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The Brazilian Engagement with International Peace: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

It is clear that Brazil seeks to enhance its international relevance through an increasing engagement with peace operations. This paper argues that the more Brazil seeks to increase its engagement in the manner in which it is currently pursuing it – essentially by deploying troops – more Brazil actively constructs its own subalternity in regards to international peace. In order to develop its argument, this paper, firstly, delineates the Brazilian engagement with peace operations throughout the time. Then, it critically problematizes such engagement by analysing it in light of the particular role that peace operations have in international politics.

Resumo

É notório que o Brasil busca aumentar a sua relevância internacional por meio do aumento do engajamento com as operações de paz. Este artigo argumenta que quanto mais o Brasil busca tal engajamento do modo pelo qual está atualmente perseguindo – essencialmente pelo envio de tropas – mais o país constrói a sua própria subalternidade no que toca a paz internacional. De modo a desenvolver o seu argumento, este artigo, primeiramente, delinea o engajamento brasileiro com as operações de paz ao longo do tempo. Posteriormente, o mesmo criticamente problematiza tal engajamento analisando-o tendo em vista o papel particular que as operações de paz têm na política internacional.

Keywords: Post-Conflict Reconstruction; Peace Operations; United Nations; Brazil

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It is enough a very brief, though attentive, observation of the international reality to notice that the direct violence¹ has been increasing recently in the international scenario. This can be clearly perceived in two dimensions: (1) the recent increasing trend in the number of deaths related to organized violence² from 2010 until now; and (2) the rising number of violent conflicts since 2012 (Melander, Pettersson and Themnér, 2016: 728-729). In fact, since the end of the Cold War, 2014 was the second-deadliest year, with more than 1300.000 people killed. Even 2015, which had fewer fatalities related to organized violence than 2014, reached the high number of 118.000 deaths (Ibidem: 728). Both years are only behind 1994 and the Rwandan genocide, when the number of deaths related to organized violence is estimated in 500.000 people (Idem). In an international scenario such as this one, it is not difficult to perceive that overcoming violent conflicts worldwide is a major element of international relations.³ Hence, more precisely, is far from being overrated considering peace operations⁴ a fundamental pillar of international politics.⁵

¹ For more regarding direct and structural violence, see (Galtung, 1969, 1990).

² For the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, ‘organized violence’ aggregates three different categories: (1) state-based armed conflict, (2) non-state conflict, and (3) one-sided violence (Melander, Pettersson and Themnér, 2016: 727). For more regarding these categories, see (Ibidem: 727-728).

³ Acknowledging the erosion of the division ‘inside/outside’ (Walker, 1993) when talking about international politics nowadays, but following a non-written convention in the discipline, the lower-case, on the one hand, is used in reference to the dynamics that take place majorly in the ‘international’ scenario and that also involves actors that are external to a particular state, whereas, on the other hand, the capital letters are used to designate the academic discipline (International Relations).

⁴ Following the UN terminology, this paper understand ‘peace operations’ to mean “[f]ield operations deployed to prevent, manage, and/or resolve violent conflicts or reduce the risk of their recurrence” (UN, 2008: 98). Hence, the term encompasses, in line with the UN understanding of the term, the key instruments used by the UN to address violent conflicts throughout the globe, ranging from peace prevention to peacebuilding and state-building efforts.

⁵ The delineation of the several modifications that peace operations went through throughout the time is far from the scope of this paper. For more in this regards, see for example (Blanco, 2014, 2015; Daniel, Taft and Wiharta, 2008; Kemer, Pereira and Blanco, 2016; Kenkel, 2013c; Newman, Paris and Richmond, 2009).

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to pursue a more relevant insertion within the international scene by increasing the participation in peace operations, especially those led by the United Nations (UN). Actually, this is exactly what several countries do, in particular the countries from the Global South.⁶ As expected, this is the case of Brazil. Perceiving the Brazilian insertion into the international scenario, it is quite clear that the sphere of the construction of international peace, especially through the contribution to peace operations, is an important pillar anchoring the international projection of the country. Consequently, it is not unusual, for instance, to associate this kind of commitment with a realist explanation of why states engage in peacekeeping activities.⁷ Under this rationale, the “explanation of state participation in UN peace-keeping [sic] is that states do whatever they can, given their power resources, to protect and preserve their national interests” (Neack, 1995: 184).⁸

Unsurprisingly, when one observes some studies regarding the Brazilian engagement with peace operations, it is not uncommon to perceive precisely that “a number of analyses of Brazilian foreign policy also adopt the realist perspective to explain the country’s participation in UN peacekeeping” (Cavalcante, 2010: 145). Consequently, it is not unusual to observe analysts perceiving the “instrumentalist” character of the Brazilian contribution to peace operations (Kenkel, 2013a: 335). Under this rationale, such engagement is connected to, for instance: (1) the increase of the Brazilian influence in UN decision-making structures; (2) the provision of a training opportunity for its armed forces; (3) the monetary compensation of the UN; or (4) the positioning of the country as an emerging or a rising power⁹ at the international scene (Call and Abdenur, 2017: 1; Kenkel, 2010, 2013a; Kenkel and Cunliffe, 2016; Nieto,

⁶ For an account about the engagement of some rising powers’ engagement with peace operations, see for example (Amar, 2012, 2013; Coning and Prakash, 2016; Kenkel, 2016; Sotomayor, 2009, 2010, 2014). For a critical analysis, see for instance (Cunliffe, 2013).

⁷ For more regarding how different theoretical approaches of the discipline of International Relations perceive and understand peace, see (Richmond, 2008), and for different reasons regarding why states engage in peace operations, see (Neack, 1995).

⁸ For a comprehensive analysis about why democratizing countries, which is the case of Brazil, engage in peace operations, see (Sotomayor, 2014: Chapter 1).

⁹ The discussion about the notions of emerging, rising or middle power is far beyond the scope of this paper. For more about it, see for instance (Holbraad, 1984; Jordaan, 2003).

2013; Uziel, 2015: 110-111).¹⁰ More precisely, the association often made is between the Brazilian contribution to peace operations and the country's quest for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council (Cavalcante, 2010: 145-146). In fact, this kind of association is made not only by scholars, but also in public statements made by Brazilian Presidents and Ambassadors (Rezende, 2012: 25-27). However, on a different note, it is also argued that such enterprise has "been marked by some degree of inconsistency over time", which is "a consequence of the lack of a clear definition of both the parameters and the expected goals of that participation and may affect the Brazilian quest for a more active profile in international peace and security matters" (Cavalcante, 2010: 146).

Notwithstanding, although such analyses certainly clarify part of the process, a more critical analysis of the Brazilian engagement illuminates other features of this enterprise. It is precisely here where it lays the core of this paper. It critically problematizes the manner in which Brazil engages with peace operations, in light of the role that they have in international politics. Under this framework, it stands out that the country's engagement with peace operations is myopic and subaltern. The paper argues that the more Brazil seeks to increase its engagement in the manner in which it is currently pursuing – by essentially contributing with troops¹¹ to peace operations – contrary to what might appear at a first sight, more the country actively constructs its own subalternity and peripheral role in the sphere of international peace.

In order to develop its analysis, and explore such paradox, the paper departs from a qualitative methodological approach, based essentially on a critical reading of both primary and secondary sources in regards to peace operations and the Brazilian engagement with this international practice. In order to advance its argument, the paper is structured in two sections. Firstly the paper delineates the manner in which Brazil engages with peace operations, evincing that such engagement is not uniform throughout time. More precisely, the section clarifies that, due to the distinct degrees

¹⁰ For a more detailed account of the Brazilian motives to contribute to peace operations, see for instance (Kenkel, 2013a; Nieto, 2013; Uziel, 2015: 110-126).

¹¹ In this paper, unless otherwise stated, when it is mentioned the Brazilian contribution to peace operations or the country's troop contribution, the notion encompasses the number of the military, police and military observers deployed to a peace operation.

of engagement that the country has with peace operations, such engagement has four different phases. Then, in its second section, the paper explores the paradox aforementioned in regards to the Brazilian engagement with peace operations. More precisely, the section discusses the Brazilian engagement with this fundamental international practice arguing that, considering the role that such instrument has internationally, such engagement is myopic and subaltern.

The Brazilian Contribution to Peace Operations

The sphere of international peace is a natural dimension for grounding a structuring projection of Brazil internationally. The reasons are many: (1) the last war that Brazil engaged, although modestly, was the Second World War; (2) the country has a stable and definitive border with its neighborhood; (3) Brazil has a peaceful relationship with all its neighbors. The last war with massive troop mobilization and fought against a neighboring country, Paraguay, dates back to the nineteenth century; and (4) although it is often forgot, the country is a founding member of the United Nations, an international organization that has, as its very ontology, the construction of a peaceful and secure international scene; to name just a few.¹²

Not by coincidence, Brazil contributes to peace operations, which might be understood as the fundamental international public policy directed to building peace at the international scene. It is true that it was only recently that Brazilian's support to peace operations became more visible. In fact, Brazil's engagement turned out to be noticeable to a more widespread public with its noteworthy presence in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (in French, *Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haiti* – MINUSTAH). However, the country has a long commitment to the UN peace operations. In fact, Brazil contributes to peace operations since their first deployment in 1948.¹³ It is true that, during the vast majority of the time, the Brazilian contribution might fall on what Katharina Coleman (2013) understands as a

¹² For an account regarding the Brazilian perceptions of security risks and threats in its region, see (Malamud and Alcañiz, 2017: 2-5).

¹³ Established in May 1948 in the Middle East, UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization) is the first peace operation and is still operative.

‘token contribution’. Nonetheless, it is important to notice that Brazil contributed, although most of the time with a small number of troops, to a high percentage of UN peace operations. Out of the 71 peace operations ever authorized by the organization’s Security Council, Brazil was present in 50 of them. This gives a participation rate of almost 70% (Coning and Prakash, 2016: 11), which undoubtedly indicates a high commitment to UN peace operations. In regards to troop deployment, the country deployed almost 50,000 uniformed personnel to UN peace operations in about 30 countries (Hamann, 2015: 1-3).¹⁴

Notwithstanding its long duration, the Brazilian engagement with peace operations, naturally, is not uniform. Indeed, one can notice different degrees of engagement throughout the time. It can be noticed periods, for instance, when the country had a marginal engagement, no engagement at all with peace operations, or when the country’s engagement was significantly increased. In fact, in general terms, it can be argued that the Brazilian engagement with peace operations can be summarized in four distinct phases:¹⁵ (1) from 1957 to 1967; (2) from 1968 to 1988; (3) from 1989 to 2004; and (4) from 2004 onwards.

The first and the second phases of the Brazilian engagement with peace operations occurred during the Cold War. This period is characterized by: (1) on the one hand, a period when the country’s engagement was related to traditional peace operations¹⁶ and its contribution was very marginal; and (2) on the other hand, a period when Brazil had no engagement at all with peace operations. During the first phase of the Brazilian engagement with peace operations, a period ranging from 1948 to 1967, the country contributed with a small number of troops to places such as the Republic of the Congo, Cyprus, and the border between India and Pakistan. The exception was the peace operation sent to the Suez, during the second half of the 1950’s – the First

¹⁴ Other Brazilian engagements with the construction of peace at the international scenario include, for instance, political missions organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) or the Mission of Military Observers Equator-Peru (MOMEPE) created by the Guarante Group (Aguilar, 2015: 115).

¹⁵ These phases are an update of the chronology presented by Monica Hirst and Reginaldo Nasser (2014: 2) and by Paulo Fontoura (2005).

¹⁶ For more about traditional peace operations see, for instance (Bellamy, William and Griffin, 2010: Chapter 7; Blanco, 2014: 268-270).

United Nation Emergency Force (UNEF I). This was the peace operation where Brazil had its most significant contribution during the Cold War (Hamann, 2015: 8).

Notwithstanding, most of the time during the Cold War, the country was under a military dictatorship (1964-1985) (Santos and Cravo, 2014: 2), which coincides with the second phase of the Brazilian engagement with peace operations. Covering a period ranging from 1968 to 1988, this second phase is characterized by the disengagement of the country with peace operations.¹⁷ This is a period when Brazil deployed a very marginal number of troops to UN peace operations. This disengagement was in line with the thought of Araújo Castro,¹⁸ who was an important influence for the Brazilian diplomacy from 1968's onwards (Cavalcante, 2010: 147), and understood the UN as an instrument for freezing the power structures at the international scenario (Araújo Castro, 1972).¹⁹ Consequently, Brazil distanced itself from multilateral organizations. This led to some important consequences, such as the country: (1) ceasing its contribution to peace operations, which prevented Brazil's participation, during this period, at the United Nations Emergency Forces II (UNEF II), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); (2) not assuming a non-permanent seat at the Security Council after 1968. In fact, after its 1967-1968 mandate, the country only assumed a non-permanent seat at the Security Council in 1988, after the country's redemocratization process; and (3) abandoning, in 1977, the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (Cavalcante, 2010: 148; Santos and Cravo, 2014: 2).

During the third and fourth phases, the country started contributing once more to peace operations. In fact, it can be observed an increase of the Brazilian contribution during this period. Both, the return of the Brazilian contribution and the increase of it, were consequences of the end of important processes in two dimensions: (1) internationally, with the end of the Cold War; and (2) domestically, with the end of

¹⁷ For a more comprehensive account of this period, see for instance (Uziel and Vargas, 2015).

¹⁸ João Augusto Araújo Castro was a Brazilian diplomat and, from 1968 to 1971, he was the Brazilian ambassador to the UN.

¹⁹ For a detailed account of his view, see (Araújo Castro, 1972).

the military dictatorship in Brazil. The third phase starts right after the country's redemocratization process. Ranging from 1989 to 2004, this period is characterized by Brazil's engagements with peace operations of the second generation.²⁰ Therefore, during this period, the country contributed with troops to peace operations in countries such as Mozambique and El Salvador. During this period, it stands out the Brazilian contribution to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission III (UNAVEM III) in Angola in the second half of the 1990's. This is the third largest contribution of the country to peace operations, with more than 4,000 troops deployed (Hamann, 2015: 8).²¹

Indeed, from the 1990's onwards, the country's contribution to peace operations was significantly increased. Not by coincidence, taking into account Brazil's troop deployments throughout the time, the overwhelming majority of it (87%) happened in the last 25 years (Cezne and Hamann, 2016: 2; Rezende, 2012: Chapter 4). In fact, attentively observing, this was very much in line with the increase of peace operations deployed to conflict scenarios after the end of the Cold War. For instance, the number of peace operations deployed in the decade ranging from 1989 to 1999 was more than the double of the number of operations deployed in the previous four decades together (Blanco, 2014: 272; Paris, 2004: 16-17).

However, notwithstanding its rising trajectory in the 1990's, the real turning point in regards to the Brazilian engagement with peace operations started only during the 2000's. More precisely, the turning point was 2004 with the Brazilian contribution to MINUSTAH, the peace operation sent to Haiti, which opens the fourth phase of Brazil's engagement with peace operations. This is a phase that continues until now. During this period, particularly with MINUSTAH, the country significantly increased its engagement with peace operations and definitely placed itself as a fundamental contributor to this international practice. This is perceptible in two dimensions: (1) the

²⁰ For more about the second generation of peace operations, see for instance (Bellamy, William and Griffin, 2010: Chapter 4; Blanco, 2014: 274-284). For more about different generations of peace operations, see for example (Kenkel, 2013c).

²¹ For more regarding the Brazilian peace initiatives in Africa, see for instance (Kenkel, 2013b).

number of troops deployed to post-conflict scenarios; and (2) the unprecedented degree of responsibilities undertaken in the sphere of building peace internationally.

In regards to the first dimension, the number of troops deployed to post-conflict scenarios, MINUSTAH was the peace operation that Brazil most contributed with troops. It corresponds to almost 80% of the country's contribution to peace operations during the period of November 1990 and December 2015, followed by the ones deployed to Lusophone countries²² (14%) and to UNIFIL in Lebanon (6%)²³ (Cezne and Hamann, 2016: 2). Consequently, not by coincidence, in 2004 Brazil reached the 14th position in troop contribution (UN, 2004).²⁴ This was an outstanding increase in regards to the country's contribution, since in the previous year, 2003, the country was occupying the 51st position (UN, 2003). The Brazilian contribution to peace operations remained high and reached its peak after the earthquake that hit Haiti. The country went from the 13th position in 2010 (UN, 2010) to the 11th one in 2012 (UN, 2012).

In regards to the second dimension aforementioned, with MINUSTAH, Brazil started having a degree of responsibilities in regards to peace operations that was simply unprecedented for the country. From the very beginning of MINUSTAH, Brazil headed what is perhaps the most expressive sphere of the peace operation in question – its military axis, by appointing its Force Commander. This was certainly a pivotal milestone for the country as a contributor to peace operations. In fact, in a very unusual practice for the UN, Brazil has been successively performing the position of the Force Commander of the MINUSTAH.²⁵ In addition, Brazil obtained other high-level positions within the sphere of international peace and security. One can mention, for instance: (1) the position of Director for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership at the

²² The countries were Angola, Mozambique, Timor-Leste and, in a lesser degree, Guinea Bissau.

²³ For a longer period of time in regards to the distribution of the Brazilian contribution to peace operations and for a more detailed account of this contribution, see for instance (Hamann, 2015: 8; Rezende, 2012: Chapter 4 and Annexes A to R).

²⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the positions mentioned in the paper are related to the date of 31st of December of the respective year.

²⁵ The position is currently performed by Lieutenant General Ajax Porto Pinheiro.

UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support;²⁶ or (2) having a member at the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, appointed by the Secretary-General, to perform a thorough review of the UN peace operations and propose improvements.²⁷ In addition, Brazil headed the military axis of the peace operation sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (in French, *Mission de L'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en RD Congo* – MONUSCO), until December 2016,²⁸ and heads, since 2011, the Maritime Task Force of UNIFIL in Lebanon.²⁹ The former is the largest peace operation in activity and the latter is the first and only peace operation to have a Maritime Task Force. Undoubtedly, the performance of such high-level positions is definitely revealing of both the strong commitment that Brazil started having in regards to peace operations and certainly the convincing degree of acceptance, by its peers, of this position of the country.

The Myopia of the Brazilian Insertion

At a first sight, the scenario aforementioned seems a very positive one for Brazil. After all, if one observes the significant intensification that Brazil had, on the one hand, in regards to its troop contribution to peace operations and, on the other hand, in regards to the responsibilities that are being performed by the country at this sphere, one might have the impression of being before a quite exciting picture. More than that, with this picture in mind, one might even argue, quite persuasively indeed, that Brazil has a highly qualified and structuring insertion into the sphere of the construction of international peace.

²⁶ The position is currently performed by Lieutenant General Paul Cruz, who was the Force Commander of the MINUSTAH from 2010 to 2011.

²⁷ The position was filled by Lieutenant Floriano Peixoto Vieira Neto, who was the Force Commander of the MINUSTAH from 2009 to 2010.

²⁸ The Force Commander is was Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz and remained two and a half years in the position.

²⁹ The current Commander is the Rear Admiral Flavio Macedo Brasil.

However, this kind of reading of the facts is definitely misleading and myopic. A problematization of such engagement that, on the one hand, brings a more attentive and critical observation and, on the other hand, is mindful of the role that peace operations perform at the international scenario, perceives a different, and perhaps somewhat perverse, side of this reality. Indeed, contrary to what might be the first sight of this scenario and as paradoxical as it may appear, the more Brazil anchors its insertion into the affairs peace operations essentially through the contribution of troops – which is fundamentally what the country currently does – the country contributes, quite actively in fact, to the construction of its own subalternity and peripheral position in the matters of international peace. In order to properly comprehend such apparent paradox, overcome such myopic understanding and, most importantly, start building a more qualified Brazilian insertion in that sphere, it is necessary to observe beneath the surface and apprehend, above all, the structuring element of the international environment in which peace operations are operationalized and the fundamental consequences that follow it.

From the very start, one has to perceive that the overcoming of violent conflicts throughout the globe and the construction of international peace are pursued in an international scenario that is far from being ideologically empty. On the contrary, this ideological character is embedded in the current international environment, although most of the time in a veiled manner, structuring and shaping the practices that are performed in it. With the end of the Cold War, the international scene experienced what might be called a liberal triumphalism. This was perhaps best epitomized by the ‘end-of-history’ argument advanced by Francis Fukuyama (1989, 1992). Since then, certainly in greater and lesser degrees depending of the moments, (neo)liberalism is the structuring force of the international scenario.³⁰ Consequently, the current international *zeitgeist* is pervaded by the understanding – which is anchored in the thoughts of thinkers such as Kant (1905 [1795]), Schumpeter (1966 [1919]) and Montesquieu (2002 [1748]) – that the liberalism has a pacifying effect over the

³⁰ For a comprehensive account of the Brazilian positioning, in different spheres, within this liberal international order, see for instance (Stuenkel and Taylor, 2015).

political entities (Doyle, 1986, 2004; Doyle and Recchia, 2011).³¹ This understanding, in regards to peace and security, culminates in the notion of ‘liberal peace’,³² which became, and still is, the underpinning ideological framework of peace operations. Under this rationale, since liberalism is equated with peace and prosperity, the construction of international peace is pursued through the liberalization of the political, economic and social spheres of post-conflict states and their populations around the globe (Paris, 2004; Richmond and Franks, 2007: 27-31).³³ Precisely because peace operations are performed under this liberal ideological framework, it is important to notice two fundamental consequences of such structuring feature of the international environment. They are: (1) peace operations have a specific role in the current international politics; and (2) there is a clear international division of labor in regards to the construction of international peace.

In regards to the former, in order to perceive such role, it is necessary to problematize peace operations departing from a different standpoint. Usually, in a rather uncritical posture, peace operations are understood as a mere technical international instrument deployed to post-conflict scenarios in order to overcome direct and structural violences.³⁴ Under this approach, the discussion about such international practice, not rarely, revolves around the discussions about the elements leading to a successful/failed peace operation.³⁵ This kind of discussion can be certainly included in what Robert Cox (1981) characterized as a ‘problem solving’ approach towards international relations. Unfortunately, it is under this kind of rationale that the Brazilian engagement is often problematized. Taking a more critical standpoint, one can perceive that peace operations are, not a mere technical instrument but, an international practice that seek to shape and structure each and every dimension of

³¹ For an account in regards to the rationing behind such argument, see for instance (Blanco, 2014: 280-283).

³² For more in this regard, see for instance (Duffield, 2001; Heathershaw, 2008; Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2006, 2007; 2008, p.89-95.) For a detailed account of the different aspects and nuances of the liberal peace, see for example (Heathershaw, 2008; Richmond, 2006, 2007).

³³ The delineation of the critiques of this character of peace operations is certainly beyond the scope of this paper. For a critical account of it, see for instance (Blanco, 2017; Chandler, 2010; Paris, 2002; Pugh, 2005; Richmond, 2010, 2014, 2016; Taylor, 2010).

³⁴ See footnote 1.

³⁵ For this kind of discussion, see for instance (Lijn, 2009; Pushkina, 2006).

post-conflict states and their populations,³⁶ towards a very particular end. In the end, since liberal peace is their underpinning ideological framework, peace operations seek to liberalize post-conflict states and populations (Paris, 2002, 2004; Richmond and Franks, 2009).

Consequently, an attentive observer perceives that peace operations are far from being simply an apolitical process seeking to build peace in war-torn scenario, as they are often portrayed internationally. On the contrary, peace operations have a rather different role in the current international politics. Under the ideological character structuring current international scenario, peace operations function as an international normalizing dispositif³⁷ that, due to its liberal social-reengineering character,³⁸ is fundamental for the maintenance and fostering of a particular order in the international society³⁹ – a (neo)liberal one.⁴⁰ More precisely, peace operations function at the international society as a normalizing dispositif that seeks to govern post-conflict states and population internationally.⁴¹ Hence, peace operations seek to conduct their conducts, to structure the field of their possible actions, which is the very essence of governing,⁴² in order to reproduce what is constructed and understood as a ‘normal’ behavior for a state, and its population, internationally (Blanco, 2017: 94-102). In the current international society, this means to liberalize every sphere of them, such as the economic, political and the social ones. This conduct of conducts is pursued in two dimension: (1) at the international level, seeking to discipline the post-conflict state as an individual political entity in the international society; and (2) at the

³⁶ Timor-Leste is perhaps the most emblematic case. See, for instance (Blanco, 2015).

³⁷ For the purpose of this paper, it suffices to understand this notion, developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, as a heterogeneous assemblage of actors, concepts, institutions and practices, which might even not be related at all, but do form a comprehensive whole. For more about this notion, see for instance (Agamben, 2009; Blanco, 2017; Deleuze, 2007; Foucault, 1980).

³⁸ For more about it, see for instance (Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2011; Richmond and Franks, 2009).

³⁹ The development of the concept of ‘international society’ is definitely beyond the purpose of this paper. For more about it, see for instance (Bull, 1977, 1992; Buzan, 1993, 2014; Dunne, 1998; Linklater, 2005; Linklater and Suganami, 2006; Onuf, 1994; Watson, 1992).

⁴⁰ This argument is comprehensively developed somewhere else. See (Blanco, 2017).

⁴¹ This paper has a Foucauldian understand of the word ‘government’ as the ‘conduct of conducts’ (Gordon, 1991). For a comprehensive account of it, see (Foucault, 1991, [1980] 2014; Larner and Walters, 2004; Li, 2007; Merlingen, 2003; Rose, O’Malley and Valverde, 2006; Walters, 2012).

⁴² See (Foucault, [1982] 2000: 341).

domestic level, through the constant exercise of a biopolitical power over life-supporting processes of its population⁴³ (Idem).

Furthermore, a critical understanding in regards to such international practice allows the analyst to go further in one's problematization and perceive a second fundamental consequence of the ideological structuring feature of the international scenario. It allows the perception of an even more perverse side of the practice of building peace internationally – the fact that there are different responsibilities depending where the country is positioned within the international political structure. Attentively observing, one can clearly perceive that there is an entrenched power relation in regards to the construction of international peace. More precisely, although operating in a veiled manner, there is a structured international division of labor between those engaged in the practice of building peace internationally. In this international division of labor of building peace, on the one hand, the Global North is responsible for the fundamental part of this structure: the delineation of both the ontology of peace and the methodology of building it internationally. Therefore, the Global North has the power of not only defining what peace is, and what it means, but also how it should be pursued and its construction operationalized throughout the globe. On the other hand, the Global South is responsible for building the kind of peace that reflects the characterization defined by the former. The Global South is the wo/manpower of such international division of labor of building peace internationally.

Therefore, there is no coincidence in the fact that: (1) on the one hand, the construction of peace in the international scenario is – rather than a genuine effort of overcoming different violences and severe privations that the populations in post-conflict settings suffer – the pursuit, widely unsuccessful in fact, of the mere indiscriminate institutionalization of (neo)liberal democracies in post-conflict scenarios; and (2) on the other hand, the countries of the Global South are those who most contribute with troops to peace operations. In order to perceive it, it suffices, for instance, to notice the top-ten troop contributors to UN peace operations during the

⁴³ Roughly, 'discipline' and 'biopolitics' are Foucauldian concepts that seek to capture the exercise power seeking to conduct conducts, respectively, of individuals and populations. For a comprehensive account of the concepts, see for instance (Foucault, [1976] 2003: Chapter 11).

recent years. They are:⁴⁴ (A) in 2009, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Egypt, Nepal, Jordan, Rwanda, Ghana, Uruguay (UN, 2009); (B) in 2010, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Egypt, Nepal, Jordan, Rwanda, Ghana, Uruguay (UN, 2010); (C) in 2011, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Egypt, Jordan, Rwanda, Nepal, Ghana (UN, 2011); (D) in 2012, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Nepal, Egypt, Jordan, Ghana (UN, 2012); (E) in 2013, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Nepal, Jordan, Ghana, Senegal (UN, 2013); in 2014, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nepal, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt (UN, 2014); (F) in 2015, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Rwanda, Nepal, Senegal, Ghana, China, Nigeria (UN, 2015); and (G) 2016, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Nepal, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Egypt (UN, 2016).

Consequently, with all that in mind, it is not hard to see that peace operations end up being a dispositif with a twofold objective. Firstly, on the one hand, it is a dispositif that seeks to transpose the structuring logics of fundamental spheres – such as political, economic and social structures – from the core to the periphery of the international society.⁴⁵ Therefore, peace operations turn out to be possibly one of the most refined instruments of global governance. Secondly, on the other hand, it has the objective to pacify, which is quite different from building peace, areas and populations of the international society, most of all located in the Global South, understood, and most of the times constructed as, turbulent. All of this – and here lays not only the most perverse side of the structure, but also where it is most evident how refined this governing instrument really is – being implemented by the states of the Global South themselves,⁴⁶ Brazil proudly self-satisfied included.

Therefore, having a clear understanding about the role that peace operations have in international politics, one can realize that there is nothing paradoxical in the

⁴⁴ The lists are organized in descending order.

⁴⁵ For more regarding the understanding of core-periphery relations at the international scenario, see for instance (Wallerstein, 1996, 2004).

⁴⁶ Philip Cunliffe (2013), for example, argues that this kind of international arrangement belongs to a historic tradition of imperial security and is quite similar, for instance, with the Legions of the past when the metropolitan states used the peripheral ones to police the empire.

aforementioned assertion that the more Brazil inserts itself as the way it does – majorly through troops – the more the country actively constructs its own subalternity in the matter of the construction of international peace. Moreover, projecting itself in this sphere mainly through the contribution of troops, as Brazil does, denotes the obvious – a very limited understanding of peace, even if not consciously, as the mere inverse of war. Consequently, under this rationale, acting on the construction of international peace, unfortunately, is nothing more than merely sending troops to war-torn areas. Therefore, it is not by chance that who leads and shapes the Brazilian debate in regards to such discussion is, above all, the Ministry of Defense. This kind of limited understanding of peace prevents, from the very start, a more relevant and structuring insertion in the matter of building international peace.

In order to pursue a more structuring insertion in the sphere of building international peace, the country needs to start intensely engaging itself with a more profound dispute – the international dispute in regards to the conception of the global imaginaries⁴⁷ of international peace. Therefore, the country needs to start inserting itself in the global discussion about the definition of peace, what international peace means, how it should be pursued internationally, how it should be operationalized in post-conflict scenarios. It is true that the country timidly tried something in this direction recently, when Brazil proposed the notion of ‘Responsibility while Protecting’ at the UN in 2011⁴⁸ (A/66/551–S/2011/701) as an enhancement and an upgrade of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’⁴⁹ norm. However, in addition of being theoretically empty, the proposed notion, precisely because it does not question the aforementioned structure in regards to the construction of international peace and in fact reproduce it, the proposal only reinforces the peripheral position of Brazil in the matter of building peace internationally.

⁴⁷ For more regarding this notion, see for instance (Steger, 2009; Taylor, 2003).

⁴⁸ For more in this regards, see for instance (Almeida, 2013; Saliba, Lopes and Vieira, 2015; Stuenkel and Tourinho, 2014; Tourinho, Stuenkel and Brockmeier, 2016).

⁴⁹ For more about the UN understands this notion, see for instance (A/63/677; A/RES/60/1: Paragraphs 138-140).

Unsurprisingly, the peripheral position of Brazil in this matter, which is a consequence of not disputing the delineations and definitions of the global imaginaries of peace, can only be overcome if the country starts pursuing a more profound, and more introspective, step – enlarging its own understanding about peace. This certainly does not mean that the country should abdicate of contributing with troops to peace operations. However, a more qualified insertion of the country needs the agglutination, in an integrated and coordinated manner, of different kinds of actors and institutions in its engagement with peace operations. More than that, beyond the overcoming of the direct and observable violence,⁵⁰ something that the deployment of troops to post-conflict countries can collaborate, Brazil needs to direct its fundamental focus to overcoming more structural violences in these places, which are constituted by unfair political, economic and social conditions. In fact, these are the very root causes of violent conflicts throughout the globe.⁵¹

Therefore, if the country wants to have a prominent role in regards to the construction of international peace, it is urgent that Brazil enlarges its own understanding of peace towards an understanding that is more related to development and that reaches different dimensions of the individuals' lives in post-conflict scenarios. Consequently, rather than contributing to peace operations merely with the deployment of troops, it makes more sense having a more multidimensional understanding and approach towards peace. This should be operationalized in line with the local populations of post-conflict scenarios and their own understandings about the reconstruction effort, and covering areas such as security, but also politics, economy, education, health, infrastructure, human development, among others. Otherwise, Brazil will remain actively building, quite proudly indeed, its own marginality and subalternity in the matters of international peace and security.

⁵⁰ See footnote 2.

⁵¹ For more discussions about the origins of violent conflicts, see for instance (Azar, 1990: Chapter 1; Burton, 1990; Demmers, 2012; Durch and Berkman, 2006; Gardner, 2002).

Conclusion

This paper discussed the Brazilian engagement with peace operations. More precisely, the paper advanced the argument that, as paradoxical as it may sound, the more Brazil engages with peace operations in the way it currently does – majorly through the contribution of troops – more the country actively produces its own subalternity and peripheral position in this sphere. In order to advance this argument, the paper, in a first moment, delineated the Brazilian engagement with peace operations throughout the time. It evinced that this engagement is far from linear and uniform, and can be structured around four different phases. They are: (1) from 1957 to 1967, when the country engaged itself with traditional peace operations, contributing with a small number of troops. The exception was UNEF I sent to the Suez, during the second half of the 1950's; (2) from 1968 to 1988, a period when the country did not engage with peace operations. This was a consequence of the military dictatorship (1964-1985) that Brazil was experiencing; (3) from 1989 to 2004, when the country engaged majorly with peace operations of the second generation. During this period, the major Brazilian contribution to peace operations was directed towards Angola (UNAVEM III) in the second half of the 1990's; and (4) from 2004 onwards, when Brazil's contribution to peace operations boosted. The major Brazilian commitment during this period is MINUSTAH in Haiti, from 2004 until now, which also represents the largest Brazilian contribution to peace operations ever.

Then, the paper discussed myopic Brazilian engagement with peace operations. The paper argued that although the country is increasing its troop's contribution and responsibilities in regards to peace operations, reading these developments as a qualified insertion of Brazil in the sphere of international peace is definitely misleading. In order to perceive the apparent paradox in regards to such engagement, the paper argued that one has to problematize it having in mind the role that peace operations have in international politics. Therefore, one has to start understanding that such process does not occur in an ideological vacuum. Under the ideological framework structuring current international scenario, it is the notion of liberal peace that is the ideological character underpinning peace operations. Furthermore, the paper evinced the perverse side of such international practice – the fact that, although operating in a veiled manner, there is a structured international division of labor

between those engaged in the practice of building peace internationally. In this international division of labor of building peace, on the one hand, the Global North is responsible for defining what peace is and how it should be operationalized worldwide and, on the other hand, the Global South is responsible for implementing such understanding of peace in post-conflict scenarios. Consequently, rather than being a mere technical instrument directed to overcoming violent conflicts in war-torn scenarios throughout the globe, the paper argued that peace operations function as an international normalizing dispositif that, due to its liberal social-reengineering character, is fundamental for the maintenance and fostering of a particular order in the international society – a (neo)liberal one. Ultimately, precisely because of this, unless Brazil start enlarging its own understanding of peace and structurally modifies the way it engages with such international practice, the country will remain voluntarily building its own subalternity and peripheral position in regards the construction of international peace.

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