ABOLISHING MILITARY AND CULTIVATING PACIFISM IN COSTA RICA: REFLECTIVE BUT LIMITED PEACE?[©] [Σ]

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ABSTRACT

Existing literature on peace, security and civil-military relations in Latin America only recently recognises the historical institutional sources of Costa Rican exceptionalism. While the Cold War's security predicament and the military dictatorship are common antecedents for most Central American states, Costa Rican demilitarisation and pacifism origins are unique and incomparable. Rather than treating post-1948 civil war development as exceptionalism, this paper seeks to normalise their success. The paper examines the political development of Costa Ricans in the 1950s and whether José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrer's historic decision to permanently abolish the military after the war helped to explain the institutionalisation process of organic civilian peace. This article reinvigorates Costa Rican exceptionalism. It analyses the cultivation of pacificism of those that have made the right choices in the face of adverse circumstances. The path dependence on national progress in education, health, and productivity only confirmed the unique political trajectory of Costa Rica, wherein they cannot be easily replicated or comparable. Understanding this distinctiveness should serve as a reminder of any renewed debate of Costa Rican exceptionalism in Central American security or democratic peace theory in liberal peacebuilding.

Keywords: culture of peace in Costa Rica, military abolishment in Costa Rica, security and peace in Latin America, civil-military relation in in Central America

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MENGHAPUSKAN KETENTERAAN DAN MEMUPUK PASIFISME DI COSTA RICA: KEAMANAN REFLEKTIF TETAPI TERHAD?

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ABSTRAK

Literatur sedia ada mengenai keamanan, keselamatan dan hubungan sivil-tentera di Amerika Latin mulai meneroka pendekatan institusionalisme sejarah dalam menerangka fenomea luar biasa Costa Rica. Walaupun situasi keselamatan sewaktu Perang Dingin dan lumrah pemerintahan diktator tentera mendasari perkembangan kebanyakan negara Amerika Tengah, peristiwa menyahmilitarisasi Costa Rica dan asal-usul pasifisme negara itu adalah unik dan tiada tandingannya di rantau tersebut. Menolak tanggapan perkembangan pasca-1948 perang saudara di Costa Rica sebagai luar biasa, kajian menunjukkan perkembangan di Costa Rica adalah normal. Makalah ini mengkaji perkembangan politik Costa Rica semenjak tahun 1950-an dan menilai sama ada keputusan bersejarah José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrer untuk menghapuskan tentera untuk selamanya membantu menjelaskan proses penginstitusian keamanan awam yang organik. Walaupun keputusan Costa Rica untuk menolak hak pertahanannya sentiasa diperbesar-besarkan sebagai sesuatu yang "progresif" dan luar biasa semasa Perang Dingin. Realiti hubungan antara pemansuhan tentera, pasifisme dan keamanan demokrasi sebenar bersifat pelbagai dimensi dan kompleks. Makalah ini menilai semula penghapusan tentera di Costa Rica. Kajian ini turut menganalisis pembudayaan pasifisme dalam menghadapi keadaan yang buruk. Mempertimbangkan pendekatan institusisionalisme sejarah dalam menyelidik sejarah keamanan tempatan, makalah turut menjelaskan persimpangan kritikal yang membawa pembentukan keamanan yang unik, sehingga akhirnya membawa keputusan untuk menghapuskan tentera di Costa Rica. Kebergantungan laluan pada kemajuan negara dalam pendidikan, kesihatan dan produktiviti hanya mengesahkan trajektori politik unik Costa Rica, yang juga perkembangan negara tersebut tidak boleh diadaptasi atau dibandingkan dengan negara lain secara mudah. Hal ini menjadi peringatan terhadap sebarang perdebatan baharu mengenai luar biasanya Costa Rica dalam keselamatan Amerika Tengah atau dalam perbahasan teori keamanan demokratik dalam pembinaan keamanan liberal.

Kata Kunci: budaya keamanan di Costa Rica, penghapusan tentera di Costa Rica, hubungan svil-tentera di Amerika Tengah

Introduction

Understanding the state of peace and conflict in Central American countries like Costa Rica can be as challenging as anywhere else. It is particularly perplexing to see countries reject or use military forces against neighbouring nations or their citizens, leading to more dangerous situations. This trend has been noticed in recent decades, even as there was relative peace and security during the Cold War. Even more unusual is the emergence of Costa Rican exceptionalism after the 1948 civil war. Costa Rica did not experience military coups or rigid military rules, unlike other Caribbean states. The country disbanded its military factions, raising questions about its defence needs during the Cold War. Is Costa Rican exceptionalism an excellent example of pacifism and positive peace in Latin America, where civil-military relations are often imbalanced? What motivated Costa Rican President José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrere to abolish the military permanently after the 1948 civil war despite the ongoing Cold War?

This article delves into the decision made by Ferrere to abolish the military in Costa Rica and answers related questions. The analysis is based on the Critical Peace Studies perspective, which goes beyond traditional International Relations (IR) theories of peace. It argues that the 1948 decision to abolish the military was shaped by Costa Rica's socio-historical accounts of peace and conflict formation. The literature on Latin America's peace, security, and civil-military relations recognises the unique circumstances that led to Costa Rica's exceptionalism. The decision to abolish the military in the early twentieth century was unlike any other in Central America, making Costa Rica a beacon of peace, development, and stability. However, there is a risk of distorting history and misinterpreting Costa Rica as a linear case of democratic peace, as advocated by proponents of Liberalism in IR and world politics.

This article reinvigorates Costa Rica's exceptionalism by examining its historic decision to abolish its military after 1948 and drawing on extensive research on security in Latin America. The discussion is divided into several sections, beginning with an investigation into the origins of Costa Rican exceptionalism as an island of peace and updates on militaristic policies and the abolishment of military options. The aim is to clarify the prevalence of civil-military relations among Central American states and the importance of militaristic peace as a precondition to insecurity and hostility towards foreign interventions.

The second part of the article presents historical institutional perspectives to explain the decision to abolish the military in 1948 and its impact on Costa Rican security and politics. The article argues that this decision cannot be confined to traditional views of neorealism and social constructivism in international relations, especially regarding the state's foreign policy and regional security. The third part of the article explores critical historical junctures of Costa Rican modern political development as part of the contemporary history of Central American state formation, war, and security

development. The fourth and final part highlights critical findings and connects past historical accounts to significant political developments and international relations in Costa Rica since the country's 1949 constitution was enforced.

The article cautions against cherry-picking historical explanations of Costa Rica as a beacon of regional peace and emphasises the importance of understanding the country's unique and dependent path since 1948. While Costa Rican exceptionalism can serve as a model for other fragile states with legacies of militaristic peace, it should not be romanticised or used to promote universal liberal peace models in other dangerous places.

Exploring Costa Rican Exceptionalism

Costa Rica has become a popular destination for tourism and retirement among people from the Global North due to its reputation for peace and development over the past few decades. The country's status as a UN regional hub for peace in Latin America has also made it a gateway for learning about peace and conflict in the region. This reliance on tourism revenue has allowed those who have suffered from war and negative peace to dream of lasting peace in the international realm.

Costa Rica's name, "rich coast," is fitting for a country surrounded by Pacific and Atlantic oceans. With its beautiful beaches, tropical weather, and opportunities for student exchange at the University of Peace, it is easy to accept the idea of everlasting or sustainable peace. However, some experts argue that expecting complete disarmament from countries like the United States is unrealistic.

Historic peace movements after World War II praised the security policies of Japan and Costa Rica, particularly as the development of Peace Studies was criticized for being too focused on nuclear-armed races and superpower conflicts in the Third World.

Although some question whether pacifism or non-violence can lead to everlasting peace, it is essential to acknowledge Costa Rica's exceptionalism in terms of its commitment to peace and tourism. This commitment is not only due to its unique geopolitical position in Central America, surrounded by conflict and militarism but also supported by numerous international reports and indexes. For example, Costa Rica ranks 38th out of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index, is rated "Free" by Freedom in the World with high scores in political rights, civil liberties, and internet freedom, and is ranked 48th out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index. It also ranks highly in the World Happiness Report and the United Nations Human Development Index.

However, recent events have shown that achieving and maintaining peace is complex. The documentary *A Bold Peace* highlights Costa Rica's abandonment of its military and redirecting resources towards human development, a strategy that aligns with the sustainable development goals and the desires of many war-torn societies.

Nevertheless, the Fragile States Report reveals that Costa Rica's understanding of peace issues is no longer supported solely by its positive peace history since 1948. In 2022, the country's ranking in state fragility declined significantly, indicating worsening indicators in its cohesion, political, economic, and social variables. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these issues, leading to increased crime rates, inflation, cost of living, social challenges, and a refugee influx from neighbouring conflict-ridden countries. These challenges have also impacted tourism revenue, with many expatriates leaving the country. The following section will discuss recent military updates and civil-military issues in Costa Rica compared to other Central American states.

Costa Rica as a Case for Pacifism?

The discussion around global security often leads to increased military spending and the need for an annual defence budget to improve a country's capabilities (Hinds, 2022; Harris 2004; Hellinger 2015). Regardless of a country's size or power, the need to defend against external threats is always present and justified through offensive and defensive realist policies (Martin 2004; Mearsheimer 2021; Metraux 2008). However, Costa Rica took a different approach and did not pursue military options during the Cold War, which was controversial at the time (Moreno 1994; Freedman 1971). The 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez, was vocal about this decision:

> to demilitarize the country means to make a profound decision. It is not enough to change the name of the armed forces. It is necessary to change the minds of those people who only yesterday wore a military uniform. It is necessary to have the courage to ban the army as a permanent institution and to say yes to a future when arms are no longer needed when the force of reason prevails over any reason to use force (*The New York Times,* January 9, 1990).

Did you know that Costa Rica is a unique state without a military? Back in 1948, following a revolution, the military was abolished, and this was cemented in Article 12 of the 1949 Constitution (Hein and Co 2012, 12). According to Article 12, the army is no longer a permanent institution. Instead, there are only necessary police forces for surveillance and the preservation of public order. Military forces may only be created through a continental agreement or for national defence, and they must always be subordinate to civilian power. They cannot deliberate or make statements or representations individually or collectively.

The decision made by Costa Rica to eliminate its military and include it in the constitution has caught the attention of many security and peace experts. This move was made during the early stages of the Cold War and shortly after World War II, when many countries were focused on building their military power. Costa Rica's choice to abolish its military was unique given the era context, where most nations spent significant money on military development and enhancement (SIPRI 2018).

Figure 1: Costa Rican Recent Trends and Fragile State Perspectives
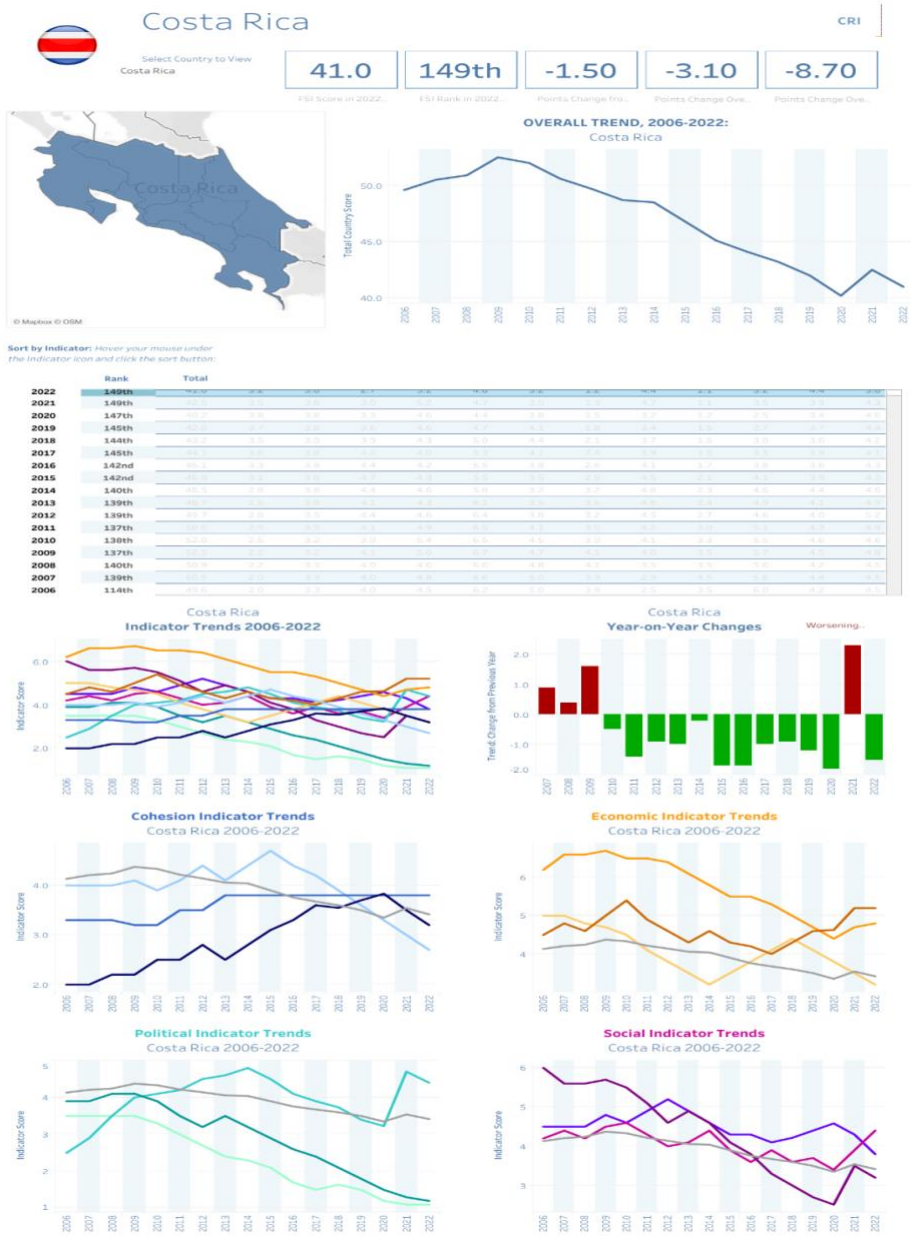
source: (*FSI* 2022).

However, Costa Rica's development was influenced by lessons learned from domestic political tragedies and two world wars (Mearsheimer 2014; Stearns 2013; Wilkinson 1956; Wilson 1998). The decision to abolish their military was remarkable, especially during the Cold War, marked by heightened competition between the US

and USSR (Mares 2012; Rankin 2012; Wiarda and Kline 1979; Martz 1959). This political development led to the belief that demilitarization was the most logical and practical policy to protect states from potential military threats. Irony to most security practices during the cold war, it was also apparent that, besides developing and strengthening military capabilities, some states, particularly the US and other powers, would even acquire nuclear weapons as part of their military strategies to survive (Wohlforth 2008; Manfred 1984). This added another dimension of security discourse to many Third World states, including Central America and the Caribbean region.

It is important to note that during the early 1900s, Costa Rica's leaders should have recognized the need to arm the military for security, given the regional political environment. Costa Rica is situated in an area that could be considered a "peace without security" zone, as described by Millett and Stiles (2008, 31). While their description referred to the current situation in the region, it is also applicable to Central American security since its independence (Mares 2015).

Since declaring independence from Spain in 1821, the political environment in Central America has been fraught with turmoil, as noted by Tickner (2009), Tussie and Acharya (2022), and Terradas (2021). Revolutions and violent political uprisings have occurred frequently in almost every state in the region (Arias 2022; Biesanz *et al.* 1999; Høivik and Aas 1981; Lehoucq 2012; Pearcy 2006; Perez and Pestana 2012). The latter half of the 20th century saw Central America and the Caribbean region become a battleground for significant ideologies of the bipolar system (Lauderdale 1986; Millett and Stiles 2008; O'Toole 2007), with the United States intervening in domestic politics, including invasions of Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Grenada, and Cuba (Przeworski 2016; McGuire 2010; Reid 2017; Salisbury 1974).

The relationship between Costa Rica and Nicaragua has been historically tense due to border conflicts and political exiles from 1948 to 1980, which led to several wars between both countries in 1948, 1954-1955, and 1977-1979 (Rettberg 2016; Pollack 2022). In contrast, Costa Rica had a peaceful and friendly relationship with Panama, as confirmed by (the Author's personal communication on February 8, 2016, and D. Diaz-Arias on February 2, 2016).

Figure 2: Geopolitics of Costa Rica in Central American Region

source: (*National Geography* 2022).

Notwithstanding the historical context of Costa Rica and the perceived need for a military for defence, the country decided to abolish its military after a violent revolution in 1948. Since then, Costa Rica has remained a state without a military. This decision has prompted scholars to examine why a country would abolish such a vital tool for ensuring its survival. While some literature in strategic studies suggests that a need for defence arises from a militarized authoritarian state facing hostile threats, there is a tendency to view increasing military budgets as a means of guaranteeing security. As a result, traditional security discourse often assumes a neutral relationship between peaceful inter-state relations and an essential military capability.

Despite the desire for peaceful relationships between countries, debates over military spending and defence procurement are inevitable. Even if a country's immediate regional environment is not subject to international or transnational threats, the classical maxim of the Weberian state, which attributes legitimate violence monopoly to the state, has given rise to war technology and modern security, strategic, and defence studies. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to imagine a foreign affairs debate that advocates for the abolition of the military to ensure perpetual peace. Some may argue that such debates are illusions of peace or great deceptions to explore politics among nations, excluding defence capability and revolutions in military

affairs. Nonetheless, exploring reasonable conditions for securing and maintaining peace with military abolition and whether they facilitate pacifism is essential.

Although Costa Rica was an exceptional candidate for peace in Central America during the Cold War's regional security predicament, the underlying reasons for pacifist views in the country do not make it a compelling argument for romanticising the regional model of peaceful transitions. Although Costa Rican political development in the 1950s was commendable compared to the neighbouring Latin American countries' prominent attributes of military dictatorship and unspeakable mayhem of violence unleashed by numerous records of extreme civil-military relations, further examinations of path dependence to progressive achievements in literacy, health, and productivity only confirmed that Costa Rica had a unique political trajectory that cannot be replicated or compared to propose democratic peace in the region. After all, social processes, and local peace formation in Costa Rica since the 1950s are not exceptional, yet misleadingly constructed as a fallacy of cultivating a peace culture that could be transferred to other countries.

Costa Rica's demilitarisation in the late 1940s is often seen as crucial in the country's subsequent path towards sustainable democratization. This concept is linked to Huntington's idea of civilian control of the military and Ayoob's third-world security predicament. The practice of demilitarization and rejection of violence and aggression in public and foreign affairs is now viewed as a moral commitment to cooperative behaviour. This pacifist approach should not be mistaken for isolationism or passivism but rather as a firm conviction against using force to address security threats. It involves nonviolent diplomatic persuasion to reject war and intervention. Pacifism discourse is multidimensional and involves nonviolent engagement against power politics by state and non-state actors. Costa Rica's maximalist position of absolute military abolishment involved a two-step process of rejecting violence and engaging in cooperative dialogue for peaceful dispute settlement. Pacifist epistemic assumptions of irenology involve a powerful moral persuasion against evil in international relations. The classical accentuation of pacifism prior to the world wars was celebrated as an individual choice of *ahimsa* or civil obedience and various humanitarian movements. However, Costa Rica's abolishment after World War II requires us to explore further peaceful means as practical state policies. The practice of military abolishment is intertwined with local origins or cultivations of peace and cannot be ignored in the discourse on Pacific contingency and peace transformation.

Throughout history, wars and conflicts have often been considered necessary for achieving peace and security. However, there have also been instances where peace has been achieved through the clash of ideas and materials between different groups. Examining these events and understanding the balance between peace and violence is crucial rather than simply viewing them as inevitable or necessary. In Central and Southern America, violence and struggles have marked the region's history, making it challenging to establish peaceful relationships. Using military force has often led to further violence rather than resolving conflicts. It is crucial to understand the complex

security issues in the region and find ways to mitigate threats and promote peaceful settlements.

Contextualising Costa Rica within the Prevalent of Militaristic Peace in Central American Security Discourse

Costa Rica's security, peace, and conflict situation is incredibly complex and risky. Despite this, comprehending and describing Costa Rican exceptionalism as a shining example of peace in Latin America and a global peace education initiative is challenging. At first glance, it is easy to see why Costa Rica is often viewed as an island of peace in the middle of a turbulent region, making it a popular destination for tourists. However, before we delve into why Costa Rica chose to abolish its military, it is essential to note that the political, security, and defence literature surrounding Costa Rica and Central America covers several different themes.

Various studies have been conducted with different themes in the field of International Relations. The ***first theme*** emphasises the importance of national security and its relation to the state's survival in world politics. Many works have explored the causal relations between these two aspects, including Eijkman (2007), Huhn (2008b, 2008a, 2009b, 2009a), Obregon (1951), Reding (1986), and A. Sanchez (2011).

The ***second theme*** focuses on the military and public forces, known as Fuerza Pública. Scholars such as Dursun-Özkanca (2017), Eijkman (2007), Harris (1996), Kassebaum (1990), Martin (2004), and A. Sanchez (2011) have emphasised militarism and civil-military perspectives, which are part of broader comparative politics.

The ***third theme*** is dedicated to researching demilitarisation or abolishment of the military. Works by Barbey (2013, 2015), Bowman (1998), Cummings (2006), Høivik and Aas (1981), A. Sanchez (2011), and F. Sanchez (2004) have inspired further investigations of viable security policies after the abolishment of the military. Scholars such as Hubers (1991), Lauderdale (1986), Lincoln and Lauderdale (1985), Mount (2015), Polk (1984), A. Sanchez (2011), F. Sanchez (2004), and Tamburini (2013) have contributed to this area of research.

The ***fourth theme*** of the literature analysed peace and conflict studies, focusing on the culture of peace (Goertzel 1984; Hubers 1991; Huhn 2008a, 2009b). The fifth theme of literature used interdisciplinary approaches such as political history and comparative politics to examine the 1948 revolution (Bell 1968, 1971; Bird 1984; Diaz-Arias 2009), the electoral process (Bird, 1984; Lehoucq, 1991, 1992, 1996, 2005, 2010; Lehoucq & Molina, 2002; Molina & Lehoucq, 1999), and democratic development in Costa Rica (Booth 1999, 2008; Booth and Seligson 1993; Hedayat 2014; Lehoucq 1991, 1992, 1996, 2012; Lehoucq and Molina, 2002; Reding 1986; Winson1989).

Other research themes included the less-militarised aspects of security, police studies, and civil defence in the country (Dursun-Özkanca 2017; Eijkman 2006b, 2006a, 2007, 2011). Although there is limited research on human rights in Costa Rica's foreign policy, there is a wealth of literature on reconciliation, peacebuilding, transitional justice, and regime change in the country (Brysk, 2005, 2009; Crahan, n.d.).

Arguably, there is a lack of comprehensive information on why Costa Rica abolished its military, with only a few sources touching on the topic briefly and without elaboration unless relevant to their main discussion. The reasons for this decision can be found scattered across various works by different scholars, such as Aguillar-Bulgarelli, Bowman, Cerdas Albertazzi and Vargas Cambronero, Dursun-Özkanca, Fallas Barrantes, Gardner, Goertzel, Harris, Hedayat, Høivik and Aas, Huhn, Kendrick, Lauderdale, Lincoln and Lauderdale, Longley, Martz, McGuire, Pearcy, A. Sanchez, Urcuyo, Wiarda and Collins, Wiarda and Kline, Wilson, and Winson.

It is worth noting that these writings are not particularly recent, with the most recent work until 2017 being Dursun-Özkanca's "Pitfalls of Police Reform in Costa Rica: Insights into Security Sector Reform in Non-Military Countries." This leaves a significant gap in our understanding of Costa Rican demilitarisation's social and historical origins. This article aims to fill that gap by exploring the many reasons behind Costa Rica's decision to abolish its military. However, there are still some marginal gaps in the study of Costa Rican defence and security, particularly from the 1940s when the state abolished the military in 2015. Despite scholars' interest in studying Costa Rica, as evidenced by the literature mentioned above, it was found that there are at least **several justifications** for the decision to abolish its military.

Firstly, a group of young social democrats affiliated with the *Partido Social Demócrata* (The Social Democratic Party/PSD) laid the first justification for abolishing the military. This occurred when they were presented with a draft for a new constitution in May 1948 to the Committee on the Project for Political Constitution. In the draft commission, the group advocated abolishing the military as an essential component of a modernised state (Høivik and Aas 1981). They contended that the state lacked military traditions, capacities or capabilities to sustain the institution. Additionally, they cited the failure of the National Army (Costa Rica's military) to quell the National Liberation Army, which consisted of the Figueristas (also known as Figueres sympathisers) rebel group and the Caribbean Legion. Furthermore, they highlighted the grave damage the National Army had caused during the revolution (Høivik and Aas 1981, 342).

According to Longley's (1993b) PhD dissertation, "Resistance and Accommodation: Costa Rica and The United States During the Rise of José Figueres, 1942-1957," internal divisions in Picado's camp, such as between Picado and René, Picado and Calderón, and Picado and Mora (leader of the communist party, Vanguardia Popular), as well as his indecision and inaction to Figueristas attacks, resulted in many lives lost. Dias-Arias also documented similar findings in his PhD thesis, "Social Crises and

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Struggling Memories: Populism, Popular Mobilisation, Violence and Memories of Civil War in Costa Rica, 1940-1948" (2009). The number of casualties was significant, with two thousand people dying during the revolution. The tragedy affected every Costa Rican, leading committee members and other political elites to accept the suggestion to abolish the military. This tragedy was one of the most significant driving forces behind the Ticos' rejection of the military as a necessary institution in a modern country (Bowman 2013, 185).

In addition to their proposal to abolish the military, this group of young social democrats urged political leaders to banish war as an instrument in national and international politics and to prioritise arbitration as a means of solving conflicts (Høivik and Aas 1981, 342; see also Bowman, 2013).

Elaborated from the first justification are *two reasons* why the military was abolished in Costa Rica. The ***first reason*** is to promote future peace and political stability by transforming social development. ***The second reason*** is related to the country's economy, which was experiencing an economic crisis. The then government used the economic factor to justify abolishing the military, allowing them to use the money previously allocated for the army to repair social problems. According to David Diaz-Arias, the plan was successful in repairing social problems. However, the implementation of the plan is a different story. Before the 1948 44-day war, Costa Rica was already experiencing an economic crisis due to two significant events, the Great Depression of the 1930s and the consequences of the Second World War. This crisis caused many political and social problems, including inflation, economic mismanagement, corruption, unemployment, class division, attempted coups, and political repression. Inequality was also high. As a result, José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrer abolished the military to save money and promote economic stability.

Nevertheless, it was only in the influential work of *La abolition del Ejercito en Costa Rica* (1988) that we can see how the two arguments this article put forward earlier in this section are connected. According to Ana Luisa Cerdas Albertazzi and Gerardo Vargas Cambronero, sustaining military and militarisation will stunt the state's social development as the Ticos at the time were already struggling to make ends meet. The ***second justifications*** are the abolishment of the military, therefore, was necessary to help improve their economy and repair the social and political problems they were experiencing. One notable suggestion to abolish the military and to channel some of the monies previously allocated to support the military to other developmental sectors, such as education, came from Edgar Cardona, the Junta's Minister of Security (Bowman 2002, 110). Cardona spoke to Figueres about dissolving the army and suggested spending more on education. He proposed a civil guard for security and abolishing the military.

Besides education, the funds have benefited numerous generations of Costa Ricans (Harris, 1996; Martínez Franzoni & Sánchez-Ancochea, 2017; O'Toole, 2007). Former Costa Rican President Óscar Arias Sánchez (1991), who held office from 1986-1990 and 2006-2010, referred to these benefits as "dividends of peace" (1991, 659). In a

lecture given at the SIPRI 1990 on "Third World Interests in the New Era of East-West Relations," Sánchez (1991) explained that "peace" meant that international development agencies recognised Costa Rica's standard of living as comparable to industrialised countries. It is widely acknowledged that the country's extraordinary progress in education, health, housing, and social welfare is because resources are not spent on purchasing arms. The absence of an army has strengthened Costa Rica's democratic system, making it one of the most stable democracies in Latin America. These are the "dividends of peace" that we have achieved. (1991, 659)

The ***third justification*** why Costa Rica abolished the military is related to Figueres' idiosincratic yet strategic move to do away with potential military threats to the new and future government of the Second Republic (Bowman, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2013; Dursun-Özkanca, 2017; Høivik and Aas, 1981; Huhn, 2008a, 2009a, 2009b; Kendrick, 1988; Lauderdale, 1986; Lincoln and Lauderdale, 1985; McGuire, 2010; Pearcy, 2006; A. Sanchez, 2011; Wiarda & Collins, 2011; Wiarda & Kline, 1979; Wilson, 1998). It is important to note here that in his quest to establish the 'Second Republic,' Figueres took up arms against Teodoro Picado Michalski's (1944-1948) government (Bowman, 2002; Hedayat, 2014). It was a joint military effort between Figueres himself, Figueristas and the Caribbean Legion. As such, he had anticipated counterrevolutions from individuals who did not like him, e.g., the Calderónistas and the military members of the conservative groups, and those who did not belong to the conservative party and groups but shared their concern over policies that Figueres had and will introduce.

It can be argued that abolishing the military, therefore, was a strategic move to fret out all elements that could be used to stage a counterrevolution against him and the Junta government (Bowman 2002; Høivik & Aas, 1981; Huhn, 2009b; Martz, 1959; Wiarda & Collins, 2011). Maintaining the same military can be challenging too. It will take many monies to arm the military to improve its capabilities to deal with future threats, as well as efforts and energies to make the National Army a professional institution. Since Costa Rica's military was already weak and debilitated by 1948, it seemed only practical to abolish the military. In Kirk Bowman's words, 'the proscription of the military merely formalised the situation' (Bowman 2002, 143). A similar argument can also be seen in Geoff Harris' article 'Military Expenditure and Social Development in Costa Rica: A Model for Small Countries?' (1996).

Apart from the strategic and practical moves, Figueres, in his quest to circumvent potential military threats to his government, was also seen wanting to change the tradition of having a top leader governing the military with a family connection with the president of the state and in 'Costa Rica: Democracy and Antimilitarism' (1984), Ted Goertzel described this action as a symbolic gesture 'to establish civilians (336) in the military institution. An apparent reason for this is related to what Figueres learnt about the institution before and during the revolution (Diaz-Arias 2009, 271). The National Army, for example, was controlled by Picado's brother, René Picado Michalski (Cerdas Cruz, 1996; Diaz-Arias, 2009; Høivik & Aas, 1981). By the nature of its organisation and family ties, 'the military was in no doubt closely linked with the

government' (Høivik and Aas 1981, 341). If one looks at the analyses John Patrick Bell (1968), Kyle Longley (1997), Kirk Bowman (1998, 2002) and David Diaz-Arias (2009) included in their discussion, particularly on the way Picado reacted to the constant violent occurrences since the very beginning of his presidency. One can see that René has been helping his brother on multiple occasions.

Nevertheless, his involvement in these occurrences can hardly be avoided since René was the Second Vice President of Costa Rica (1944-1948) and a minister responsible for Public Security (Davis, 1972; Longley, 1997). In his views, too, of the view that there is nothing wrong nor unusual for President Picado, albeit reluctantly at first,18 to use the military to maintain domestic order, especially when the police forces were incapable of handling an intense situation like a revolution. However, how and for what purpose the military being used had been the target of many criticisms.

Obviously, the military was used not only to protect the state from political disturbances that Figueres and his supporters initiated but also to keep the party in power (Bowman, 2002; Davis, 1972; Longley, 1997). In Sparrow and the Hawk: Costa Rica and the United States During the Rise of José Figueres (1997), Kyle Longley narrated that René, in one of his involvements after the 1948 annulment of the election result, commanded the military to bomb the area where the president-elect, Otílio Ulate, was hiding if he and Figueres not wanting to surrender (Bell 1971, 128; Longley 1994, 67). This was an effort to arrest them after they were allegedly involved in a riot opposing the annulment (Longley 1997). Longley's report on the situation was also documented by Nathaniel Davis, the then US Ambassador to Costa Rica, in his telegram to The State Department (1972, 489–490). Since Figueres believed the military was already corrupted, he refused to inherit military personnel (soldiers) whose allegiance was to the former presidents— Calderón and Picado—and the Communist party (Longley, 1997). According to Kyle Longley (1993a), the New York Times, one of the international newspapers that covered the situation after the annulment of the 1948 election result, reported that there were two factions within the government forces at that time. 'The regular army remained loyal to Picado and its commander, René Picado, the president's brother … [T]he majority of the troops owed their allegiance to Mora and Calderón' (p. 72). He then elaborated on this statement by reminding readers about the support that Vanguardia Popular received, which according to him, 'should not be taken for granted' (p. 73). In this respect, Longley (1997) described that 'more than 70 per cent of the police and army were party members, and they owed their allegiance primarily to the communist commanders [Mora]' (p. 73). Divisions within the military can indeed be a threat to the new government. For this reason, abolishing the military was considered the best policy option that Figueres opted to secure himself and his position as leader of the Junta government.

The *fourth justification* suggested that Costa Rica abolished the military because the Junta wanted to preserve the state's peaceful status and 'as a protest against military coups throughout Latin America'19 (Høivik and Aas 1981, 342). Tord Høivik and Solveig Aas introduced these arguments in their article 'Demilitarization in Costa

Rica: A Farewell to Arms?' (1981). Notwithstanding the following two arguments, it is not easy to establish how they can be justified. The following section discusses two arguments that contradict what Costa Rica has experienced.

Two Arguments of Military Abolishment and Costa Rica's Path Dependence to Democratic Pacifism

The ***first argument*** being discussed is the 1948 revolution in Costa Rica, a violent event that resulted in the loss of two thousand lives. Various sources have discussed this event, including Academic A, Academic B, A. López and Ramírez, Bell, Booth and Seligson, Diaz-Arias, Gardner, Hedayat, and Pearcy. The revolution led to Figueres assuming power for 18 months, even though he was not democratically elected. One may question the justification behind abolishing the military to preserve peace and protest military coups in Latin America, primarily since Figueres and his supporter's used violence against an elected government. It should also be noted that the revolution itself disrupted the peace.

To preserve the state's peaceful status, deserves critical examination, particularly on the word "preserve" used by Høivik and Aas. Considering if the argument implies that Costa Rica was already enjoying the peace before the revolution is essential. If this is the case, it urges further investigation to determine what caused this aberration - a mechanism to find a brief phase of institutional flux also referred to as a critical juncture, during which a dramatic change happened and made Costa Rica famous today as a peaceful country without a military (Biesanz *et al* 1999; Ebel *et al* 1991; Garcia 2004; Hedayat 2014; Huhn 2009a; Láscaris 1994; Zúniga 2019). While the ***second argument*** differs somewhat from Costa Rica's experience, the first argument deserves another critical look.

It is possible that Figueres's decision to abolish the military was driven by a recognition that it posed a real threat to Costa Rica's political stability. This recognition may have come from looking at the situation throughout Latin America, where ambitious leaders often used the military to gain and maintain power. Examples can be seen in Nicaragua, where Anastasio Somoza and Garcia ruled for extended periods, and the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Cuba saw similar abuses of power under Fulgencio Batista, while in Guatemala, the military was used by Ubico Castañeda, and in Peru, Manuel Odría had complete control of the military to serve his political objectives.

Throughout its history, Costa Rica has had military leaders use the military to rule the state. However, this stopped in 1919 after military dictator Federico Tinoco Granados (1917-1919) was removed from office (Busey, 1961). There was only one instance where politicians René, President Picado, and Calderón allegedly wanted to remain in power following the 1948 election (Biesanz *et al*, 1999; Bowman, 2002; Diaz-Arias, 2009; Høivik and Aas, 1981; Longley, 1997). This situation led Figueres and his sympathisers to believe they had to revolt against the Picado government. They were convinced peace could only be attained by establishing the 'Second

Republic' (Hedayat 2014, 19; 159–160). The military's inability to remain apolitical meant the decision to abolish the military was considered suitable. This was seen as a moral obligation to preserve the peace the state had enjoyed since 1919.

One of the arguments presented in the ***fourth justification*** earlier is closely related to an argument introduced by Maria Emanuela Hedayat in a chapter of her PhD on Costa Rica's Democratic Institutional Development from 1820 to the 1960s. Her argument highlights the ***fifth justification*** earlier for why Costa Rica abolished the military.

According to Hedayat, the Junta abolished the military because of three reasons. First, Figueres wanted to show to the US his commitment to regional peace, especially after he was famously portrayed as the 'leader of a terrorist group' and ii) an 'anarchist' (both labels are mine based on the descriptions that she illustrated in her writing) for. His action in disrupting Costa Rica's political stability in 1946 and 1947 led to the 1948 election through his 'shock brigades'—a militia group that conducted terrorist attacks to achieve their desired goals (Hedayat 2014, 168–169), his membership in the Caribbean Legion—a movement that plotted to overthrow oppressive dictators throughout Latin America, and; his involvement in the armed insurrection, together with the Caribbean Legion, that had caused the 1948 revolution.

Many people in Costa Rica, Central America, and the US know about Figueres's involvement in these three events (Bowman, 2002; Davis, 1972; Diaz-Arias, 2009; Hedayat, 2014, 207; Longley, 1997). The proximity of Costa Rica to the Panama Canal has made the US uneasy about the country's political development (Bowman, 2002; Davis, 1972; Longley, 1997). In order to demonstrate his capabilities as a leader, Figueres took a significant step by abolishing the military. This act was meant to show that he was committed to restoring order and peace, was not aggressive (as evidenced by the abolition of the military), was anti-communist, and supported the US. Most importantly, Figueres wanted to prove to the US that he was a reliable and trustworthy ally.

To counter his opponents' portrayal of him as a dictator who violated Costa Rica's peaceful and democratic political identity, the decision to abolish the military was made. This move was intended to challenge the country's 'exceptionality' collective imaginary, characterised by consensus and innate peacefulness. He was labelled this way after ousting Picado, which allowed him to rule Costa Rica as a military Junta after taking power from the president-elect Otílio Ulate Blanco (1949-1953). His policies were mainly aimed at the opposition, including the communist party, labour unions, and conservative oligarchies.

Figueres, the conservative oligarch, nationalised the banking system, electric and water companies and telephone services. He also appointed Figueristas to important administrative positions in the state's autonomous institutions, according to Biesanz et al. (1999), Hedayat (2014), Palmer & Molina (2006), and Seligson (2006). These

policies led to Figueres being labelled as a dictator and 'the Soviet communist in disguise' by his political opponents, as cited by Hedayat (2014, 204).

According to this research, Figueres was initially hesitant about abolishing the military. He believed the military played a crucial role in maintaining order after the revolution. This view was shared by former rebel soldiers who felt the military was necessary to safeguard Costa Rica's future peace. Articles published in *La Prensa Libre and La Nación* immediately after the revolution also suggested that the military should be reorganised in light of democracy and national freedom rather than wholly abolished. The decision to keep the military was also meant to reassure the international community that Costa Rica would not be left vulnerable to threats from within and outside the state. Figueres had noble intentions, but political elites and the public demanded that the military be abolished in Costa Rica. This decision made Figueres a political figure responsible for creating an exceptional state.

During the 1980s, the United States engaged in counterinsurgency in El Salvador and supported a guerrilla insurgency in Nicaragua, creating a war zone. In 1986, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias attempted to bring peace to Nicaragua with the Esquipulas Peace Agreement. However, researchers need help distinguishing between negative and positive peace in analysing this agreement. In 1987, the Costa Rican government successfully facilitated a peaceful settlement among conflicting parties in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, bringing lasting peace to the region during the Cold War. This settlement also increased democratic participation, political reforms, and accountability demands as the region transitioned out of the Cold War. These changes were part of Huntington's third wave of democratisation, which focused on political accountability, transitional justice, and liberal peacebuilding to overcome militarism's legacy and foster peaceful change.

Acknowledgement and Declaration

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