posit that the combination of military-style weapons, training and tactical organisation and deployment will translate into greater disruptive capacity (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021, 523). As these military features are built or designed around the aim of reaching maximum destructive capacity, organisations receiving these elements will be more likely than others to employ excessive force.

Secondly, this greater disruptive power will lead to an increase in human rights violations. While local and community law enforcement forces are trained with

an emphasis on developing and maintaining community relations and de-escalating conflict (Ibid), as they move away from this mentality and closer to that of military thinking (e.g. eliminating the enemy at all costs), human rights become a lower priority and find themselves at a higher risk of not being respected.

Thirdly, as law enforcement becomes more militarised, less attention will be given to 'fixing' the initial problem, i.e., reforming the "less militarised" agencies (Ibid). Research has shown that although militarised strategies may produce unfavourable consequences, public opinion tends to support these strategies as they see them as an example of a rapid action and response from the government. If a government goes from having corrupt, inefficient police on the streets to large deployments of military troops with the mission of ridding the country of criminals, those harmful consequences may be overlooked. With an increase in public support, governments thus have less incentives for police reform.

Lastly, Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021) posit that as law enforcement move away from civil law and into military law, they may operate outside of a clearly defined legal order, ultimately leading to impunity.

4. Methodology

In order to evaluate the ongoing militarisation of Mexico, this thesis will be guided by the two following questions:

- (1) What is the current state of the militarisation of the Guardia Nacional?

- (2) What are the societal and civil-military implications of this militarisation in terms of citizen security, human rights, legal order, and police reform?

4.1. Methodological Approach

This thesis' methodological process involves two steps. The first step will consist of measuring the militarisation of the GN by seeking commonalities with the FA. The process will be divided into four sections, guided by the four indicators proposed by Kraska (2007). In order to measure each indicator and offer an evaluation of the GN, a scale will be employed. While Kraska offers his own scale of measurement (ranging from 1 to 12, 1 being low militarisation and 12 being high militarisation), in the case of the GN, a more compact scale will prove more instrumental. This is not to say that Kraska's scale cannot be applied to other cases. In fact, it proves a well-founded tool, and is useful to apply to more developed cases (e.g., U.S. law enforcement). For the GN, as the body was only established in 2019, not enough time has passed in order to obtain concrete, reliable data on each indicator. As such, this would fail to enable an accurate assessment, and thus the appropriate utilisation of Kraska's scale. Instead, this thesis has developed an elementary scale which suits the novelty of the situation. The scale embodies a representation of groundwork research, seeking to offer an illustrative qualitative base on the theme of the militarisation of the GN. This base should serve as a first step for avenues of exploration for further qualitative and quantitative research. The following figure (Figure 2) offers an illustration of the chosen scale of measurement for the militarisation of the GN:

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities

Figure 2. Commonality Scale (By author)

The scale will be applied to each individual sub-indicator, with a summary being presented at the end, including the results of each sub-indicator. The term 'commonality' was chosen due to its versatility and broad nature. Firstly, in terms of practicality, both features enable it to be applied to each of the four indicators. Secondly, due to the novelty of the subject, the chosen term of

measurement could not be too precise. As mentioned, this is a preliminary research piece, meaning it is one of the first of its kind to offer any form of quantitative or qualitative measurement.

Second, this thesis will link this militarisation to potential societal and civil-military consequences based on research carried out by Flores-Macías and Zarkin (2021). According to their proposed theoretical expectations, high levels of militarisation in four areas (accountability, weaponry, training and organisational structure) lead to detrimental consequences for four key features of democratic governance (citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order). A slight alteration will be made to their framework, with this thesis employing Kraska's (2007) indicators instead of the four put forward by Flores-Macías and Zarkin. The justification for such a decision has already been presented but can be summarised as the following: the indicators put forward by Kraska (2007) are of a broader nature and encompass elements that those by Flores-Macías and Zarkin do not. As a result, the theoretical expectations guiding the second part of this thesis will be as follows: signs of militarisation in the material, cultural, organisational, and operational field are expected to have adverse effects on citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order.

4.2. Data

To respond to the two principal questions, this thesis will employ open-source qualitative as well as quantitative data. To be more specific, the first question will require data on the material, cultural, organisational, and operational characteristics of the GN. This information will be gathered from a variety of sources, and in both qualitative and quantitative form. Indeed, academic articles, official government documents (such as laws, reports, or press releases), surveys by national bodies, e.g. the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (the National Institute of Statistics and Geography – INEGI), reports by international organisations and newspaper articles will all be made use of.

Depending on the indicator, some sources will prove more useful than others. For example, when assessing the material dimension of the militarisation of the GN, data will be more likely to originate from governmental sources such as the *Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos* (said document provides a list of all weapons held by the FA). Quantitative and qualitative data will be mixed for a similar reason. While the cultural indicator calls for a qualitative evaluation of the GN's uniform and language, operational or organisational indicators may require more quantitative data (e.g. statistics regarding deployment rates). The second question, regarding the implications of the militarisation, will necessitate a similar mix of data.

The following section will offer a more in-depth insight into how data will be collected for each of the individual indicators.

4.3. Indicators

4.3.1. Cultural Indicators

While most data will be acquired through the analysis and handpicking of relevant information from diverse sources, data backing the cultural indicator will need to be collected through a more unique method. As this indicator can be defined by the presence of martial language and ideology of militarism, i.e., military beliefs and values, this requires a more in-depth analysis and methodological tool.

4.3.1.1. Martial Language

In order to extract data surrounding martial language, the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be employed. Scholars employing CDA see language as "a form of social practice, and are concerned with systematically investigating hidden power relations and ideologies embedded in discourse." (Johnson et McLean 2020, 379).

Through a selection of public speeches by the Commander of the GN, characteristics representative of martial language will be sought after. To be

precise, ten speeches held between 2019 and 2023 will be analysed. One of the speech's concerns the GN's 2023 Fourth Anniversary Ceremony, another the 2019 Inauguration Ceremony, and the eight others concern the inauguration of GN facilities. Table 2 provides a list of the speeches, as well as their in-text identifiers and the equivalent reference.

Table 2. List of analysed speeches and their identifiers and references

Speech [7]	In-text identifier	Reference
GN Fourth Anniversary Ceremony, on June 30, 2023 [8]	[GN 4th Anniv 2023]	(Córdova Campos 2023)
Inauguration of GN facilities on September 10, 2022 [9]	[GN FI 2022]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2022)
Inauguration of GN facilities on January 22, 2021 [10]	[GN FI 2021a]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2021a)
Inauguration of GN facilities on July 3, 2021 [11]	[GN FI 2021b]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2021b)
Inauguration of GN facilities on August 27, 2021[12]	[GN FI 2021c]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2021c)
Inauguration of GN facilities on February 14, 2020 [13]	[GN FI 2020a]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2020a)

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[7] All speeches were translated by the author.

[8] Speech delivered by Commissioner General David Córdova Campos, Commander of the National Guard, during the Fourth Anniversary Ceremony of the National Guard, in Campo Marte, Mexico City, on June 30, 2023.

[9] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio, Commander of the National Guard, during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Colotlán, Jalisco, on September 10, 2022.

[10] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Sabinas, Hidalgo, Nuevo León, on January 22, 2021.

[11] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Pitiquito, Sonora, on July 3, 2021.

[12] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, on August 27, 2021.

[13] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Sahuayo de Morelos, Michoacán, on February 14, 2020.

Inauguration of GN facilities on February 14, 2020 [14]	[GN FI 2020b]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2020b)
Inauguration of GN facilities on February 15, 2020 [15]	[GN FI 2020c]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2020c)
Inauguration of GN facilities on December 16, 2020 [16]	[GN FI 2020d]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2020d)
Inauguration Ceremony of the National Guard, on June 30, 2019 [17]	[GN Inaug 2019]	(Rodríguez Bucio 2019)

Source: By author.

Inductive reasoning will be employed in order to extract indicators of martial language. Indeed, instead of searching for pre-decided words in the speeches, this thesis will use observation to later draw conclusions and list words or expressions demonstrative of military language and tendencies.

Looking into these speeches will enable an analysis of the discourse surrounding the GN, and facilitate the making of inferences regarding the characteristics' significance towards the process of militarisation.

4.3.1.2. Military Style

Collecting data regarding military style is relatively straightforward. The government website provides an illustration of the two types of uniforms, and a presidential speech from March 2019 concerning the inauguration of the GN describes each uniform.

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[14] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Jiquilpan de Juárez, Michoacán, on February 14, 2020.
[15] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Tepatitlán de Morelos, Jalisco, on February 15, 2020.
[16] Speech delivered by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration of the National Guard facilities in Moctezuma, Sonora, on December 16, 2020.
[17] Speech given by Commissioner General Luis Rodríguez Bucio during the Inauguration Ceremony of the National Guard, in Campo Marte, Cd. Méx., on June 30, 2019.

4.3.1.3. Ceremonial Displays

Information will be gathered on ceremonial displays through the observation of swear-in ceremonies. These ceremonies will be analysed according to their symbolism, discipline, and hierarchy.

4.3.2. Material Indicators

Gathering data on material indicators, i.e., GN weaponry, equipment, and technology, will be done through multiple means. Firstly, the most obvious manner of accessing this information, being to request it through official sources, will not be possible in this case due to the sensitive nature of the request. As such, secondary sources will be primarily relied on to provide such data. While certain official documentation, including the Ley de la Guardia Nacional, presents some basic indication of the nature of the weaponry, news and investigational articles provide further details. In combination with this, certain inferences will be made regarding the transfer of the GN to SEDENA and their new potential access to a variety of military-grade weapons.

4.3.3. Organisational Indicators

In order to encounter information concerning the organisational side of the GN, three themes will be looked into: personnel, chain of command, and training. Most data regarding personnel and those in command will originate from official government documents or government-affiliated bodies, specifically the INEGI. When it comes to training, a combination of investigative sources were employed, as well as requests to access information from the Mexican government. Said inquiries for information were not personally requested, as a large majority of the information was already available on the *Plataforma Nacional de Transparencia* (National Platform for Transparency – PNT).

4.3.4. Operational Indicators

Similar to the previous indicator, collecting data on the operational indicator of militarisation will mostly be done through the consulting of governmental sources. Most information concerning the GN deployment strategy, and their

duties is publicly available. Further, there are numerous press releases on the creation of a new specialised GN unit.

4.4. Case Selection

The militarisation of law enforcement is an international phenomena. It is discussed and observed in all corners of the world, including in the U.S. (e.g., Hall et Coyne 2013; Kraska et Kappeler 1997), in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g., Bruin et Karabatak 2021), in Oceania (Goldsworthy 2022; The Western Cape Department of Community Safety 2018) and, of course, in Latin America. The far-reaching nature of the topic signifies that any and all countries could be employed as a case study. So why Mexico, and why the GN in particular? The Mexican case is particularly interesting from an academic perspective for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Mexico hosts a rather unique relationship between civil and military institutions. Indeed, in comparison to other Latin American countries, historically, civil-military relations in Mexico have been inordinately stable. Considered an "island of stability" amongst neighbouring countries fraught with civil-military tension (Hachemer 2017, 83), Mexican civilian institutions have long managed to maintain an amiable and rather beneficial relationship with the FA. Academia has attributed this stability to what is called the "civil-military pact". Born out of the Mexican Revolution and the PRI leadership, this pact cemented the importance of the FA in Mexican society. While the pact began to breakdown following Mexico's transition to democracy in the late 1980s, the FA have maintained their influential position, particularly after being introduced into the realm of public security (i.e., fighting organised crime and drug-trafficking). The role of the FA continued to evolve with the 2006 administration, led by Felipe Calderón, heavily relying on the military for matters of internal security (see section 5.3.2 of Hachemer 2017). While Calderón's strategy was heavily criticised, AMLO appears to be pursuing a similar path.

While Mexico distinguishes itself from other Latin American countries due to its unique civil-military relations, thus offering itself as a compelling study, alongside it, any administration could have been selected for analysis. This thesis has chosen to focus on the AMLO administration. Firstly, this is due to it being relatively understudied (owing to its relative newness), and secondly due to the unprecedented nature of AMLO's security strategy. While other administrations have attempted to set up their own form of law enforcement, such as Peña Nieto's Gendarmerie, none have taken as significant steps as AMLO. While the inception of the GN itself already offers a valid research opportunity, the shifting and highly debated nature of the GN (alternating between civil or military), adds an additional layer to explore. As previously mentioned, the GN was first under civilian command, the SSPC, and was later placed under the responsibility of SEDENA. This shift is rare in its kind, and ultimately signifies that Mexico has lost the sole non-military police institution responsible for public security on a national scale. Such an impactful political decision is well worthy of academic attention.

5. Contextualisation

Before attempting to offer any evaluation of the GN, a contextualisation of the subject is needed. The creation and deployment of the GN was no random occurrence. Its inception can be placed within a context of (1) a history of civil-military camaraderie and (2) the current security crisis plaguing the country. The combination of both elements enabled it to pass, politically and socially, relatively undisputed. However, as time passes, the GN is facing increasing backlash.

5.1. A history of Mexican civil-military camaraderie: from the 1930s to today

Intervention by the FA in public security is no new affair. On the contrary, military participation in internal security can be traced back to the late 1930s, during which they participated in the eradication of illicit crops as part of the

fight against drugs (Astorga 2007). The length of their support, totalling to over 80 years, has given rise to what academics term chronic path dependence. While administrations attempt to move away from the pattern of relying on the FA for matters of public security, most find themselves drawn back to that same tendency. The following section on the evolving role of the FA since the 1930s will shed light on this pattern.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a revival of the participation of the military in public security, particularly in the face of counterinsurgency campaigns during the Dirty War and the Zapatista uprising (Gaussens et González 2020). The 1990s continued this process and marked a turning point in the FA' participation in public affairs after being given more 'official' duties. As put by Alvarado Mendoza and Zaverucha (2010), the military "assumed a new role and began a process of organizational, technical, budgetary, team-building and internal security planning" (254).[18] Alongside this, the government upped the body's "budget, training, personnel and equipment" (Ibid).[19]

In the following years, two particular institutional and political changes consolidated the FA' more permanent role in public security (Gaussens et González 2020). First, was the creation of the National Public Security System in 1995, alongside a handful of other like-minded changes. Second, was the shifting discourse surrounding the use of the military in public security during the Calderón administration from 2006 to 2012.

Firstly, the 1995 system enabled the coordination and distribution of competences in matters of public security between federal, state, and municipal authorities (Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública 2017). These authorities included SEDENA and the *Secretaría de Marina* (the Secretariat of the Navy – SEMAR), alongside other civil organisms. In terms of civil-military relations, this signified that the military was now able to

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[18] Translated by author.
[19] Translated by author.

participate in the designing of Mexico's security policy. Around the same time, a substitution policy was put in place with the aim of "replacing police officers with military personnel at medium and high command levels, both in instances of public security and justice—including preventive and judicial police tasks" (Gaussens et González 2020, 31). Other complementary policies in the late 1990s include that of the creation of Mixed Operations Bases (BOM) between civilian police forces and the military, as well as the inception of the Federal Police in 1999 (which incorporated elements of the Military Police). These actions marked the slow but gradual integration of the FA into public security.

The 2000s continued the trend of military inclusion in public security, particularly from 2006 onwards.[20] Indeed, the second development that altered the status of the military took place during the Felipe Calderón administration (2006-2012), where the official discourse relied on the use of force in order to combat organised crime. From early on, Calderón made clear his security strategy highly depended on the military's support. In December 2006, on a Michoacán military base, the then-president famously declared a "war" against cartels, drug trafficking, and organised crime more generally. The FA were a central tool in his strategy and were supported by a number of actions favourable to their expansion. The military budget almost doubled (the 2006-2012 period saw an increase of about 3.2 billion to 6.2 billion USD) and public security civilian posts were gradually replaced by military persons (RESDAL 2012). Such a shift allowed "the military to become the dominant force in internal security issues" (Hachemer 2017, 92).

Most academics tend to agree that this reliance on the Army was due to the ongoing government crisis Calderón found himself in. In order to prove his government's capacity and efficiency, as well as restore its legitimacy, bold and

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[20] While the previous administration, headed by Vicente Fox (2000-2006), also incorporated the use of the Armed Forces for public security into its security strategy, deployment numbers were much higher during the Calderón administration. While Fox committed an average of 19,293 troops annually to battling drug trafficking, Calderón deployed an average of 45,000 during his six years (Grayson 2013, 3).

rather ruthless measures were needed, or so it appeared. While they were definitely bold, ultimately, they failed to address Mexico's security crisis. While it cannot be ignored that a number of drug kingpins were taken off the streets – around a ballpark figure of 100 – the direct attack on the cartels encouraged a harsh retaliation. Violence suffered a sharp increase, with the number of homicides nearly tripling during Calderón's term (Flannery 2013). By the end of his presidency, Calderón had little to brag about. His successor, Enrique Peña Nieto, was met with the challenge of turning the country around, and somehow, finding peace for the Mexican people.

This proved easier said than done. Head of state between 2012 and 2018, Peña Nieto attempted to curb the violence by announcing a broad package of reforms in the security sector. The aim of these reforms was relatively straightforward: to relieve the military from its tasks in public security while reinforcing civilian law enforcement agencies (Hachemer 2017). One of the new policies that sought to strengthen law enforcement was the creation of the "National Gendarmerie". Originally separate from the Federal Police, the Gendarmerie was set up with the objective of reaching 40,000 members (Ibid). After being stalled on numerous occasions and allegedly due to budgetary restriction, only 5,000 members were sworn in. Such a small number proved no match against the rampant crime tearing through the country, and experts and academics were quick in pointing this out. Ultimately, little changed, with the Federal Police maintaining their position, the FA remaining in public security, and the Gendarmerie becoming a division of the Federal Police – i.e., "the opposite to what it was originally proposed to be: an intermediary body of military origin and identity" (Sánchez Lara et Aguilar Romero 2020, 71). Violence rates continued to spike, with Peña Nieto's last two years in office being characterised as "the most violent in recent history", with an average of over 2,000 murders a month (Amnesty International 2018a). It was in this context that AMLO found himself in when coming into power in 2018.

5.2. 2018 to today: AMLO's venture to resolve the Mexican security crisis

As the previous section has shown, AMLO was in no way the first to initiate the militarisation of public security. In fact, from as early as 2010, AMLO strongly advocated against any form of militarisation. The narrative put forward during his multiple presidential campaigns (in 2006, 2012, and 2018) appeared to indicate a certain disdain or dislike for the FA and the growing role they held in public security. In addition to accusing the FA of participating in the 2014 disappearance of the 43 students in Ayotzinapa (Alberto Alonso 2017), AMLO frequently stated how the military had too much power. In 2012, referring to Felipe Calderón's military-led take on tackling the security crisis, AMLO expressed how coercive policies were not the correct path to take, stating how "nothing is solved with the use of the Army, Navy, police, prisons, threats of heavy hand, with more severe laws, since peace and tranquillity are fruits of justice" (Almazán 2016).[21] These hostile feelings appeared reciprocal, with a considerable section of the military opposing his views, particularly in the run-up to and during his 2018 presidency (Deare 2021). Amongst the numerous opinions was the voice of Sergio Aponte Polito, a recently retired General and former commander of the II Military Region in Baja California (Ibid). In an op-ed entitled "No apoyé ni apoyaré a AMLO" ("I did not and will not support AMLO"), Polito expressed his concerns regarding AMLO becoming president. Defending his reasoning for not supporting the candidate, he voices how AMLO is "constantly denouncing the Armed Forces", and has expressed interest in reducing the size and budget of the Army (Redacción Zeta 2018).[22]

Regardless of this controversy, AMLO made his stance on reducing the role of the FA in public security an official part of his presidential campaign. He advocated for the removal of the military in the "war on drugs" and on the

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[21] Translated by author.
[22] Translated by author.

streets, and ultimately to send them back to their barracks.[23] His approach was reflected in his choice of slogan, "Abrazos no Balazos" (Hugs not Bullets). So, why the talk of the militarisation of law enforcement if he was promising the opposite? It turns out that removing the FA from Mexico's internal security is easier said than done.

It took the newly-elect president very little time to retract his statement of returning the Army to their barracks. According to the media, after coming to power, AMLO "realised" that Mexico "could not face the serious problem of insecurity and violence in the country" without the support of the military (particularly as the other bodies, such as the Federal Police, are incapable of taking on such a large task alone – or at all) (López Ponce 2018).[24] Why he did not grasp this at an earlier stage, before incorporating it into his presidential campaign, is something that may never be known.

Needing to offer up an alternative, AMLO turned to a similar strategy employed by Peña Nieto: the creation, or more so the revival, of a new security body. AMLO's big idea was to dust off and reinstitute a law enforcement body – the GN – buried in the 1917 Constitution. Originally "reserves of the Federal Army under the command of the governors of each state, members of the GN were not full-time soldiers, but volunteers available to be called to duty in an emergency" (Hernández Ojeda 2023).[25] While the body fell into disuse during the 19th century, its constitutional framework remained in place. AMLO took advantage of this, only left with the task of operationalising the body.

Through its operationalisation, the president aimed to present the body as a new federal law enforcement agency, with members being pulled from the Federal Police, the Military Police, and the Naval Police. However, two constitutional

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[23] In 2017, he stated: "We will not use force to resolve social problems,", "We are going to confront insecurity and violence by addressing the root causes, not as they have been doing." (Fisher 2022).
[24] Translated by author.
[25] Translated by author.

catches emerged during the inception of the GN. On the one hand, Article 21 states that public security institutions, i.e. what the GN would be classified as, must be civilian in nature. On the other, Article 129 of the Mexican Constitution forbids any military bodies from performing tasks unrelated to defence tasks in times of peace (Hernández Ojeda 2023). To address the two issues, the GN was placed under the SSPC – a civil institution (solving the first constitutional barrier). This also meant that by transferring to the SSPC, those joining from the Army or Navy were giving up their military titles and thus becoming civilian participants (solving the second constitutional obstacle). With these hurdles overcome, Mexico was officially ready to welcome its new law enforcement body.

While the GN was under the SSPC for three years, in 2022, the body was officially transferred to SEDENA. The Ministry of Defence was granted the administrative and operational control of the GN, relaunching the debate of the "militarisation" of public security. In reality, this did in fact violate Article 21 of the Constitution, which AMLO was well aware of when first putting the GN under the SSPC. While the transfer raised a great deal of criticism, the reform went ahead, meaning the GN was now fully under military control.

5.3. An unfaltering support of the Armed Forces?

When discussing the past, present, and future militarisation of Mexico, it may come as a surprise how the process has continued on for so long, and why citizens are 'accepting' of the GN. While some resistance has been shown, due to a lack of better solutions and the poor quality of law enforcement, most of the Mexican population tends to give in to military-oriented solutions regarding the security crisis. Alongside the history of civil-military camaraderie, this is another reason as to how the GN has managed to weave itself into the Mexican security system.

Indeed, most years, the Army and the Navy have come out top in surveys regarding perceptions of trust in Mexican authorities. In 2022, 89.6% of the

population identified the Navy as the body in which they held the most trust, followed by the Army with 87.1% (INEGI 2022c, 57). In contrast, only 58.3% of Mexicans indicated trusting the judicial body, and 56.2% the State Police (Ibid).[26]

While this can be linked back to a plethora of explanations, including the historical involvement of the FA in humanitarian operations or low-resource communities, as said, one reason in particular appears most obvious. Above all, considering the notorious and unmistakable corruption of both the Mexican police and the judicial system, the military is perceived as the "lesser evil" (Flores Pérez 2015, 15). With organised crime and drug trafficking organisations wreaking havoc on the country, the more forceful methods of the FA appear to offer at worst an offer of hope; at least someone, somewhere, is doing something. As a result, their controversial methods, involving high levels of violence, tendencies towards authoritarianism, and their own level of corruption, may, to an extent, be overlooked.

6. Findings

The following section will begin the review of the GN in terms of its level of militarisation and its societal and civil-military implications. First, findings relating to the GN's level of militarisation will be presented. These findings will be presented in an orderly fashion in four separate sections, corresponding to the four indicators of militarisation put forward by Kraska (2007). The description of the cultural, material, organisational, and operational characteristics of the GN will enable this thesis to place the law enforcement body on a scale of militarisation.

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[26] Following the State Police, percentages of trust gradually diminished. This includes the ministerial, judicial or investigative police (56%), the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and State Prosecutors' Offices (55.9%), the Municipal Preventive Police (52.7%), and the Transit Police (45%) (INEGI 2022c, 57).

6.1. Cultural Indicator

Following Kraska's (2007) research, the cultural indicators analysed in this study will correspond to the following: martial language, military style in appearance, and ceremonial displays.

6.1.1. Martial language

When looking at the ten selected speeches pronounced by the Commander of the GN, five themes emerged. These are: personal relationships, military values, military operationality, military service, and military disposition. The following section will present the findings in relation to these themes. Table 3 displays a summary of the results.

Table 3. Results of CDA of speeches

Themes	Codes
Personal relationships	- Reference to military camaraderie
Military values	- Reference to legitimacy-seeking: ➢ procedural ➢ external ➢ internal
Military operationality	- Reference to military infrastructure - Use of military operational language - Reference to service men and women
Military service	- Reference to military service - Reference to a call to military service
Military disposition	- Reference to military force

Source: By author.

Throughout the speeches, a number of phrases, words, and expressions relating to the broader theme of military life emerge when discussing the GN. The first to surface concerns *military personal relationships*. On a number of occasions, the GN was associated with other military bodies, including the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. As an example, in a speech introduction, the GN

Commander starts with: "Comrades from the National Guard, Mexican Army, National Air Force and Navy" [GN 4th Anniv 2023]. By utilising the word "comrades" to address the GN alongside other military bodies, it is as if the GN is being placed as part of a larger military whole. This reinforces a sense of shared camaraderie and solidarity. In other speeches, the GN is said to share the same "esprit de corps" [GN FI 2021a] or "spirit" [GN FI 2020d] as the FA which "unites" [GN FI 2021a; GN FI 2020d] them. Similarly, this emphasises the prior idea of a shared unity between the two bodies, as well as a feel of collective identity and belonging. Overall, the two bodies are placed alongside each other and spoken of as if they share a strong connection.

Secondly, a theme that appears regularly throughout nearly all speeches is that of *military values*. Traditionally, values associated to the FA include, among others, that of loyalty, honesty, integrity, discipline, and courage. In the speeches, discipline is mentioned on eight occasions when referring to the characteristics or nature of the GN [GN 4th Anniv 2023; GN FI 2021b; GN FI 2021c; GN Inaug 2019]. The term is particularly present in both the 2023 Anniversary speech (three times) and the 2019 Inauguration speech (three times). Alongside discipline, certain other values mentioned can be linked to legitimacy seeking strategies from governance literature: internal, external, and procedural (Christensen, Laegreid et Rykkja 2016). In calling upon the values of "honesty" [GN FI 2022; GN FI 2021b], "loyalty" [GN FI 2022], "service to the citizenry" [GN FI 2021b] the GN is attempting to remind its public of the internal reasonings for its establishment, which are morally grounded. Identifying as a "guarantor of public safety" [GN Inaug 2019] whose ultimate goal is to "better serve Mexico" [GN FI 2020b] in ways of "providing security" [GN Inaug 2019] addresses a sentiment of wanting to achieve better external outputs from their force. Part of this is ensuring the values of "professionalism" [GN 4th Anniv 2023] and "discipline" [GN 4th Anniv 2023; GN FI 2021b; GN Inaug 2019] underlie the GN's procedures. This serves to justify the changes of the GN's current more military set-up.

Thirdly, a number of words or expressions were found alluding to *military operationality*. In this case, operationality refers to the way in which the military traditionally operates, i.e., through which means (material and immaterial). Regarding the material side, when describing the living quarters of the GN, the word "barracks" was found in seven of the speeches [GN FI 2022; GN FI 2021a; GN FI 2021b; GN FI 2021c; GN FI 2020a; GN FI 2020c; GN FI 2020d]. This directly alludes to a connection with military culture and infrastructure, particularly as the speaker could have chosen a multitude of other words to refer to GN accommodation. Instead, the word "barracks" was chosen, specifically to emphasise this connection. Further, on two occasions, the phrasing "assigned" was employed when referring to missions or members of the GN ("missions assigned to (people) […], (people) who are assigned to […]" [GN FI 2022; GN FI 2021c]. Alongside this, the terms "missions" [GN FI 2022], "joint operations" [GN FI 2020a], and "troops" [GN Inaug 2019] are mentioned in order to describe either the members of the GN or their actions and goals. These are all expressions which embody elements of military operationality. The use of the verb "to assign" refers to the concept of delegation of tasks and responsibilities, which is something found in the structured hierarchy and chain of command in the AF. The same can be said for the word "troops", which is a term only employed in a military context, again referring to hierarchy.

Alongside this, *military service* is a theme that is recurrent throughout a number of the speeches. In four speeches, the verb "to serve" is used regularly [GN FI 2022; GN FI 2020a; GN FI 2020b; GN FI 2020c], as well as the expression "to provide services to" [GN FI 2022]. Both are used when discussing the duty of the GN to the people or citizenry of Mexico. Similarly, the expression of "vocation for service" was encountered in two of the speeches [GN FI 2021a; GN FI 2020b]. Together, these terms allude to the loyalty and duty the body has towards the Mexican population. This is a concept that is recurrent in the military realm, where their sense of purpose is strongly based on their duties to their country. When a person decides to enlist in the AF, they are seen as giving

up or dedicating their lives to serve their country. This is a feeling that is attempting to be fostered through this use of language. This is illustrated by certain passages in a number of the speeches which are dedicated to encouraging enlistment in the GN. Geared towards the younger generation, the phrasing of these passages resembles that of military enlistment, with the invitations to service combining the verb "to serve" and "joining" the ranks [GN FI 2021a; GN FI 2020a; GN FI 2020b; GN FI 2020c].

Lastly, certain adjectives referring to *military disposition* are used by the Commander of the GN when detailing how the GN will, or should, act when faced with crime and criminal groups. On one occasion, it is expressed how the GN will "act firmly" against criminals [GN FI 2020a], as well as how the body will be "unbeatable" against organised crime [GN FI 2020d]. If the GN was perceived and spoken of as a civilian law enforcement body, the focus would be on privileging peace and only employing force as a last resort. Instead, the GN is described as a strict, strong, and almost invincible force, which will not back down against organised crime. This is borrowed from military ideology and ways of perceiving crime and criminals. Following their line of thinking, their principal aim is to eliminate the enemy, through whichever means necessary.

Looking at all five themes, through a conscious choice of wording, the GN appears to be portrayed as an extension of the AF. This is visible through the numerous attempts at creating associations and similarities between both bodies, and justifying changes. While this concept of similarity and unity is only disseminated in an immaterial fashion, i.e., through language, it has a particular importance in terms of the construction of identity of the GN. As a relatively new body, the GN will tend to shape its identity and status around the official narrative(s), e.g., one being by the Commander of the GN. As the presented narrative concerns establishing a feeling of proximity between the GN and the AF, this may be absorbed by members of the GN, meaning there is a chance they will construct their identity around this perceived similarity with the AF.

Thus, GN members may drift away from the concept of being a law enforcement body responsible for citizen safety and minimising conflict, and instead towards a military mentality privileging the use of force.

Based on these findings, in relation to martial language, the GN is considered to possess *overt commonalities* with the AF (Figure 3).

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
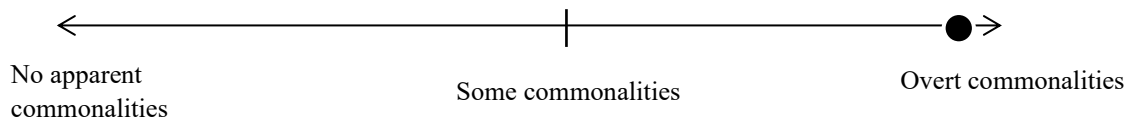
Figure 3. Martial Language on the Commonality Scale

6.1.2. Military style

The GN has two types of troop uniforms: one for field personnel, and one for proximity agents (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Uniforms of the Guardia Nacional. Taken from Guardia Nacional (2021).

Field personnel, being those deployed in regional coordinates, are dressed in grey and black camouflage pixilation uniforms, consisting of a jacket, tactical trousers, relatively high-rise black boots, a cap or helmet, a bulletproof vest, and an armband or 'bracelet' with the initials *GN*. Proximity agents, i.e., those "in contact with society", are in light and dark shades of green/greys, and in a shirt,

trousers, black boots, a cap, and the *GN* inscription on an armband as well as on the back of the shirt or jacket (López Obrador 2019).[27]

As Figure 5 illustrates, the FA possess a similar field uniform to the GN. While the colours are different (green versus grey), the pixelated pattern is the same. Other similarities include the general style or fit of the uniform, the cap, and the boots.

Figure 5. Uniforms of the Armed Forces. Taken from SEDENA (2013).

Based on these two comparisons, in terms of uniform, the GN is seen as having *overt commonalities* with the FA.

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
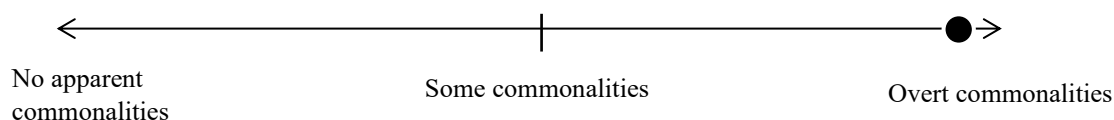
Figure 6. GN Uniform on the Commonality Scale

6.1.3. Ceremonial displays

Since its inception, most (or all) GN swear-in ceremonies have been modelled after those of the military. As per the words of the previous GN commander, Luis Rodríguez Bucio (2019-2023):

"[…] being that the Guard is an institution that for the accomplishment of its mission uses weapons, we have a structure similar to that of the Armed

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[27] Translated by author.

Forces. We also think it is very convenient that here in this institution it should be established that every time a Guard official takes up a position, the appropriate ceremony is held so that all the personnel, from their area in principle and from the National Guard in general, realize that there was a change in the structure of the National Guard." (Murillo 2022)[28]

Swear-in ceremonies are usually held on either SEDENA-owned or military grounds. For example, the 2023 change of GN commanders took place at the Marte military camp (Redacción SinEmbargo 2023). Other key elements of the ceremonies include the considerable presence of Mexican symbols (such as the flag), the disposition of GN members (aligned in rows), the presence of the chain of command, and saluting by the GN. Figure 7 provides a visual comparison between GN and Army swear-in ceremonies.

| - **Symbolism :** uniform
- **Discipline :** organised structure | - **Symbolism :** Mexican flag, uniform
- **Hierarchy/discipline :** superior in uniform, salute, organised structure | - **Symbolism :** Mexican flag, uniforms
- **Discipline :** organised structure | - **Symbolism :** Mexican flag, uniform
- **Hierarchy/discipline :** superior in uniform, salute, organised structure |

Figure 7. Visual comparison of GN and Army swear-in ceremonies. Taken from Cortesia (2023); Revista Military Armas (n.d.); Rodríguez Velázquez (2023); and Yucatan Ahora (2022).

As the above images exhibit, similarities in symbolism, discipline, and hierarchy can be noted between the ceremonies of the two bodies. Based on this, with regards to ceremonial displays, the GN is deemed to possess *overt commonalities* with the FA.

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[28] Translated by author.

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
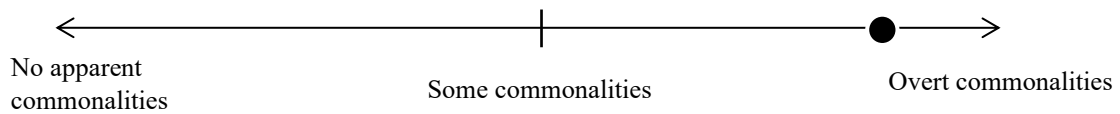
Figure 8. GN Ceremonial Displays on the Commonality Scale

6.2. Material Indicator

In this section, material indicators including weaponry and equipment will be presented. Due to its confidential nature, accessing this information was no easy task. What follows is a combination of public information and considered assumptions.

When attempting to directly request a list of GN weaponry, the response was as follows:

> "In accordance with articles 100, 101 second paragraph, 103, 105, 106 section I, 113 section I, of the General Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information; 97, 98 section I, 99 second paragraph, 100, 102 first and second paragraph and 110 section I, of the Federal Law on Transparency Access to Public Information; Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Nineteenth, Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth numerals of the General Guidelines on Information Classification and Declassification, as well as for the Preparation of Public Versions; It is information that is classified as "RESERVED", for a reservation period of 5 years" (Unidad de Asuntos Jurídicos y Transparencia de la Guardia Nacional 2021b).[29]

Although a full list was withheld, one indication was given, being that the GN possess "small arms and long weapons" (Ibid). While this does not aid much towards painting a portrait of the situation, other more public sources, including news articles and investigation platforms, offer more detailed suggestions as to

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[29] Translated by author.

which weapons the law enforcement body holds. FX-05 Xiuhcoatl assault rifles (Alejandro Medellín 2020; La Razón 2019), 50-caliber Barrett semi-automatic rifles (Alejandro Medellín 2020; Storr 2023), Heckler & Koch machine guns (Alejandro Medellín 2020), and Sig Sauer P-320 9mm pistols (Alejandro Medellín 2020; Presidencia de la República 2020) have all been mentioned as part of the GN weapon repertoire. These are accompanied by more transport-oriented equipment, including Cheyenne pick-up trucks (Presidencia de la República 2020), Black Hawk helicopters (Amnesty International 2020), ambulances, and motorcycles (Presidencia de la República 2020). Table 3 offers a summary of the range of potential GN weaponry and equipment, as well as the numbers for each type (when available).

Table 4. Assumed Weaponry of the Guardia Nacional

Weaponry				
Type	*Visual representation*[30]	*Status (confirmed/ unconfirmed)*[31]	*GN stock*	
			Year	Figure (Approx.)
FX-05 Xiuhcoatl assault rifle		Confirmed	N/A	N/A[32]
50-Caliber Barrett semi-automatic rifle	 Example of the M82A1 model	Unconfirmed	N/A	N/A

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[30] Sources: Barrett (n.d.); EFE (2021); El Sol de León (2023); Guardia Nacional (2022b); Sig Sauer (n.d.); Suciu (2020); Quevedo (2021); WeaponSystems (n.d.).
[31] Status based on whether the weapon/equipment has been recognised in official government documentation.
[32] Although no precise data was encountered, the FX-05 Xiuhcoatl is the GN's principal weapon, signifying that the figure would be relatively high.

Heckler & Koch machine gun	 Example of the HK21 model	Unconfirmed	N/A	N/A
Sig Sauer P-320 9mm pistols	 Example of the P320 Nitron Full-Size	Confirmed	2020	50,000

Equipment				
Type	*Visual representation*	*Status (confirmed/ unconfirmed)*	*GN stock*	
			Year	Figure (Approx.)
Cheyenne pick-up truck		Confirmed	2020	2,714
Black Hawk helicopter		Unconfirmed[33]	2023	Up to 48[34]
Ambulance		Confirmed	2020	10

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[33] Unconfirmed in official documentation although presence of photographic evidence.
[34] Including helicopters available to the Armed Forces (Quevedo 2023).

Motorcycle		Confirmed	2020	185

Sources: Alejandro Medellín (2020); Amnesty International (2020); La Razon (2019); Presidencia de la República (2020); Storr (2023).

As it turns out, a number of this weaponry and equipment is also shared with the FA. As Table 5 illustrates, both bodies share the FX-05 Xiuhcoatl, as well as similar models of the three other weapons.[35]

Table 5. GN and Armed Forces Weaponry Equivalent

GN Weapon	Armed Forces weapon equivalent
FX-05 Xiuhcoatl	FX-05 Xiuhcoatl
50-Caliber Barrett semi-automatic rifle	Barrett M82 .50 Calibre
Heckler & Koch machine gun	Heckler & Koch HK MP5; HK21; HK21E
Sig Sauer P-320 9mm pistols	SIG P220; SIG P226

Sources: ArmyRecognition (n.d.) and Military Factory (n.d.)

What is interesting about the shared FX-05 Xiuhcoatl is that it is considered the "flagship weapon" of SEDENA (i.e., one of the principal 'go-to' weapons of

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[35] No models were encountered for the GN's Barrett rifle or the H&K machine gun, meaning the Armed Forces' equivalent could still be the same model.

the FA) (Redacción Infobae México 2023).[36] Being designed and manufactured in the workshops of the Mexican Army, the FX-05 is considered a weapon of combat, able to fire 750 bullets per minute. In addition, the weapon has highly adaptable features, including the ability to install attachments ranging from bayonets to grenade launchers.

In addition to what has been suggested by prior sources, other inferences can be made. An investigation by the *Programa de Seguridad Ciudadana* of the Iberoamericana University states that the basic equipment of the GN "comes from the Armed Forces, with some adaptations in response to the wide range of tasks that correspond to the GN" (Storr 2023). As is indicated here, the transfer of control of the GN from the SSPC to SEDENA signifies a drastic shift in terms of weaponry. Indeed, the Ley de la Guardia Nacional (2019) states that the GN is entitled to "firearms and ammunition covered by the collective official licence issued by the Ministry of National Defence" (as well as "less lethal weapons" and "technological equipment and instruments") (20).[37] Thus, as the GN's weaponry will now be originating from a military body, it is highly likely they will have access to and be equipped with more lethal weapons. Article 11 of the *Ley Federal De Armas De Fuego y Explosivos* (1972) provides a list of all weapons available exclusively to the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force (see Table 6). While this does not signify that the GN is equipped with everything on the list, it provides a general idea as to what they *may* have access to.

Table 6. Weapons available to the Armed Forces

Weapon types (English) [38]		In original Spanish
Revolvers		*Revólveres*
	Calibre .357 Magnum	
	Superior to .38 Special	

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[36] Translated by author.
[37] Translated by author.
[38] All weapons translated by author.

Pistols		*Pistolas*
	Calibre 9mm. Parabellum, Luger and similar types	
	.38 Super and Comando	
	Superior calibres	
Rifles, carbines, *mosquetones*, shotguns		*Fusiles, mosquetones, carabinas y tercerolas*
	Calibre .223"	
	7 mm.	
	7.62 mm	
	Carbines calibre .30" in all models	
Pistols, carbines, rifles with burst system, sub-machine-guns, machine guns		*Pistolas, carabinas y fusiles con sistema de ráfaga, sub-ametralladoras, metralletas y ametralladoras*
	All calibres	
Shotguns and gas launchers		*Escopetas y lanzagases*
	Barrel length of less than 635 mm. (25)	
	Calibre greater than 12 (.729 or 18.5 mm)	
Ammunition for the previous weapons and cartridges		*Municiones y cartuchos*
	With special devices such as tracers, incendiaries, perforators, fumigants, expansive gases	
	And for those loaded with shots greater than 00 (.84 cm in diameter) for shotguns	

Cannons, artillery pieces, mortars, and tanks		*Cañones, piezas de artillería, morteros y carros de combate*
	With attachments, accessories, projectiles and ammunition	
Rocket projectiles, torpedoes, grenades, bombs, mines, depth charges, flamethrowers and similar		*Proyectiles-cohete, torpedos, granadas, bombas, minas, cargas de profundidad, lanzallamas y similares*
	With the devices, artifices and machines for their launching	
Bayonets, sabres, and spears		*Bayonetas, sables y lanzas*
Ships, submarines, boats and seaplanes		*Navíos, submarinos, embarcaciones e hidroaviones*
	For naval warfare and their armament	
War aircrafts		*Aeronaves de guerra*
	And their armament	
War devices, gases, and chemical substances		*Artificios de guerra, gases y substancias químicas de aplicación*

Source : Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión (1972)

While it is difficult to assess a degree of similarity between the GN and the FA' weaponry and equipment based on mostly unconfirmed data, some form of

judgement can be made. As the first section displayed, the GN shares its principal weapon (the FX-05) with the FA (who also heavily rely on said weapon). Other potential weapons held by the GN are also found in the FA repertoire, albeit in different models. Further, the transfer of the GN to SEDENA may have had, or will have, a conceivably substantial impact on weapon availability and access. This could mean the GN would have (and might already have) access to a wide-range of war-level weaponry and equipment, including higher power machine guns, shotguns, or war aircrafts. With regards to equipment, while the majority of GN apparatus is cited in official documentation, its lack of specialisation does not make it particularly stand out from that of other public security bodies. One exception is the possession of Black Hawk helicopters, which are shared with the FA.

In this sense, in terms of material inventory, the GN is considered to have *some commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 9).

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
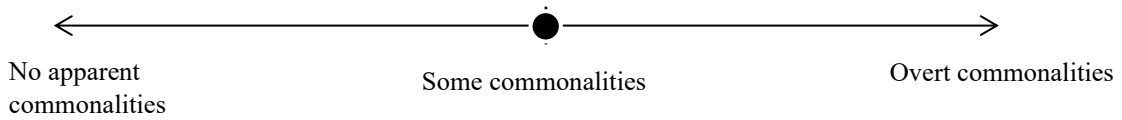
Figure 9. Weaponry and Equipment on the Commonality Scale

6.3. Organisational Indicator

6.3.1. Personnel

The GN is made up of four different groups: personnel originating from SEDENA, from SEMAR, from the *Policía Federal* (the Federal Police), and new civilian recruits. While the GN was a "civilian" institution from the outset, within SEDENA and SEMAR, a large majority of the assigned personnel correspond to individuals from the *Policías Militares*, i.e., the Military and Naval Police. Table 7 provides an overview of the distribution of the GN from years 2019 to 2021. In order to verify the acquired data, a number of sources were consulted. Although all sources were of official nature (being government

documents), slight variances were noted in the data. As such, being unable to know which sources were most reliable, ranges were included in the table in order to not disregard potential genuine data. While the ranges are less precise, they provide a fuller picture of the situation and inferences can still be made due to the not-so-large disparities.

Table 7. Personnel of the Guardia Nacional from 2019 to 2021

Personnel of the Guardia Nacional		2019	2020	2021
SEDENA		46,759 - 48,771	59,505 - 59,548	73,805 - 73,835
SEMAR		6,003 - 9,367	13,528 - 16,513	16,792
	Military Police	35,509	51,012	54,178
Federal Police		26,954 - 33,783	24,174 - 26,136	23,236
Civilian recruits		7 - N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
Total		**83,087 - 88,557**	**99,169 - 100,235**	**113,833 - 113,863**

Sources: Presidencia de la República (2021); INEGI (2022a); SSPC (2021); SSPC (2020)

Note: *N/A: Data not cited in source.

As can be seen, members originating from SEDENA make up the largest proportion of the GN's personnel, usually representing at least half of the total amount. While those from SEMAR represent a significantly smaller number, combined with those from SEDENA, the total number of military-originating individuals is notably high. To add to this, a large part of the reassigned SEDENA and SEMAR personnel originate from the Military Polices. Both bodies also experience a significant increase between 2019 and 2020, as well as between 2020 and 2021 for SEDENA members. In comparison, personnel deriving from the Federal Police represent a substantially lower segment of the

GN. Further, their numbers have gradually decreased over the past three years, losing a minimum of a few thousand personnel.
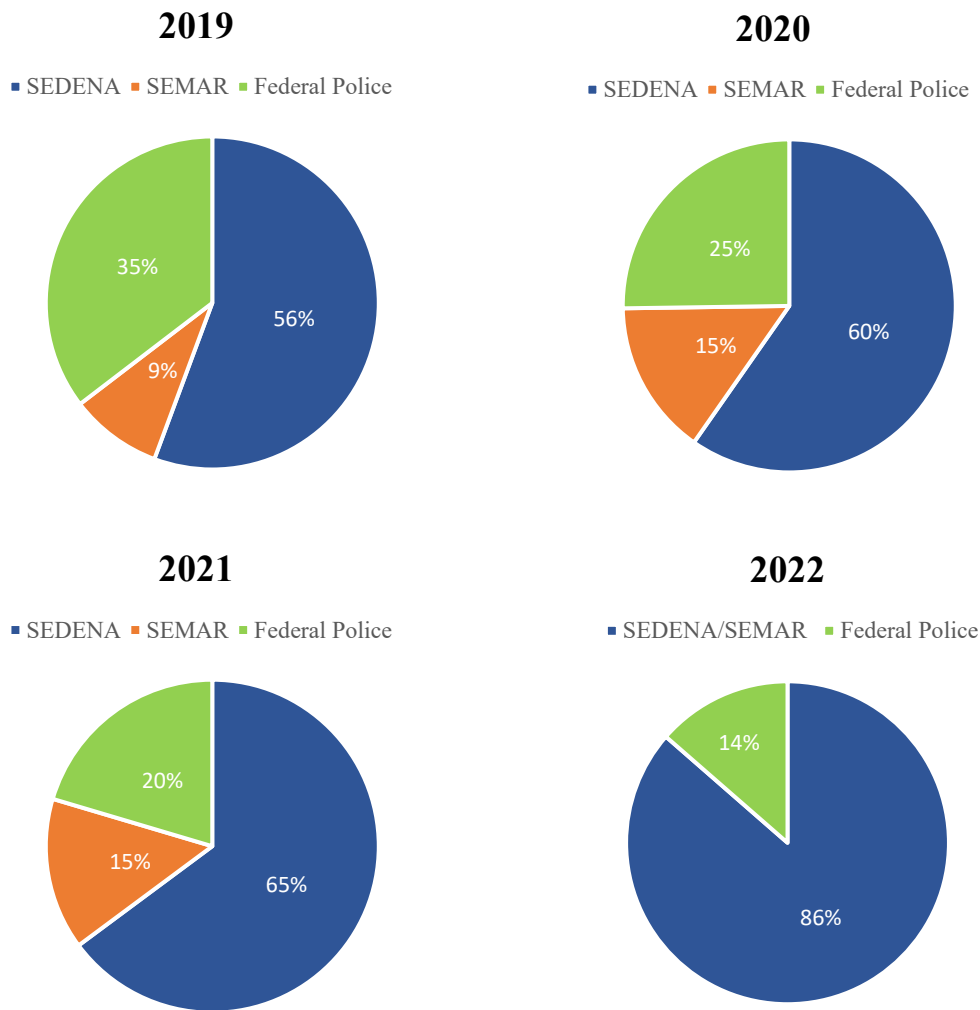
When it comes to 2022 GN personnel data, the figures are slightly more limited (most likely due to the novelty of the matter). With data being available regarding the total number of personnel (Gobierno de México 2023), the number of Military Police (Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional 2023a), and the Federal Police (Unidad de Asuntos Jurídicos y Transparencia de la Guardia Nacional 2023), an assumption was made regarding the general figure of SEDENA and SEMAR personnel. The estimated data is presented in the following table (Table 8).

Table 8. Personnel of the Guardia Nacional in 2022

Personnel of the Guardia Nacional	2022
SEDENA / SEMAR	110,814
Military Police	65,417
Federal Police	17,419
Total	**128,233**

Sources: Storr (2023), Secretaría de Defensa Nacional (2023) and (Unidad de Asuntos Jurídicos y Transparencia de la Guardia Nacional 2023)

Figures 10 to 13 offer a comparative illustration of each year. Civilian recruits were not included in the figures due to data only being available in 2019 (the 2019 figure was also such a low percentage that it would fail to be represented in the figure). The Military Police are also not represented due to the unavailability of data concerning their origin (either SEDENA or SEMAR).

2019

■ SEDENA ■ SEMAR ■ Federal Police

56%
9%
35%

2020

■ SEDENA ■ SEMAR ■ Federal Police

60%
15%
25%

2021

■ SEDENA ■ SEMAR ■ Federal Police

65%
15%
20%

2022

■ SEDENA/SEMAR ■ Federal Police

86%
14%

Figures 10, 11, 12, 13. Personnel of the Guardia Nacional by origin from 2019 to 2022.

As the visualisations demonstrate, between 2019 and 2022 there has been a gradual increase in GN members originating from SEDENA. Contrarily, the percentage of members originally from the Federal Police has decreased, with them first representing 35% of GN personnel in 2019, yet only amounting to 14% three years later. In sum, the military portion of the GN is particularly high, and has been gradually increasing since 2019 (65% in 2019, 75% in 2020, 80% in 2021, and 86% in 2022).

Taking this into consideration, in terms of personnel, the GN is considered to have *overt commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 14).
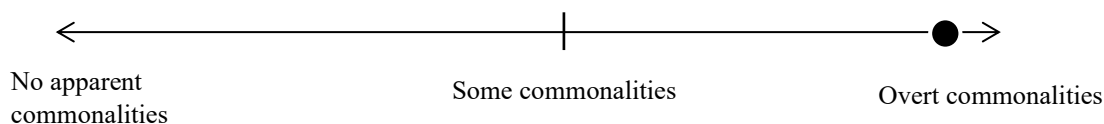

Figure 14. GN Personnel on the Commonality Scale

6.3.2. Chain of Command

In addition to most of the GN personnel being of military origin, those higher above can also be placed in that same category. Since its inception, the GN has had two commanders, General Luis Rodríguez Bucio (April 2019 - January 2023) and General Commissioner David Córdova Campos (January 2023 -). Both men originated from SEDENA, with the current commander having held an impressive list of military positions, including being the Commander of V Región Militar and 39 Zona Militar, as well as heading Infantry Battalions 29 and 66 (Quevedo, David Córdova Campos, nuevo comandante de la Guardia Nacional de México 2023). While it is the President of the Republic who makes the final decision on who to appoint Commander, the selection is made based on a proposal by the head of SEDENA (Luna 2023). Thus, this makes both commanders possessing military background slightly less surprising.

Slightly below them, state coordinators also have the tendency to stem from either SEDENA or SEMAR. Indeed, in 2021, all 32 GN state coordinators were of military origin. To be precise, 87.5% were from SEDENA and 12.5% from SEMAR (INEGI 2022b). Although figures regarding 2022 and 2023 are unavailable, it is unlikely that much would have changed, meaning the GN is most likely still headed by predominantly military-trained individuals.

With both commanders of the GN stemming from military institutions and most state coordinators also sharing similar military backgrounds, the chain of command of the GN can be characterised as military-based. In view of these

findings, in relation to chain of command, the GN is perceived as having *overt commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 15).
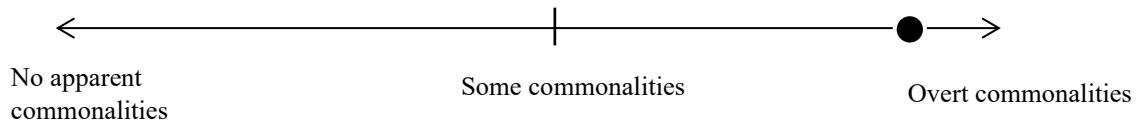

Figure 15. GN Chain of Command on the Commonality Scale

6.3.3. Training

When first entering the GN, new recruits are subjected to a three-phase training process. This includes (1) combat training, (2) training by organic or specific function, and (3) unit training (Storr 2023). What is interesting about this structure is how it is modelled after the training process of the FA, who themselves also follow the first three steps (in addition to two others tailored towards military foreign invasion). This homogeneity signifies that, on occasion, both bodies carry out combined military exercises (Alejandro Medellin 2022). This first occurred in 2022, when over 6,000 elements of the Army and the GN were deployed to respond to two makeshift scenarios: a military invasion and the recovery of spaces controlled by heavily armed criminals (Ibid).

Turning back to the specificities of GN training, the first step lasts 5 months, the second 2 months, and the third 1 month (Guevara Moyano 2020, 17). For veteran personnel, the initial phase is reduced to 1.5 months, with subsequent training remaining the same duration (Ibid). The two first courses, the *Curso de Adiestramiento de Combate Individual Regional* (the Regional Individual Combat Training Course - CACIR), and *the Curso de Formación de Policía Militar* (the Military Police Training Course), are directly designed and taught by SEDENA and SEMAR, while the third, the *Curso de Formación Inicial para la GN* (the Initial Training Course for the National Guard) is carried out by the GN itself. Table 9 offers an overview of this training process.

Table 9. Guardia Nacional training process

Course	Type	Duration (months)	Duration (hours)	Designed/Instructed by
1. Curso de Adiestramiento de Combate Individual Regional	Combat training	5	N/A*	SEDENA / SEMAR
2. Curso de Formación de Policía Militar	Training by organic or specific function	2	N/A*	SEDENA / SEMAR
3. Curso de Formación Inicial para la GN	Unit training	1	500	GN

Sources: Guevara Moyano (2020) and Storr (2023)

Note : *N/A (Data not cited in source)

While, in theory, the third stage of training is meant to be taught by the GN, in practice, military presence also appears to have stretched to this phase via instruction. As shown in Table 10, a large number of instructors covering the curriculum are of military background. Similar to their sizable presence in the GN, SEDENA members clearly take up a substantial amount of teaching roles (less so for SEMAR although their involvement remains notable).

Table 10. Assigned SEDENA and SEMAR instructors to GN training

Area of Knowledge	SEDENA instructors assigned to	SEMAR instructors assigned to
Social liaison and linkage	31	6
Operational Tactical Skills and Competencies	101	16
Doctrine	36	9

Criminal Justice System Accusatory	37	13
Human Rights	12	0
Gender Perspective	19	5
Human Development	14	1
Juridical-Administrative	48	4
Physical Conditioning	10	1
Subtotal Thematic Axis	**308**	**55**

Breaking down the course, 240 hours are dedicated to basic police skills, including detention practices, doctrine, or physical conditioning. Another 130 hours are devoted to the body's performance in the judicial system, i.e., ranging from studying the criminal justice system to the writing of police reports. The last 130 hours are divided between classes on the theme of the use of force (90 hours), and more 'humanitarian' topics (40 hours) such as human rights, gender, and "citizen proximity actions" (Storr 2023). Subjects concerning the use of force include weapon and shooting practice, restoration of public order, legitimate use of force, and the use of the PR-24 baton for the control of people (Ibid).[39]

Thus, when looking at the GN training process as a whole, it tends to be dominated by a military theme. Firstly, the training structure is modelled after that of the FA. In alignment with this, two out of the three stages are designed and instructed by SEDENA and SEMAR members, while the third stage presents a large number of instructors also of SEDENA or SEMAR origin. Lastly, since 2022, both the GN and the FA have carried out combined military

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[39] Appendix B provides a full list of all units covered under the 500 hours of training.

exercises. As a result of these findings, in terms of training, the GN is considered to share *overt commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 16).
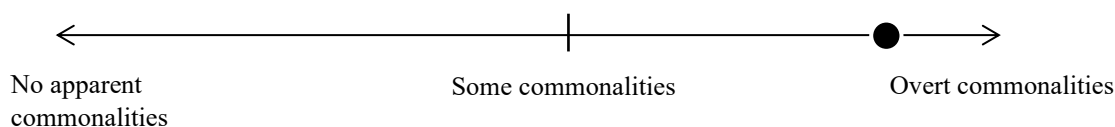

Figure 16. GN Training on the Commonality Scale

6.4. Operational Indicator

The fourth indicator of militarisation concerns the operational side of a body. By looking at deployment strategies, type of duties, and specialised units, it is possible to determine the extent of GN operational patterns being potentially modelled after the military.

6.4.1. Deployment strategy

One of the principal pillars of the GN strategy is the maintenance of a national presence throughout the Mexican territory. This is achieved through the deployment of GN elements in all 32 Mexican federal entities, further divided into 266 'regional coordinates'. Table 11 presents the deployment figures of the GN in each federal entity from 2019 to 2023. The designation of troops in each region is based on the number of inhabitants, combined with crime rates and projections, i.e., regions with higher crime and homicide rates will receive a higher number of GN troops. This deployment strategy also appears to favour the deployment of GN members alongside the FA. While the two bodies are deployed together for routine tasks such as reducing crime rates and homicides (Gómez 2023; Santos Cid et Morán Breña 2023), they are also sent on more particular missions including the control of migration on the Southern border (WOLA 2021) or the construction of the Mayan railway (Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional 2023b).

Table 11. Operational Deployment of the Guardia National (in thousands)

State	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2021	Dec. 2022	Dec. 2023
Aguascalientes	524	358	364	839	839
Baja California	1,888	2,060	2,119	1,639	1,680
Baja California Sur	842	1,101	1,385	870	763
Campeche	874	920	915	1,004	1,007
Chiapas	3,369	3,454	3,762	3,810	3,810
Chihuahua	2,025	2,488	2,542	3,090	3,203
Coahuila	1,438	2,191	2,160	2,258	2,322
Colima	902	986	992	789	701
Ciudad de México	3,442	12,751	12,369	20,605	5,385
Durango	680	1,339	1,324	1,625	1,389
Guanajuato	3,326	6,855	6,260	6,644	5,399
Guerrero	3,311	4,438	3,438	2,951	3,082
Hidalgo	2,043	1,919	1,817	1,810	1,810
Jalisco	3,848	5,831	6,384	4,500	7,151
Estado de México	8,579	9,638	9,385	13,081	7,475
Michoacán	4,362	4,910	6,171	4,640	4,629
Morelos	1,397	1,249	1,206	1,418	1,412
Nayarit	977	1,076	1,275	1,026	1,026
Nuevo León	2,131	2,291	2,405	2,874	2,673
Oaxaca	4,323	5,231	5,344	4,699	5,003
Puebla	3,066	3,393	3,387	2,435	2,591
Querétaro	1,782	1,068	1,090	1,006	1,006

Quintana Roo	1,994	1,728	1,717	2,462	2,462
San Luis Potosí	1,231	1,142	1,349	1,179	1,170
Sinaloa	1,662	3,863	4,124	3,989	3,989
Sonora	2,621	2,438	2,669	2,007	2,464
Tabasco	1,587	1,699	2,047	2,067	2,067
Tamaulipas	2,912	4,010	3,927	2,665	2,598
Tlaxcala	697	560	568	1,812	1,848
Veracruz	4,198	4,334	4,666	4,045	4,015
Yucatán	759	844	857	896	934
Zacatecas	1,647	2,117	1,928	1,420	1,402
Total	**74,437**	**98,282**	**99,946**	**106,155**	**87,305**

Source: Causa en Común (2023)

While data was not encountered concerning rates of deployment of the GN alongside the FA, sources show that since the GN's transfer to SEDENA, it has become a more than regular occurrence. Based on this, the GN's deployment strategy is considered to share *some commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 17).

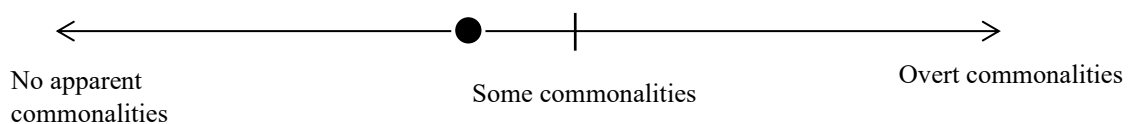**Figure 17.** GN Deployment Strategy on the Commonality Scale

6.4.2. Missions

The Ley de la Guardia Nacional (2019) states that the GN has 43 functions, most being aligned with the principles of public security, i.e., the prevention and investigation of crime and the maintenance of social order. The collaboration with federal entities and municipalities and "assisting" the FA in the exercise of

their duties are two other principal pillars in the GN's list of missions (3).[40] In more specific terms, their duties range from immigration control and border security (including in airports, federal highways, railways, airports, and in other forms of public transport), to carrying out covert operations, or supervising dam vessels, lake reservoirs and riverbeds.[41] To provide an example and to gage recent GN priorities, Box 1 provides a summary of the body's 2022 "substantive activities" (Guardia Nacional 2023).[42]

Box 1. Substantive Activities of the Guardia Nacional in 2022

- Strengthening order and social peace in 50 priority municipalities with the highest homicide rate
- Road security
- GN booth security
- Safeguarding of strategic facilities
- Hydrocarbon theft prevention
- Migration and Development Plan
- Safeguarding the financial resources of social programmes
- "Fertilizers for Welfare" Programme
- Security measures for certain Commissions and Secretariats
- Protection of cultural heritage in certain archaeological zones
- Protection of certain environmental zones
- Tourism safety and security in airports
- Procedural security, cybersecurity and intelligence

Source: Guardia Nacional (2023). Translated by author.

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[40] Translated by author.
[41] See Article 9 of the Ley de La Guardia Nacional, 2019 for a full list of the Powers and Obligations of the GN.
[42] See Appendix C for the full list. Translated by author.

As the table demonstrates, the GN has a large repertoire of missions in all areas of society. In order to gage whether the body shares similarities with the FA in terms of its role and purposes, a comparison is offered in Table 12.

Table 12. Comparison of the Guardia Nacional and the Armed Forces' principal missions

Guardia Nacional purposes	Armed Forces purposes
I. Safeguard the life, integrity, security, goods and rights of people, as well as preserve freedoms.	I. Defend the integrity, independence and sovereignty of the nation.
II. Contribute to the generation and preservation of public order and social peace.	II. Guarantee internal security.
III. Safeguard the assets and resources of the Nation.	III. Assist the civilian population in cases of public needs.
IV. Carry out collaboration and coordination actions with federal entities and municipalities.	IV. Carry out civic actions and social works that tend to the progress of the country.
	V. In the event of a disaster, help to maintain order, help people and their property, and rebuild the affected areas.

Sources: Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión (2019) and Ley Orgánica del Ejército y Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos (1986). Translated by author.

As the table shows, while the first two principal purposes of the FA concern the preservation and defence of the Mexican territory (common military themes), the remaining three concern public security and assisting the citizenry. Historically, while the Mexican FA have regularly had an important presence in public security, in 2022, AMLO solidified their role in the area by making it legally permanent until 2028. The justification for such a decision was centred

around the military acting as a 'temporary' fill-in while the GN develops its structure, capabilities, and territorial implantation (Ramos 2022). This corroborates previous findings concerning the joint deployment of both bodies.

Thus, while the GN shares similarities with the FA in terms of missions concerning public security, in the case of this research, this does not support the idea of militarisation of the GN. In fact, it supports a separate phenomenon, which is the constabularisation of the military (i.e., when the armed forces take the responsibilities of civilian law enforcement agencies) (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021). Since this is not the focus of this thesis, in terms of missions, the GN is seen to have no *apparent commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 18).

No apparent
commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
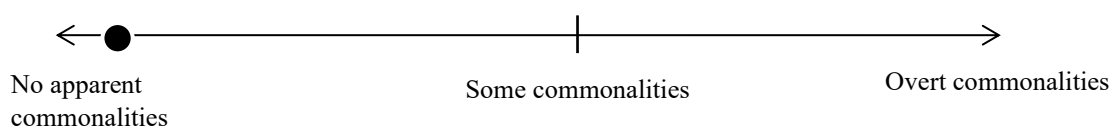
Figure 18. GN Missions on the Commonality Scale

6.4.3. Specialised Units

In December 2022, a new GN unit was created: the *Fuerza Especial de Reacción e Intervención* (Special Reaction and Intervention Force - FERI). Its inception occurred in response to a demand to improve the performance of the GN in high-impact public security operations, as well as aiding them in preventing and combating crime (Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana 2022). While an entire separate research process could be dedicated to the analysis of this new body, for lack of words, this section will provide a brief overview, sufficient enough to offer an indicative comparison to the FA.

Concerning its purpose, the FERI has been assigned eight tactical-operational activities (see Box 2).

Box 2. FERI Tactical-Operational Activities

- Rescue of hostages and persons at risk or deprived of their liberty
- Resolve high-risk situations
- Transfer of highly dangerous prisoners
- Tasks of search, location, deactivation and / or neutralization of explosive devices; as well as, neutralization of threats of Chemical, Biological or Radiological materials
- Provide security at special events (high-level meetings, diplomatic, cultural and/or sporting events of an international nature) and senior officials
- Support to the ministerial authorities for the execution of arrest warrants and investigation techniques (searches)
- Participate in high-impact operations against organized crime
- Carry out surprise and short-term operations in urban areas with a high incidence of crime

Source: Guardia Nacional (2022a). Translated by author.

As per December 2022, the FERI consists of 500 troops (7 inspectors, 55 officers, and 430 basic level agents) (Redacción Informado 2022) who receive special training allowing them "to effectively carry out missions that demand speed, precision, forcefulness, and specialized skills" (Guardia Nacional 2022d).[43] Moreover, concerning the chain of command, the FERI reports to the *Jefatura General de Coordinación Policial* (General Police Coordination Headquarters), while its operational command remains in the hand of the Commander of the GN. While both bodies should be of civilian nature, both are in fact, of military origin. As previously discussed, the at-the-time and current Commander of the GN both possess military backgrounds. Further, the General Chief of Police Coordination, General Ernesto Joaquín Geminiano Jiménez, is also of military background, previously being the Commander of the Military Garrison (Sánchez Banda 2020). Looking at the uniform of the FERI, it builds on that of the GN with certain observable differences including colours (black

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[43] Translated by author.

being a predominant colour) and further protective gear. Figure 19 offers an illustration of the FERI in their different operational gear.
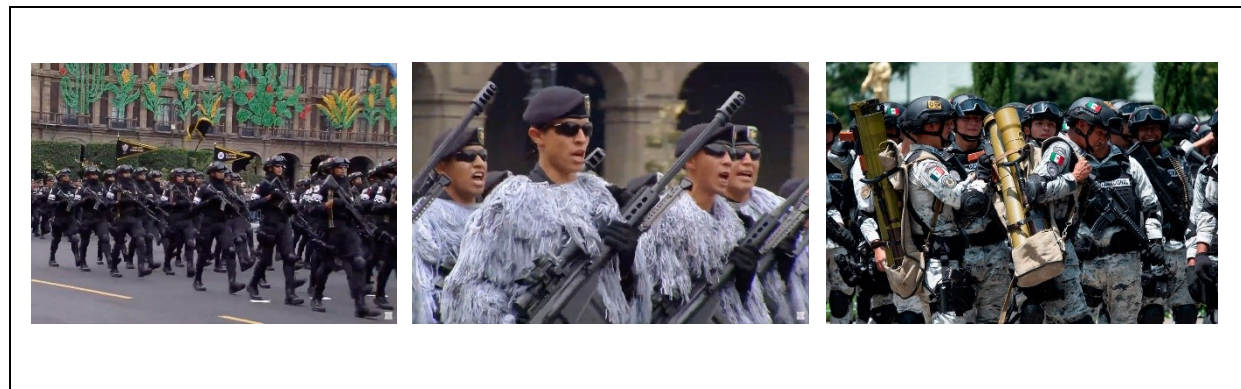

Figure 19. Visual Representation of the FERI uniform and operational gear. Taken from Guardia Nacional (2022c) and Laines (2023).

While no information was encountered regarding weaponry, the above figures indicate the unit appears to have the same weaponry as the GN, plus specialised arms (which would accompany their specialised training).

Based on this overview, some militaristic tendencies can already be picked up on. In addition to both bodies in charge of the FERI being of military origin, the structure (including uniform and weaponry), and type of missions appear to be a step further than the responsibilities of a civilian law enforcement body. In order to offer a more thorough image of the FERI in terms of militarisation, a brief comparison will be presented with the *Fuerza Especial de Reacción* (FER), i.e., the Mexican Army's Special Mission Unit (SMU).

With no information being available regarding the training content of the FERI or its full weaponry repertoire, it is difficult to offer a detailed comparison of the two bodies. However, what was encountered was similarities in missions. The following figure (Box 3) offers a list of the main tasks of the FER, with those in bold indicating those shared with the FERI.

Box 3. FER Principal Activities

- Clandestine Operations
- Counterinsurgency
- **Counter-narcotics**
- Counterproliferation
- Covert Action
- **Executive Protection**
- **Hostage Rescue**
- Irregular Warfare
- **Special Operations and Reconnaissance**

Source: (Sutil Toledano 2023).

With FERI sharing four missions of a specialised military unit (meaning they may work together) and demonstrating general militaristic tendencies (specialised training, weaponry and uniform, and military-based heads of command), the body is considered to have *some commonalities* with the FA (see Figure 20).

No apparent commonalities   Some commonalities   Overt commonalities
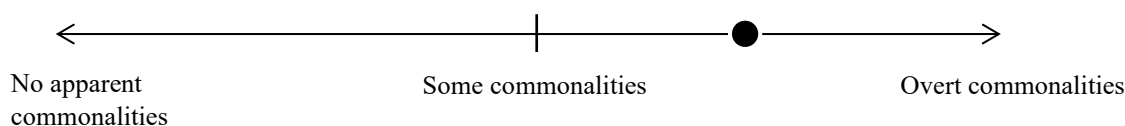
Figure 20. GN Specialised Unit (FERI) on the Commonality Scale

The previous findings have offered an individual insight into four different features of the GN. The intention of this section is to bring together each of the four elements and analyse them as a cohesive whole, in a broader attempt to understand their repercussions for Mexican society.

6.5. Assessing the Militarisation of the Guardia Nacional as a whole

This research has looked into four indicators of militarisation: material, cultural, organisational, and operational. Each had sub-indicators, which were

individually attributed a measurement on the commonality scale based on similarities with the Mexican FA. Table 14 offers a summary of the results.

Table 13. Summary of Results from the Commonality Scale

Indicator	Attributed measurement
Material	
Weaponry and Equipment	Some commonalities
Cultural	
Martial Language	Overt commonalities
Uniform	Overt commonalities
Ceremonial Displays	Overt commonalities
Organisational	
Personnel	Overt commonalities
Chain of Command	Overt commonalities
Training	Overt commonalities
Operational	
Deployment Strategy	Some commonalities
Missions	No apparent commonalities
Specialised Unit	Some commonalities

Source: By author.

As the table demonstrates, out of the ten sub-indicators, six of them were considered to have *overt commonalities* with the FA, three *some commonalities*,

and only one *no apparent commonalities*. Similarities were most present in the cultural and organisational spheres.

While these measurements remain indicative, a clear picture can still be drawn of the GN: the body is, to some degree, undergoing a process of militarisation. This can be seen not only through the individual measurements of each sub-indicator, but also when analysing them as a harmonious entity.

For example, when overlaying GN missions and weaponry, the situation portrays militaristic tendencies much more than if they were considered individually. When looking at the missions of the GN, the given measurement was *no apparent commonalities*, particularly due to the body being mostly assigned duties in public security (which is not out of the ordinary for a police force). However, when taking into consideration previous findings concerning the weaponry and equipment repertoire of the GN, the situation is no longer so straightforward. Duties in public security signify that the law enforcement body spends a significant portion of time in close proximity to the Mexican citizenry. Troops will be in regular contact with populations, patrolling in ordinary locations such as in public transport or on the streets or highways, or carrying out missions to do with healthcare, the environment, or education (among others). While, by themselves, these sound like regular police duties, it must not be forgotten that the GN may soon, or may already have, access to potential war- grade weaponry. At present, the body already has a confirmed repertoire including large weapons such as the FX-05 Xiuhcoatl assault rifle. Regular individuals are thus being 'policed' by troops brandishing weapons meant for deadly battlefield purposes.

Taken together, each of the indicators build on one other, reinforcing the process of militarisation. In the case of the GN, each indicator provides a different aspect of similarity with the FA, ultimately creating a general sense of sameness. This process can be broken down as follows: (1) the cultural indicator provides GN members with a *perception* of similarity, (2) the operational and organisational

indicators provide them with a *structure* of similarity, and (3) the material indicator provides them with the *tools* of similarity. Figure 21 illustrates this process.
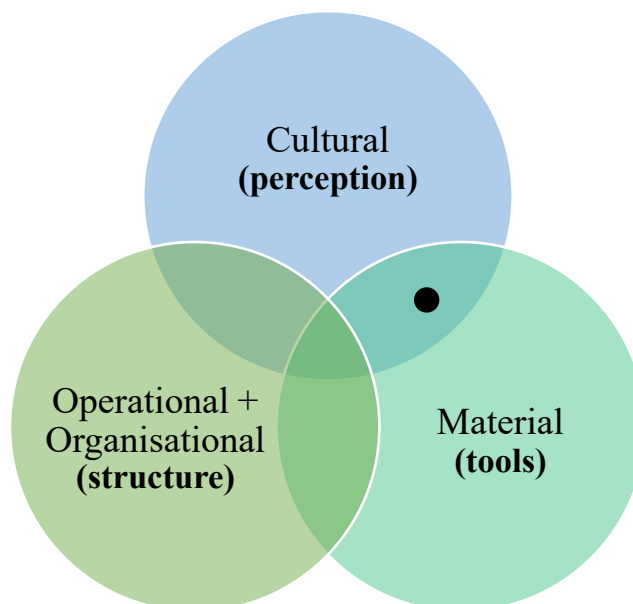
● : The process of militarisation

Figure 21. The Interaction of Indicators of Militarisation (By author).

Based on these findings and the categorisation offered by Flores-Macías et Zarkin (2021) (see Figure 1), this thesis would place the body as similar to the concept of a 'constabularised military'.[44] This is due to the high number of similarities between the GN and the FA, particularly in terms of the organisational indicator. Not only does this indicator share similarities, but the GN's personnel, chain of command, and training mostly originate from the FA themselves.

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[44] Flores-Macías et Zarkin (2021) characterise a constabularised military as being under military law, possessing heavy weaponry and equipment, an engage and destroy training mentality, and a high degree of centralisation and hierarchy (see Figure 1).

7. Implications

7.1. The Repercussions of Militarisation: citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order

Having determined an indicative assessment of the level of militarisation of the GN, this last section will dedicate itself to explore the potential implications of said militarisation. As hinted by a number of studies, the militarisation of law enforcement tends to be accompanied by variety of detrimental ramifications. Taking example from Flores-Macías et Zarkin's (2021) theoretical expectations of militarisation, the following four outcomes of this phenomenon will be considered in Mexican society: citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order.

7.1.1. Citizen Security

As history has shown, militarised security strategies have failed to provide satisfactory results when attempting to quell the security crisis. In fact, academics have directly identified the presence of the FA "as a trigger and direct cause of increased violence in the municipalities where the military are deployed" (Amnesty International 2018b, 5). This goes in line with work carried out by Flores-Macías et Zarkin (2021), who find that "the combination of military-style weapons, training and tactical organisation and deployment will translate into greater disruptive capacity" (523). Felipe Calderón's "war on drugs" serves as a fitting example. After placing the FA at the forefront of his security strategy, levels of violence spiked immensely and over 70,000 innocent victims' lives were claimed (Konrad 2015). As the GN follows a similar structure to the FA, it would not come as surprise if an increase in violence accompanied the deployment of the body.

Looking at current figures, up until today, data indicates that there has been no substantial increase in violence. While the total number of homicides is higher than any of the five previous presidencies (totalling at 119,487 after only three

and a half years), homicides have still experienced a slight decrease since AMLO has taken office (see Figure 22).
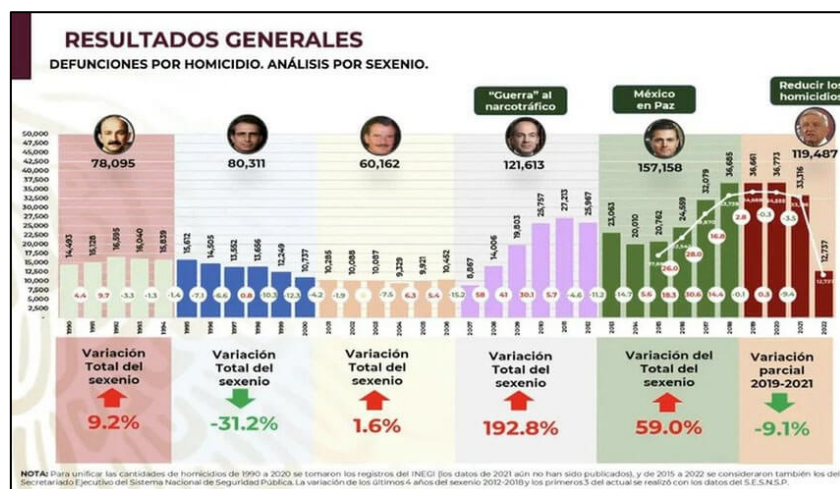
Figure 22. Graphic representing homicides rates across Mexican presidencies from 1990 to 2023. Taken from Gobierno de México 2023, 30.

Other data concerning members of SEDENA more generally indicates that while deployments have increased, they have taken on a more passive role. They are involved in fewer confrontations and carry out more evasive tactics to avoid criminals (Michael Carvallo 2022). For example, table 15 displays the extent of occurrence of confrontations between SEDENA members and armed civilians in the last three presidencies.

Table 14. Occurrence of Confrontations between SEDENA members and armed civilians

Presidency	Occurrence of armed confrontation (in hours)
Felipe Calderón	Every 24 hrs
Enrique Peña Nieto	Every 30 hrs
Andrés Manuel López Obrador	Every 36 hrs

Source: Michael Carvallo (2022)

However, while in theory this demonstrates a reduction in disruptive capacity, this could also be due to a lack of efficiency. As Figure 22 demonstrates, the decline in homicides is particularly limited, only decreasing by 9.1% between 2019 and 2021. As rates of violence are dropping rather slowly, the reduction in confrontations between SEDENA members and civilians could be explained by a simple lack of being able to engage with criminals (due to inefficient methods).

Everything considered, it is difficult to assess the impact of the GN on levels of violence. Generally, data hints that SEDENA members are engaging in less confrontations with armed civilians and homicide rates are slowly dropping. Thus, it appears that the GN has not directly led to an increase in disruptive capacity.

7.1.2. Human Rights

Due to their tendency to employ violence and possessing a mentality geared towards overwhelming and eliminating an enemy, a militarised body is more likely to commit human rights violations than other law enforcement bodies (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021, 523). In Mexico, this is reinforced by the knowledge that most crimes committed by civilians or military bodies, go unpunished.[45] The FA (including the Military Police) have been implicated in some of the largest human rights scandals in Mexican history, including the 2014 Ayotzinapa case where 43 students disappeared. More recent data indicates that between 2007 and September 2022, 5,335 civilians were killed at the hands of the FA (MND Staff 2023). Further, since 2018, human rights commission complaints have been steadily rising.

Knowing the history of abuses by the FA and the shared military characteristics with the GN, a number of bodies have raised concern regarding the potentiality for the GN to commit human rights violations by use of force. This concern is

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[45] In 2020, a report by México Evalúa found that 94.8% of criminal cases reported in Mexico go unpunished (México Evalúa 2020).

far from misplaced, as demonstrate the growing number of complaints raised to the *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Human Rights Commission - CNDH) concerning the GN (see Figure 23).
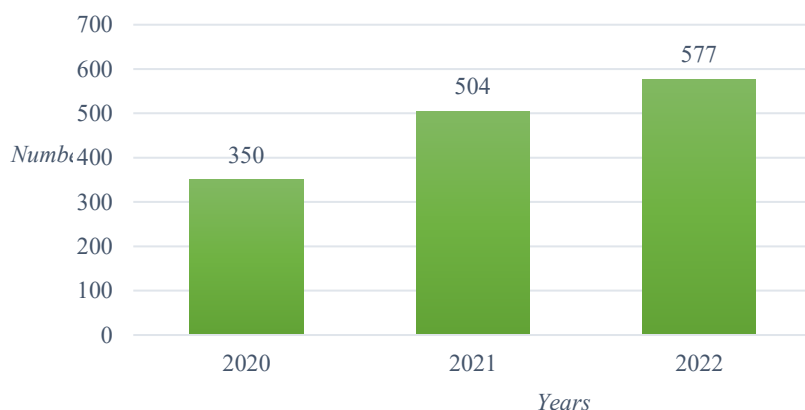

Figure 23. Human Rights Complaints against the Guardia Nacional from 2020 to 2022. Data taken from CNDH (2022).

As the GN is most likely to employ its weapons during confrontations, it is during this time that most of the violations tend to occur. A report by the *Centro de Derechos Humanos* (Centre of Human Rights) lists a total of 63 events that occurred between August 2019 and April 2021 as occasions where the use of lethal force was employed by the GN (Centro de Derechos Humanos 2021, 186). Out of these confrontations, 14 elements of the GN lost their lives, while 94 other individuals were killed (5 being classed as civilians and the other 89 as "aggressors") (Ibid). As the report points out, the differentiation between individuals as "civilians" or "aggressors" is problematic due to the fact that being classed as the latter appears to justify the use of lethal force. In reality, while they may have committed a crime, these individuals maintain certain rights, including the right to a fair trial and the right to life. As the details of each confrontation are not publicly available, it is impossible to know whether the GN employed lethal force as a last resort (being legal), or instead used it unjustly. Further, it is highly possible that the number of confrontations

involving lethal force is much higher, since military bodies have the tendency to underreport events which would portray them in a negative light.

Before looking into implications of militarisation on police reform and the legal order, a last section will be dedicated to the specific case of a Mexican citizen who was deprived of their life by the GN. This is in an attempt to illustrate the reality of the severity of violence that can be inflicted upon civilians at the hands of a militarised body.

In December 2022, the CNDH issued a recommendation to the head of the SSPC for Serious Violations of Human Rights, due to: "the violation of the human rights to freedom, legality, integrity and personal security, committed by at least 14 elements attached to the National Guard (GN), to the detriment of a person who was the victim of illegal retention, torture, disappearance and deprivation of life, in the municipality of Vicente Guerrero in the State of Durango." (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos 2022, 1).[46] In this case, the GN violated four human rights. To this day, it is unknown if the 14 GN members implicated in the case were ever punished.

The knowledge that the GN can, and has, committed human rights violations is exceedingly worrisome for Mexico. Mexican citizens deserve a law enforcement body they can trust, not one they should fear.

7.1.3. Police Reform

A third consequence of militarisation concerns police reform. Flores-Macías et Zarkin (2021) assess that "as law enforcement becomes more militarised, less attention will be given to 'fixing' the initial problem, i.e., reforming the "less militarised" agencies" (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021, 523). Due to the growing dependence on the FA for safety and security, as well as their high levels of public trust, this holds some truth for the case of Mexico.

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[46] Translated by author.

The GN was created with the aim of replacing the Policía Federal, Mexico's national police force. The reasoning behind AMLO's decision to dissolve the PF lies in the body lacking "discipline, training, and professionalism" (López Obrador 2018, 13).[47] While the inception of the GN could be seen as a "police reform" in itself, as Hernández Ojeda (2023) points out, Mexican presidents have a tendency to create their own security force, one which is dismantled by the following president. This can be seen with Calderón who created the PF after a restructuring of the *Policía Federal Preventiva* (the Federal Preventive Police), with Peña Nieto who created the *Gendarmería Nacional* (National Gendarmerie), and with AMLO and the GN. This informal custom is due to Mexican public security not having a state logic, but a government logic. Policies are seen as "disposable", which are in place for the six year presidential term then overturned (Ibid).[48] In terms of police reform, this proves highly inefficient, resetting any attempt at improving the body. This is true in the case of the GN, which is a body that has had to be built from the ground up, translating into a very lengthy and costly process.

In terms of reforming other law enforcement bodies such as state and municipal police, a number of aims were put forward in the *Estrategia Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (National Strategy of Public Security). Among others, these included the allocation of further resources to strengthen the bodies, further police training and professionalization programs, and the creation of a University of Public Security to provide educational continuity in the security field (Gobierno de México 2019, 51). Four years later, results are rather underwhelming.

Two main subsidies are responsible for strengthening performance in public security matters in municipalities and states: the *Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública* (Contribution Fund for Public Security - FASP) and the

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[47] Translated by author.
[48] Translated by author.

Programa de Fortalecimiento para la Seguridad (Security Strengthening Program - Fortaseg). While the FASP has suffered budget stagnation in the first four years of AMLO's term, in 2021, the administration eliminated the Fortaseg subsidy (Aguirre et Daen 2022; Badillo 2022). This signifies that funding towards state and municipal police has been drastically reduced since AMLO has taken power, a fact that strongly goes against the aims put forward in the National Strategy of Public Security. Figure 24 illustrates the evolution of the FASP and Fortaseg budgets from 2018 to 2022.
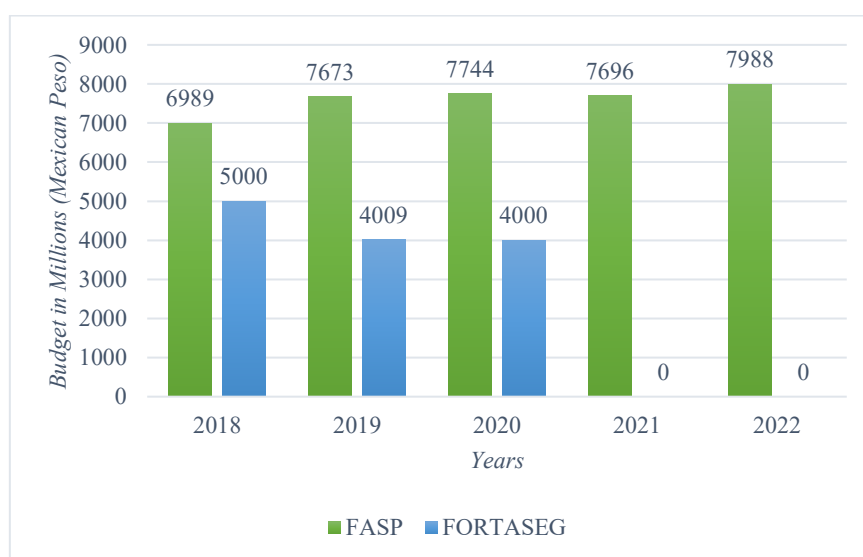
Figure 24. Evolution of the FASP and Fortaseg Budgets from 2018 to 2022. Taken from Badillo (2022).

In sum, in terms of public security, it seems that the GN appears to have taken most of the focus of the AMLO administration. Looking at recent municipal and state budget cuts, the strengthening of civilian police bodies seems to have been set aside, corroborating Flores-Macías et Zarkin's theoretical expectation of militarisation. While the GN may act as a temporary solution to the security crisis, ultimately, solid municipal and state police forces are needed in order to permanently tackle the extreme levels of violence Mexico is facing.

7.1.4. The Legal Order

Lastly, militarisation carries the risk of a law enforcement body moving from civilian to military law, meaning the concerned body may end up operating outside of a clearly defined legal order, ultimately leading to impunity (Flores-Macías et Zarkin 2021, 524).

As previously mentioned in the section concerning human rights, when it comes to committing crimes against civilians, the FA have a penchant for escaping any form of punishment. However, the avoidance of repercussions is not necessarily due to differences in military and civilian law. In fact, following certain reforms in the early 2010s, the FA are mostly under civilian jurisdiction (other than a few exceptions).

Prior to 2014, civilian and human rights cases could be tried in the military justice system. This meant that when being accused of a crime, a member of the FA would be judged in a 'special' court, by fellow individuals also originating from the military. With military investigations being known to propagate impunity due to their lack of results, lengthiness, and general incompetency, many not only have victims been left with no justice, but numerous military perpetrators have been left unpunished (see p.12 of Suárez-Enríquez et Meyer 2017 for 3 examples of cases carried out under military jurisdiction). However, following recommendations by the *Poder Judicial Federal* (Federal Judiciary – PJF) in 2011 and 2012, reforms to the *Código de Justicia Militar* (Military Justice Code – CJM) were carried out. Military jurisdiction was thus restricted, with civilian cases solely being investigated and tried by civilian judges. For the military, this signified a sharp reduction in their influence, and a slight reduction in their chances of escaping justice.

While this signifies that the military, including the GN, are currently mostly under civilian jurisdiction, a number of legal loopholes persist, meaning both bodies can still act outside of a clearly defined legal order.

Four articles in the CJM continue to provide a certain level of authority to the bodies in civilian-related cases. Table 16 summarises how each of the four articles obstructs civil investigations.

Table 15. Military legal obstructions to civil investigations

Article	Obstruction
Artículo 37	- Enables military authorities to be the first to investigate any crime committed by soldiers, prior to notifying civilian authorities concerning cases that do not fall within military jurisdiction. - Enables the continuation of parallel or separate military investigations from civil ones concerning the same case.
Artículo 49bis	- Adds to the functions of the Military Ministerial Police (military investigators) acts that are essential for civilian investigations (e.g. preserving the scene of crime).
Artículo 57	- Does not exclude cases of human rights violations committed by soldiers against other soldiers from military jurisdiction.
Artículo 129	- Enables soldiers accused of committing crimes or human rights violations against civilians to be detained in military prisons, making it difficult to interview and take statements for civilian investigations.

Source: Suárez-Enríquez et Meyer (2017). Translated by author.

As these articles demonstrate, while civilian cases come under civilian jurisdiction, the military continues to hold a significant amount of influence and power in said cases.

Lastly, with regards to crimes relating to military hierarchy and authority, alterations to the Ley de la Guardia Nacional have been made in order for

most of the GN to come strictly under military jurisdiction. Article 57 (Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión 2019) details this change:

> Article 57. The personnel of the National Guard must subject their conduct to the observance of the laws, orders and hierarchies, to obedience to superiority, as well as to the Code of Ethics of the National Guard.
>
> Notwithstanding the foregoing, the military personnel assigned to the National Guard will continue to be subject to military jurisdiction with respect to the crimes specified in the Second Book of the Code of Military Justice that attempt against the hierarchy and authority.

Knowing that most years, military-originating personnel make up over half of GN (see Table 7 and 8), this signifies that most GN members are included under this military jurisdiction umbrella.

Overall, the GN operate mostly under civilian jurisdiction. The shift towards militarisation has not translated into much difference in this department. This does not signify that the GN cannot operate outside of legal boundaries, particularly as Mexico has an extremely high level of impunity.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to assess the level of militarisation of the Mexican *Guardia Nacional* (GN), as well as explore its societal implications. The first stage was achieved by establishing a scale of measurement based on commonalities with the *Fuerzas Armadas* (FA), which was applied to four distinct indicators (material, cultural, organisational, and operational). The division of the process of militarisation into four components enabled a more comprehensive evaluation, and demonstrated how each of the indicators are interlinked with one another.

Overall, it was found that the GN shares a high number of commonalities with the FA. This is particularly true across cultural and organisational indicators,

where overt commonalities were found in all sub-indicators (language, uniform, ceremonial displays, and personnel, chain of command, and training). Within the material and operational indicators, some commonalities were found with regards to weaponry, deployment strategy, and specialised units, while none were found in terms of missions. Taken together, it was established that the indicators build on one another through the following process: (1) the cultural indicator provides GN members with a *perception* of similarity, (2) the operational and organisational indicators provide them with a *structure* of similarity, and (3) the material indicator provides them with the *tools*, which are similar. Based on these results and the mechanism upon which the indicators interact, the final evaluation given to the GN is that it most closely resembles a 'constabularised military'.

The second part of this thesis dedicated itself to investigating the implications of the prior assessment of the GN in terms of citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order. No indications were found concerning GN deployment, armament, and tactics leading to higher rates of violence. While levels of crime remain exceedingly high, homicides have experienced a slight reduction since AMLO has taken office. However, it was found that the GN is becoming increasingly implicated in human rights violations. This is particularly visible through the growing number of complaints being addressed to the *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (CNDH) regarding the GN. Separately, the inception and development of the GN appears to have shifted the focus away from efforts in police reform. In fact, both municipal and state police have experienced a decrease in investment since AMLO has taken office. Lastly, the GN has not shown much of a shift away from the legal order. For the most part, the body continues to come under civilian jurisdiction, other than a few exceptions. However, while it may operate within a legal sphere, due to Mexico's renowned poor judicial system, this does not mean it will not escape impunity.

Overall, this thesis has provided an exploratory insight into a relatively novel and understudied subject. A scale of measurement of militarisation was developed and applied to the GN, so as to better understand the current structural changes and how they affect Mexico's larger political and security landscape. While there is a large amount of uncertainty around the current and future status of the GN, the main takeaways from this research are: (1) Mexico has yet to encounter a suitable and efficient manner of tackling its security crisis; and (2) the current solution – placing a militarised body at the forefront of a security strategy – might be doing more harm than good, by not only lacking in results, but also by endangering certain Mexican citizens' most fundamental rights.

Due to the subject of study being relatively new, certain data limitations were unavoidable. Concrete data from official sources was not easily accessible. This meant that less reliable sources, such as those originating from the media, were included in the study in order to provide a form of assessment of the GN. As a result, the results obtained are of indicative nature, rather than a final judgement. Further, this research only took into consideration four indicators. This signifies that not all elements contributing to the process of militarisation have been analysed. Other indicators can also be looked at, for example, one relating to the legal sphere. Similarly, within the four chosen indicators, a select few sub-indicators were taken into consideration. This shares the abovementioned limitation, meaning that other relevant information for the most well-rounded measurement of militarisation of the GN might have been disregarded.

As this study represents a preliminary investigation into the status of the GN, it offers a number of avenues of exploration for future research. Its indicative base means it can be easily built on through other quantitative and qualitative work, by, for example, refining the scale of measurement, or broadening the scope of the indicators. In addition to future work on the measurement of militarisation, other themes mentioned in this thesis can serve as points of departure for future research projects. One that stands out in particular is how AMLO has shifted in

opinion. While he first advocated for the removal of the FA from public security, once elected, he did the exact opposite, instead reinforcing their position in Mexican society. This paradox is an interesting line of research, which could be guided by theories of historical institutionalism or rational choice.

To end, since beginning this study, a number of significant new developments have occurred in relation to the position of the GN. In April 2023, the *Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación* (Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation - SCJN) declared the transfer of the GN from the SSPC to SEDENA as unconstitutional. This was due to the shift being in opposition of Article 21 of the Constitution, which states that public security institutions must be of civilian nature (although this was overlooked for the first seven months following the transfer). Accordingly, the AMLO administration was given until January 2024 to return the GN to the SSPC, a civilian body. This back and forth between civilian and military bodies is an interesting dynamic, and would prove a useful case study when attempting to demonstrate the instability of the Mexican political system in tackling the security crisis. This idea is reinforced by AMLO's response to the declaration of unconstitutionality. Instead of backing down, the president stated that he would reattempt the transfer of the GN to SEDENA on September 1, 2024, being the first day of the new Legislature. It remains to be seen if this move will be accepted, and what consequences it will entail.

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APPENDIX A.

Military language			
Speech	*Theme*	*Quotes*	*Code*
GN Fourth Anniversary Ceremony, on June 30, 2023	Personal relationships	"**Comrades** from the National Guard, Mexican Army, National Air Force and Navy."	Reference to military camaraderie
	Military values	"[…] the celebration of the 4th Anniversary of the National Guard, an institution **par excellence, guarantor** of public safety in the country."	Reference to military values: procedural, external
	Military values	"[…] a **disciplined** and **professional** body."	Reference to military values: procedural
	Military values	"[…] allows establishing solid principles based on **discipline** and **values**."	Reference to military values: procedural, internal
	Military values	"[…] **being closer to the public** to continue with **discipline** and **professionalism**."	Reference to military values: internal, procedural

Inauguration of GN facilities on September 10, 2022	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure
	Military values Military service	"[…] the National Guard strengthens and expands its operational deployment with **loyal** women and men who **provide their service to society** every day."	Reference to military values: internal, external Reference to military service
	Military values Military service	"[…] in addition to the **honour of serving** the people of Mexico."	Reference to military values: internal, external Reference to military service
	Military values	"[…] the values of **loyalty** and **honesty** that govern us."	Reference to military values: internal
	Military operationality	"[…] the **missions assigned** to you."	Use of military operational language
Inauguration of GN facilities on	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure

January 22, 2021	Military service	"[…] to invite the young people of this municipality and this region of the country who have a **vocation for service** to join this great project to transform public safety."	Reference to a call to military service
	Personal relationships	"Those of us who make up the National Guard recognize the **esprit de corps** that **unites us** with the Armed Forces […]"	Reference to military camaraderie
	Military values	"we seek to **protect** and **serve**"	Reference to military values: internal, external
Inauguration of GN facilities on July 3, 2021	Military values	"Each member of the National Guard is instilled with the **values of honesty**, **discipline** and a **spirit of service to the citizenry**."	Reference to military values: internal, procedural, external and military service
	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure

Inauguration of GN facilities on August 27, 2021	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure
	Military values	"[…] create a **solid** and **disciplined** institution."	Reference to military values: internal, procedural
	Military operationality	"[…] the women and men of the National Guard who are **assigned** to this beautiful state of our country."	Use of military operational language
Inauguration of GN facilities on February 14, 2020 (Sahuayo de Morelos)	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure
	Military operationality Military disposition	"**Joint operations** will articulate efforts to prevent crimes and **act firmly** against those who break the law and disrupt coexistence."	Use of military operational language Reference to military force
	Military values Military service	"[…] the commitment of these citizens to **serve** the country and society"	Reference to military values: external Reference to military service

	Military service Military values	"I want to take this opportunity to invite the youth of this part of the country to **join the ranks** of the National Guard. It is a good option to **serve** Mexico."	Reference to a call to military service Reference to military values: external
Inauguration of GN facilities on February 14, 2020 (Jiquilpan de Juárez)	Military service Military values	"to better **serve** Mexico"	Reference to military service Reference to military values: external
	Military service Military values	"Those who have a true **vocation of service** to Mexico follow the path of permanent preparation."	Reference to military service Reference to military values: external
	Military service	"I invite the young people of this region of the country to **join the ranks** of the National Guard […]"	Reference to a call to military service
Inauguration of GN facilities on	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure

February 15, 2020	Military values Military service	"**protect** and **serve** the citizenry"	Reference to military values: external Reference to military service
	Military service Military values	"I want to take this opportunity to invite the young people of this region to join its **ranks**, in which they will find a good way to **serve** Mexican society."	Reference to a call to military service Reference to military values: external
	Military values	"[…] with a clear sense of **honour.**"	Reference to military values: internal
Inauguration of GN facilities on December 16, 2020	Military operationality	"barracks"	Reference to military infrastructure
	Military disposition	"[…] will we be **unbeatable** against criminal groups."	Reference to military force
	Personal relationships	"Those of us who are members of the National Guard recognize **the spirit that unites us** with the Armed Forces."	Reference to military camaraderie

Inauguration Ceremony of the National Guard, on June 30, 2019	Military values	"[…] the National Guard is a civil, **disciplined** and **professional** public security institution."	Reference to military values: internal, procedural
	Military values	"[…] we are also driven by **discipline**, **love for the country,** the **fulfillment of duty** and the fight against corruption."	Reference to military values: internal, procedural
	Military operationality	"troops"	Reference to service men and women
	Military values	"I call on the members of the National Guard, to achieve the recognition of Mexican society based on **sacrifice, discipline and love for Mexico**."	Reference to military values: internal and procedural
	Military values	"**Providing security** to Mexican families is the greatest **honour** we have as a National Guard."	Reference to military values: external and internal

	Military values	"[…] with the greatest **dedication** and the **deepest love for the homeland.**"	Reference to military values: internal

Source: By Author.

APPENDIX B.

Initial training course for the National Guard (Veterans/New Entrants)		
No.	**Learning units**	**Hours**
1	Police Instruction and Discipline	50
2	Police Defence and Physical Conditioning	50
3	Guardia Nacional Doctrine	20
4	Police Ethics and Culture of Legality	20
5	Human Rights Applied to the Function of the Guardia Nacional	20
6	Gender, Gender Violence and Feminicide	20
7	Legitimate Use of Force	20
8	Introduction to Public Administration	10
9	Introduction to Public Security	10
10	Introduction to Criminal Law	10
11	Principles and Generalities of the Criminal Justice System	10
12	Police Action within the Criminal Justice System	10
13	Guardia Nacional Functions as a First Responder	20
14	First Respondent Workshop and Audience Participation	30
15	Juvenile Criminal Justice	10
16	Civil Protection (GN Plan)	10
17	First Aid in Function of the Guardia Nacional	20
18	Social Proximity and Links with the Citizenry	10
19	Use of human control tools and mechanisms (PR-24)	10
20	General Driving of Vehicles of the National Guard	20
21	Restauration of Public Order	30
22	Weapons and Practice of Shooting	30
23	Radiocommunication	10
24	Detention and Driving of Persons	20
25	Oral and Written Communication and Police Reports	20
26	Human Police Development	10

	TOTAL:	500

Source: Unidad de Asuntos Juridicos y Transparencia de la G.N., 2022. Translated by author.

APPENDIX C.

Primary Activities of the Guardia Nacional in 2022
Actions to strengthen, maintain and restore order and social peace in 50 priority municipalities with the highest homicide rate.
Security to roads to protect the integrity of people and their heritage.
Security plan to booths in coordination with Federal Roads and Bridges (CAPUFE).
Safeguard of strategic facilities of the National Customs Agency of Mexico (ANAM), Airports and Auxiliary Services (ASA}, PEMEX, CFE and National Control Center for Natural Gas (CENAGAS).
Prevent the theft of hydrocarbons with permanent security operations to duets and escorts to PEMEX autotanks.
Migration and Development Plan for the Northern and Southern Borders, in coordination with the National Migration Institute (INM).
Measures to guarantee the financial resources of the various social programmes, in coordination with the Secretariat for WELFARE.
Program "Fertilizers for Welfare", providing transport security for FERTINAL and PEMEX PRO-AGROIN DUSTRIAS, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER).
Security measures for the personnel of the National Search Commission (CNB), the State Commission for the Search of Persons (CEBP), the Secretariat for Territorial and Urban Agrarian Development (SEDATU), the Federal Consumer Prosecutor's Office (PROFECO), the National Commission for Aquaculture and Fisheries (CONAPESCA), Federal Judiciary (PJF), CFE, Federal Environmental Protection Office (PROFEPA), Federal Telecommunications Institute (1FT) and Tax Administration Service (SAT).

Protection of cultural heritage in the archaeological zones of: Teotihuacán, Calakmul, Palenque, Tajín, Tehuacán, Chichen-ltzá, Tulúm and Monte Albán.
Protection of the Upper Gulf of California Biosphere, Campeche (Calakmul) and Michoacán.
Actions in airports to provide care and security to national and international tourism.
Procedural security, cybersecurity and intelligence.

<div align="center">Source: Guardia Nacional (2022). Translated by author.</div>