

Securitisation and situations of emergency (Part II)

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Plan

- The implications of the deployment of the armed forces and other security forces to fight health crises;
- Identifying securitizing moves in the context of health crises;
- Share experience in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The war rhetoric

- US President Donald Trump referred to COVID-19 as “our big war... a medical war”
- UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson stated, “We must act like any wartime government”
- Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called for national solidarity by saying that Spain “now finds itself in a war to defend all we have taken for granted”
- However, for instance, German, Dutch, and Italian officials have all been very careful to *avoid* the word “war” in speeches to their nations.

Domestic deployment of armed forces

- Almost every European Union (EU) member state has mobilized their armed forces to fight COVID-19 in one way or another.
- Outside of Europe, *inter alia*, the US Army has been mobilized to provide medical support and hospital capacity, and the US Department of Defense (DoD) has created a COVID-19 task force.
- Canada and Australia have employed their armed forces to assist law enforcement with transporting supplies.
- In China, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was assigned control of medical and essential supplies.
- In Argentina, armed forces have provided food supplies to citizens in need.
- In Colombia, military personnel have been mobilized to upgrade hospital capacity.

What did armed forces
do?

medical



What did armed forces
do?

logistical



What did armed forces
do?

law-and-order



The effects of deployment on the armed forces

- Some military activities have been drastically cut back, and others brought completely to a halt.
- Education in military schools has been suspended across Europe.
- The deployment affected their right to health.
- Armed forces who are actively contributing to the pandemic response faced the added stress of being deployed in their own countries.
- The exposure of armed forces personnel to the virus has been higher than among general populations.



The Securitization of COVID-19: Three Political Dilemmas (Sears, 2020)

- The global response to COVID-19 contains all the critical elements of securitization: referent object(s), threat, audiences, securitizing acts and actors, and emergency measures.
- This macro-securitization opens up three political dilemmas behind the securitization of COVID-19:
 - The Referent Object: Security for Whom?
 - (De-)Securitizing Moves: A Catastrophic Threat?
 - Emergency Measures: To Securitize, or Not to Securitize? At what cost?

COVID-19 and NHRIs

- Field visits
- Complaint-handling
- New e-case management systems
- Social media presence
- Special reports



Thank you!