

Urban military geographies: New directions in the (re)production of space, militarism, and the urban

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Abstract

Armed forces in urban areas are a very visible source of socio-spatial and urban change. Even in contemporary cities 'at peace', this presence and ensuing changes can be wide-ranging, evident across infrastructure, organisations, narratives of place, events, and everyday activities. Although over the past 2 decades critical military studies and urban geopolitics have explored some of these themes, an urban studies perspective on such military geographies in peacetime has elicited far less attention. The aim of this article is to open up opportunities for deeper conceptualisation and research on urban military geographies. This article establishes a dialogue between critical military studies and urban geopolitics, to review the different dimensions of the influence of a military presence in urban space, and to provide a synthesis of these two bodies of literature. Using Lefebvre's dialectical theory of spatial production, this review shows how cities can be privileged spaces for the reproduction of militarism and preparation for war. Moreover, it examines how the presence of military forces in peacetime can influence the material and immaterial production of urban space.

KEYWORDS

militarisation, military geography, urban development, urban geopolitics

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1 | URBAN GEOPOLITICS, MILITARY GEOGRAPHIES, AND URBAN MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

The relationship between military presence and the city is a central node of urban transformations. In contemporary cities not directly involved in warfare, this presence manifests itself in material and immaterial forms, which are the result of unceasing interactions between the past and present, and between local dynamics and transcalar geopolitical scenarios. Processes of militarisation are hugely influential for cities, and this global process contributes to a blurring between the dichotomy of war and peace (Farish, 2013; Gregory, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). While recognising the contemporary ambivalence of the war/peace dichotomy, this article focuses on questions of militarism and militarisation in peace or non-conflict contexts in order to differentiate from military influences in cities at war (Daniellson, 2022; Pasquetti, 2019) and in divided cities (Allegra et al., 2012; Calame & Charlesworth, 2011; Casaglia, 2020).

Over the past 20 years, the 'urban geopolitical turn' (Fregonese, 2012; Graham, 2004a; Rokem & Boano, 2018, 2023; Rokem et al., 2017; Yacobi, 2009) has shaped urban studies and geopolitics, examining the connection between transnational geopolitical transformations, the production of space, and acts of violence at the urban scale. As Rokem et al. (2017) highlight, two lines of research have emerged from this approach: the first deals with processes of militarisation and imaginaries of late-modern and asymmetrical wars (Coaffee, 2004; Coward, 2008; Elden, 2013; Graham, 2010; Sassen, 2010; Weizman, 2007). The second focuses on contested cities, with reference to the role of planning and architecture in ethno-national conflicts (Badescu, 2022; Fregonese, 2009; Genç, 2021; Veron, 2021). However, the relationship between cities and armed forces is not only evident in the destructive and targeting dimensions of war, but also in cities as sites of war preparation and administration in areas commonly considered 'at peace'. Following this theoretical approach, the New Military Urbanism (Graham, 2009, 2010, 2012) has analysed the global proliferation of discourses, activities, infrastructures, and popular arenas linking processes of urbanisation and militarisation. Thereby, urban geopolitics connects discursive and material dimensions of that phenomena. In non-war contexts, cities have become points from which to analyse the everyday effects of militarisation and war preparation (Sidaway, 2009).

In parallel to this body of work, critical military studies (Basham & Bulmer, 2017; Basham et al., 2015), and critical military geographies¹ (Forsyth, 2019; Rech et al., 2015; Woodward, 2004), have developed a focus on the 'geographical constitution and expression of military phenomena' (Woodward, 2019, p. 2). This approach has investigated the footprint of military presence, activities, and representations on places and communities, turning attention to contexts not directly involved in war. Within this theoretical framework, militarism acquires a pivotal, and twofold, meaning. This concept captures the increasing influence of the processes of militarisation² and portrays the complexity of such phenomena at both cultural-ideological and material levels. Examining how military priorities influence different spheres of society, Enloe (2016) has defined militarism as 'a complex package of ideas that, all together, promote military values in both military and civil affairs' (ibid, p.11). Bernazzoli and Flint (2009a, 2009b) and Dowler (2012) have used this approach to describe how militaristic beliefs constitute a form of hegemonic culture that – particularly in peacetime contexts - shapes the collective vision. From a perspective oriented towards the material effects of military activities and representations, Woodward (2005) defined the geographies of militarism 'as the shaping of civilian space and social relations by military objectives, rationales, and structures, either as part of the deliberate extension of military influence into civilian spheres of life and the prioritising of military institutions, or as a byproduct of those processes' (ibid, p.4). In both senses, the term militarism³ is strongly linked to the dimensions of space in which it is reproduced and it allows one to grasp the multidimensionality of military geographies at different scales (Rech et al., 2015). In similar ways, analyses of military landscapes (McGarry, 2022; Woodward, 2014) and places (Bernazzoli & Flint, 2009a, 2010; Woodward, 2020) allow us to examine how they are the result of formal and informal processes. Indeed, military geographies are based on precise institutional and military choices and actions, which produce places and representations. Moreover, Bernazzoli and Flint (2009a, 2010) have emphasised the characterisation of place as a hegemonic and recursive process, in which social construction is influenced and, over time, influences the production of place. Using this framework, understanding of military phenomena appears to be mediated by interactions between the characteristics of the location and the nature of the presence (or absence) of the military.

Although the study of militarisation and militarism as agents of spatial production has become widespread in recent years, the military-urban relationship is under-studied, particularly in non-conflict scenarios (Dekel, 2021). In summary, urban geopolitics has mainly dealt with conflict contexts, whereas critical military studies has been silent on the multidimensional aspects of militarism in relation to the urban. The aim of this article therefore is to take debate forward by exploring what a conceptualisation of urban military geographies might look like. This is achieved by analysing how cities are privileged sites of reproduction of militarism and how the presence of armed forces influences the production of urban space. To this end, the paper connects the literatures on urban geopolitics and critical military studies with Henri Lefebvre's (1968, 1974) theory on the social production of social space. Critical military scholars have already adopted Lefebvre's work to describe post-military geographies (Rech & Yarwood, 2019) and to investigate how spatial identity affects anti-militarist movements (Della Porta & Fabbri, 2016). Here, I employ Lefebvre's three dimensions of space – spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation – to investigate the multiple dimensions of urban military geographies. Following this theoretical framework, spatial practice allows us to observe the structural dynamics of space use, representations of space provide insight into the dominant images that define social space, and spaces of representation enable us to analyse the processes of signification that emerge in everyday life. Ultimately, the dialectic approach between these dimensions (Brenner & Schmid, 2015; Schmid, 2008, 2016) can reveal insights into the constitution of military geographies.

2 | INFRASTRUCTURES AND CONTROL AS SPATIAL PRACTICE

For Lefebvre (1974), spatial practice identifies a material dimension where the activities and performances of a specific social formation unfold. It incorporates processes of production and reproduction. As such, spatial practice encompasses social behaviours and rhythms of life and can be analysed to investigate social space. For example, Lefebvre suggests studying patterns of movement between the workplace and private life, thus uncovering the interactions and networks that denote socio-economic processes as agents of spatial configuration. In the context of urban military geographies, this concept can be operationalised by investigating two key elements of New Military Urbanism: 'the militarisation of movement' and 'the blurring of civilian and military control' (Graham, 2010, p. 87). Indeed, the use of infrastructures and networks at different scales and the implementation of control (and surveillance/tracking) systems linked to military knowledge characterise everyday life and the production processes of both urbanisation and militarisation (Rossi & Vanolo, 2012). From this perspective, although this specific focus may seem reductive, it allows us to show how the management of infrastructures becomes an instrument of influence on spatial practice.

Analyses of the relationships between cities and infrastructures has been one of the defining themes in urban studies over the last 20 years. The 'infrastructural turn' has highlighted how such facilities, in the shadow of their materiality, express a multiplicity of practices including mobility, exclusion, resistance and militarisation (Graham & Marvin, 2002; Tuitjer & Müller, 2021; Wiig et al., 2022). Although the relationship between military presence and urban infrastructures remains under-studied, relevant literature suggests two approaches. One of these follows the observation that many contemporary cities host numerous forms of infrastructure directly operated by the military: examples include ports, airports, pipelines, training areas, rifle ranges, and barracks. In analysing these infrastructures, it is necessary to take into account 'the diversity of types of places and their functions, and the range of possible military influences on social and economic networks' (Woodward, 2004, p. 41). Indeed, they develop various flows (of people, services, economies) that relate differently to the local areas in which they operate. Ultimately, as Dekel (2021) shows, the relationships between armed forces and cities can be analysed from a political economy perspective (i.e., the Military-Urban Nexus), framing military facilities and activities as active agents within the neoliberal urban system. In this framework, the influence of a military presence on spatial practice, in terms of both its production and reproduction characteristics, can be explored through economic military geographies (Woodward, 2004) and movement flows. The second approach follows Graham's (2010) observation that civil infrastructures within and between different cities have undergone a rapid process of militarisation to protect long global

economic chains and logistical networks, to defend urban landmarks, and to control the borders between the Global North and South with regard to migration flows. From this perspective, it is possible to note how the practices of militarising the movement of people and goods have strongly influenced the construction and use of urban architectures, whether maritime (Cowen & Bunce, 2006), aerial (Graham & Hewitt, 2013; Tironi & Valderrama, 2021), or terrestrial (Coaffee, 2009). In particular, this influence seems to emerge from the combination of security doctrine and political economy, which brings together infrastructural warfare and the architectures of globalised urban life (Graham, 2012).

To better explore the role of infrastructure, it is useful to analyse the infrastructural systems of control in detail. The control of space by armed forces is one of the main features linking geographical knowledge to military practices. Over the centuries, this combination has enabled the conquest and governance of territories, ensuring the maintenance of imperial and colonial systems (Forsyth, 2019; Galgano & Palka, 2010; Hudson, 1977). Accordingly, military geographies have been concerned primarily with the physical control of territory. As Woodward notes, 'military control, over economies, social structure, environments and landscapes flows directly from this very fact of being there. We cannot understand how militarism and military power are geographically constituted and expressed without an understanding of the patterns and consequences of the fact of physical military presence' (2004, p.35). This control, often accompanied by the use of signs and cartography (Dematteis, 1985, p. 22) and the spatial dynamics of secrecy (Kearns, 2021), is based above all on the use and (non-)concession of data and information concerning both military and civil spheres (although the rigidity of this dichotomy will be returned to below). In the contemporary era, this phenomenon has further evolved through transformation of urban space with particular reference to advanced industrial cities. For example, the militarisation of policing through the provision of weapons by the armed forces and the militarisation of the marginality in neoliberal cities (Meeks, 2006; Radil et al., 2017; Wacquant, 2008) make urban space increasingly perceived as militarised. Accordingly, New Military Urbanism has emphasised how control technologies developed for military purposes have become more intertwined with the new architectures of urban life and the 'spaces of discipline' (Foucault, 1991), creating a strong link between citizenship, consumption and militarism. Both the rhetoric of the war on terror and crime (Graham, 2004b; Tironi & Valderrama, 2021; Williams, 2020) and the discursive and material construction of smart cities (Vanolo, 2014; Wiig, 2018; Wiig & Wyly, 2016) have supported the development of hybrid systems that enable the tracking of citizens' habits and behaviours. These processes, which combine military and civilian activities, respond to a twofold need within contemporary cities: firstly, to mobilise control infrastructures for purposes of defence and preparation for war; secondly, to support processes of valorisation and financialisation of urban time and space, through surveillance tools originally developed by the armed forces. Although this kind of analysis shows the intersection across processes of militarisation, securitisation and commercialisation, it is nonetheless 'instructive for the degree to which it reveals the growth of ostensibly civilian infrastructures and architectures as military in origin and purpose' (Woodward, 2014, p. 43).

From this perspective, examining the spatial practices of urban militaries geographies, in their infrastructural and control forms, allows for a deeper understanding of the relationships between urban and military flows and the connections between the processes of militarisation and disciplining within contemporary cities. As Cowen suggests '[i]nfrastructure is not only a vehicle of domination – it is also a means of transformation. Taking infrastructure not only as object of study but also as method' (2020, p. 483) enables the tracing of historical processes that have characterised the structuring of militarism in cities, as well as the tools to analyse the military rhythms that produce contemporary cities in their characteristics of connection, tracking, economy, culture, and dwelling.

3 | LOCAL ENTANGLEMENTS AND PROMOTION STRATEGIES AS REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

For Lefebvre (1974), representations of space connect society's order to production relations through the codification of knowledge and images that define space. In this framework, planners, urban designers, and experts develop dominant representations that 'emerge at the level of discourse, of speech as such, and therefore comprise verbalized forms such as descriptions, definitions, and especially (scientific) theories of space'

(Schmid, 2008, p. 37). Such representations are also present as symbolic patterns, through maps, models, and signs. The analysis of representations is pivotal in investigating the patterns of interaction between the military and the urban. Indeed, the production of cultural-symbolic capital plays a central role in the development of policies and entrepreneurial strategies of contemporary competitive cities (Harvey, 1989; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009). Even so, urban representations are influenced by security doctrine and militarisation processes, through the normalisation of surveillance paradigms and military discourses in local policies (Graham, 2012). Representations of military presence are a central theme in critical military studies, which have emphasised that military representation emerges as a necessary instrument to explain, formalise, and normalise mechanisms of control over territories (Rech et al., 2015; Woodward, 2004) and to legitimise war from an everyday perspective as an appropriate tool for conflict resolution (Dowler, 2012). To investigate the representations that develop from the interaction (and conflict) between these dynamics - and the spatial effects resulting from them - it is important to focus on the entanglements between armed forces and local actors in events organisation, valorisation strategies and decommissioning processes of military establishments.

In recent decades, urban geopolitics and critical military studies have highlighted the increasing number of official and unofficial stakeholders that participate in military-urban relations. The 'urban geopolitical turn' has mainly focused on the re-scaling processes of political violence from the state to the urban level, in which new categories of armed subjects - such as organised crime groups and militias - have emerged, and on the development of hybrid sovereignties in which state and non-state actors redefine forms of power and violence management (Fregonese, 2012). Similarly, critical military scholarship has developed the concept of civil-military entanglement, as a means of exploring complex relationships between armed forces and local institutions, infrastructure management authorities, universities, veterans' associations, trade unions, civil society groups, and citizens. This latter concept allows us to explore this type of interaction beyond the relational level of exchange between different subjects, focusing on the level of co-constitution and co-production of discourses and geographies (Forsyth, 2019; Sørensen & Ben Ari, 2019; Woodward, 2020). From this perspective, it is possible to explore the representations that have emerged with reference to events of remembrance and promotion of the armed forces (Basham, 2016; McGarry, 2022; Rech, 2015; Rech & Yarwood, 2019) and to collaborations in the transformation of places (Artioli, 2013; Bernazzoli & Flint, 2010; Essex & Yarwood, 2017; Sidaway, 2009). Research about Armed Forces Day (AFD), which is held annually in over 300 locations in the UK (including many cities), has highlighted how such events exemplify the convergence of local and military promotional campaigns. As Rech and Yarwood argue, 'AFD is symptomatic of structural changes to the British military establishment, and an attempt to re-imagine civil-military relations and the performances that sustain them' (2019, p.196). Furthermore, as Rech (2015) notes, the link between military airshows and the geographies of tourism emphasises the need to frame these events as a point of contact between representations of geopolitics and the entertainment market. In this sense, military events respond perfectly to the construction of symbolic and emotional capital that both contemporary cities and war preparation require. Analysing the relationship between the state, the Navy, and local actors and institutions in a strategic military city (Toulon, France), Artioli (2013) focused on the cooperation practices developed during the implementation of the new urban agenda in the early 2000s. In this framework, armed forces became the first partner with local institutions and an active part of redevelopment processes, supporting this strategy and the 'political discourse that proclaimed convergence of interest between the city and the Navy' (ibid, p.77). Beyond the promotion of this image, the attempt to transform Toulon into a 'Mediterranean Metropolis' has encountered numerous obstacles. In particular, the reluctance of the military to allow civilians to control and use the spaces they manage. This dynamic highlights how the pivotal role of armed forces and their material contribution is fundamental in promoting security, framing securitisation as a core concept in local development discourses and plans. Similarly, Cowen and Bunce (2006) analysed the public discourse on port (in)security in Canada and the United States in the post-9/11 era, revealing convergences between representations of securitisation and waterfront valorisation in the production of space.

Relevant too to the links between militarism and urban development is the debate on the conversion of unused military facilities, explored with reference to sustainability and local economic development (Bagaeen, 2006;

Simion-Melinte, 2012), difficulties in the decommissioning and revalorisation processes (Camerin & Gastaldi, 2018; Perelli & Sistu, 2015), and participatory regeneration methodologies (Ponzini & Vani, 2014). However, in the case of decommissioning-reconversion, this process remains under-researched, due to its complexity and its multidisciplinary nature (Ponzini & Vani, 2014). From a military-urban space production perspective, as Woodward (2014) proposes, it is important to research the role of the 'footprint' of a (former) military function and how it continues to act in its reproduction. Military influence as spatial and social agent can, therefore, be identified not simply in the implementation processes of planning and regeneration projects, but also in the discourses, images and symbols associated with the agreements between the armed forces, the Ministry of Defence and local institutions.

The studies presented in this section illustrate how interconnections in spatial representations operate. Thus, the conceived space, as defined by Lefebvre, is the result of entanglements between military and institutional actors. However, it is important to emphasise that the urban order resulting from dominant spatial representations is not only evident within strategic plans, institutional agreements, and development strategies, but also in the representations provided by tourist guides, official memoirs, and numerous other tools that deliver coded images of society. Sidaway's (2009) examination of guidebooks as an agent producing socio-spatial images and relations at different scales in the urban section of Britain's South West Coast path, is an example.

4 | LANDSCAPES AND THE EVERYDAY IN RELATION TO THE SPACES OF REPRESENTATION

For Lefebvre (1974), spaces of representation are framed as lived spaces, in which experience is expressed through images and symbols. This dimension focuses on the processes of material and immaterial signification and on the features of social life. Indeed, the study of spaces of representation aims to delve into the 'subterranean' and 'clandestine' elements of living, in which different forms of imagining space emerge. For urban military geographies, this dimension prompts consideration of the role of landscapes and the everyday in reproducing and resisting urban militarism. In this sense, spaces of representation assume different facets of the same phenomena: they make visible in place the values and practices of militarisation in daily life, dwelling on the importance of signs and images, whilst also enabling observation of how practices of reappropriation and contestation of (former) military areas develop in daily experience.

Critical military studies and geopolitics scholarship emphasises the importance of landscape as geographical category in relation to local footprints (Woodward, 2014), environmental issues (Havlick, 2019; Pearson, 2012), virtual gaming (Bos, 2018; Graham, 2010), and processes of militarisation and securitisation (Graham, 2004b, 2010). Rech et al. have highlighted how the analysis of military landscapes enables scholars 'to locate, place, and situate militaries and their activities, and to inquire as to the more-often-than-not deleterious effects of (sometimes anachronistic) military presences in landscapes' (2015, pp. 50–51), emphasising their dual nature as both representational and experiential. The study of landscapes as representations of military power and territorial practices examines the symbolism emerging from military establishments and monuments. Equally, the experiential and material components of these landscapes emphasise the role of situated relationships, whether habitual or temporary, between people and these structures and objects. Nevertheless, although 'peaceful' cities host numerous military sites, studies of urban military landscapes are few. As Woodward (2020) suggests, scale plays a central role in analysing how militarisation affects places and landscapes, using the military landscapes of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (UK) as examples to explain the role of representations of civil-military entanglements in the city. The Royal Navy base (HMS Calliope) at the centre of the redeveloped waterfront is configured not only as logistical infrastructure for military reservists but also as a normalised symbolic landscape that reaffirms the military presence within contemporary urban life. Similarly, war memorials are framed as spaces of representation in which memorialisation practices and symbols intersect with the rhetoric of sacrifice for the homeland. In Sidaway's (2009) study of Plymouth (UK), the non-representational approach reveals how military symbols, images, and structures present in the urban fabric of an ordinary English city can provoke different emotions in citizens, linked to feelings of security/insecurity, which have geopolitical repercussions.

Moreover, McGarry (2019, 2022) highlights how liminality can be interpreted as a defining feature of military landscapes. Through the study of UK Armed Forces Day 2017 in Liverpool, McGarry shows how during that event the transformation of urban space and the promotion of the British military establishes a “liminal military landscape”: an otherwise civic space occupied in some way by a military presence which locates those engaging within it, either knowingly or unknowingly, in ambiguous space between that considered ‘civilian’ and ‘military’ (McGarry, 2022, p. 274). This concept suggests two specifications concerning temporality and the civil-military dichotomy. McGarry defined this space as part of an event, emphasising its temporality. Nevertheless, the dimension of liminality can be understood more broadly and requires further exploration. Indeed, in and around urban military landscapes there are daily interactions between civilians and military institutions and activities that build relationships with space and people in which the influence of militarism operates informally through urban space. Within this theoretical framework, critical military geographies suggests that we move away from a narrow civil-military dichotomy (Bernazzoli & Flint, 2009a, 2010; Rech et al., 2015). According to this perspective, military landscapes require a twofold analysis: on the one hand, it is necessary to observe the representations and the intersecting practices in which this dichotomy is blurred; on the other hand, it is helpful to analyse how the mobilisation of this binomial by the state and the armed forces reproduces processes of militarisation and militarism (Woodward, 2014).

Furthermore, and following Lefebvre's consideration of the everyday as decisive in ‘linking the economy to individual life experiences’ (Ronneberger, 2008, p. 135), in urban geopolitics and critical military studies this category assumes a pivotal role in examining the intersections and conflicts between militarism and people's daily lives. Bernazzoli and Flint (2010) analyse the influence of barracks at the local scale through the study of two US cities adjacent to the Fort Campbell military area: Hopkinsville (Kentucky) and Clarksville (Tennessee). The research highlights how in everyday life the military presence influences surrounding communities, through perpetuating the logic of military values, and in the relations between formal and informal actors. Militarisation, therefore, develops as a process in which urban spaces become highly permeable places for the reproduction of militarism, but also spaces which counter it. More broadly, feminist approaches provide an interesting insight into analysing the impact of militarisation processes on everyday life. Such approaches, mainly originating from feminist political geography and international relations studies, have highlighted how the normalisation of military power is based on the most private social representations and interactions (Dowler, 2012), in which ‘militarised masculinity’ (Basham & Bulmer, 2017) reproduces the values and ideas of militarism through the ordinary dimensions of life (Enloe, 2016). From these perspectives, the ‘focus on everyday life reveals the spatial and temporal depth to which military interests and agendas are woven into diverse lives, practices, discourses and desires’ (Henry & Natanel, 2016, p. 853) and, at the same time, shows this to be part of the construction of the “home front”, as a space of civilian support for wars happening elsewhere’ (Dawney, 2020, p. 1100). A different angle on everyday life provides a further insight into formal and informal practices of contestation. For example, Alexander (2016) examines how, for the indigenous peoples of Guam, the fences of the US bases on the island represent not only a material structure that delimits spaces and perpetuates forms of colonialism and militarisation, but also provide an opportunity for identity construction and actions of resistance. The fence stands as a representation of alterity and a space for community re-signification. Similarly, Davis (2011) explores geographies of resistance to US military bases with reference to the role played by social movements in opposition practices. In this sense, military training bases are representative places for the activities of armed forces and become symbols for contestation against military presence. Nevertheless, such ‘geographies of resistance’ remain largely under-researched, particularly at the urban scale. An in-depth study of the formal and informal dynamics of contestation would allow an examination of how military landscapes are also spaces of counter-representation, where militarism, the militarisation of places, and preparations for war are both reproduced and contested, as exemplified by studies linking military and carceral geographies (Asoni, 2022; Moran & Turner, 2022).

5 | RESEARCHING URBAN MILITARY GEOGRAPHIES

This review has focused on the different features of urban military geographies in 'peace contexts', following Woodward's proposition that 'military geographies are everywhere. But often you have to know where to look' (2005, p.179). It has explored how the three dimensions of Lefebvre's theory of space production – spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation – can be used to highlight how, in contemporary cities, the presence of armed forces represents a use of the urban through which to observe the co-production of infrastructures, discourses, policies, landscapes, and formal and informal practices. The complexity of urban and military geographies suggests a constant dialogue between these dimensions. In fact, as shown in the examples presented, the effects of militarism and militarisation processes at the urban scale result from the interaction of several characteristics.

This paper, therefore, aims to open a dialogue between different research and experiences. Indeed, the insights provided here are not meant to represent rigid concepts and tools to be applied mechanically in different urban contexts, but rather points of view from which to look at the multiple influences that military rhetoric and activities develop in urban transformation processes and everyday practices. Moreover, this urban-based approach offers the possibility of connecting the footprints of militarisation-militarism at different scales, from the local to national and international, as proposed by urban geopolitics. Orienting the gaze towards infrastructures, representations and everyday military landscapes present in cities permits the observation of the visible and invisible geographies that connect the places for war preparation with the sites where the materiality of war is perpetuated.

Finally, this review shows a problem that can be interpreted as a possibility. The relatively scarce international literature from critical military geographies and urban geopolitics about cities 'at peace' mainly considers European and North American cities. Narrow as they are, these studies highlight some basic features of cities and processes of militarisation and militarism in the Global North. Yet this body of work barely captures central aspects of such processes in other urban areas of the world. For example, studying the UK's Armed Forces Day enables analysis of the entanglements between different 'civil' and 'military' aspects, yet it is strongly influenced by the peculiarities of the UK's social, state, and military models and modes of being. Expanding the gaze to other areas is useful for questioning the multiple articulations of military imprints and the possibility that different local patterns may lead to the emergence of composite militarisms. From this point of view, research on urban military geographies requires situated study in different contexts. Such an approach would therefore allow for the interpretation of the varying interactions between the urban and military, where the character of militarism in urban space is constantly evolving and spatially diverse.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The adjective 'critical' in relation to critical military studies and critical military geographies is used by scholars to describe an epistemological turn in military studies that has occurred in recent decades. Specifically, military studies has historically used geographical knowledge as a tool for warfare or the analysis of warfare, while "critical military geography offers opportunities to strive for progressive change in social sciences' engagements with the military, militarism, and its processes of enactment, which enable us to undertake critical inquiry into military phenomena" (Rech et al., 2015, p. 56).
- ² This contribution uses the term militarisation, framing it in its extended meaning that also encompasses certain securitisation processes and that positions military forces as a relevant actor in the definition of socio-economic priorities (Woodward, 2014). Although acknowledging the ambiguity that this definition brings, through the separation between

the 'military' and 'civilian' spheres (Bernazzoli & Flint, 2009b), it is deemed necessary to investigate how military activities and discourses constantly influence the rhetorics and activities of control, security, and redevelopment at the urban scale (Graham, 2010).

³ Following these approaches, this paper uses the term militarism in a broad sense to describe the influence of military rhetoric and actions in the civilian sphere, both materially and discursively. Through this interpretation, I analyse how the symbolism of military landscapes and practices influences citizens and urban development.

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