BRAZILIAN’S BLUE HELMETS

The case of Brazil’s participation at MINUSTAH

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While Brazil got more active in regards of its foreign policy, incorporating the subject of the social justice and adopting a new behavior in the multilateral forums, the political crisis in Haiti makes the international aid one of the main subjects of its agenda. Brazil then, presents itself as a protagonist in the help to the Haitian crisis, showing his solidarity with a Latin America country (SOUZA NETO, 2012). In the same period, Brazil got more engaged to assume international responsibilities, participating of the United Nations Peace Operations. This work will make a brief history of Brazil’s participation in such operations and discuss the reasons and means in which the country operates as a military leadership in the United Nations Mission for Stabilization in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Still, the paper presents a critical discussion of the use of soft power, a concept of developed by J. Nye, to explain Brazil's participation in this Mission.

The involvement of Brazil in Peace Operations remounts to the times of existence of the League of Nations. Since then, the country contributed actively in sending men to the League of Nations’ military force and later, to the United Nations (UN). The 1970s represented a detour of the Brazil’s position regarding the United Nations, according to a diplomatic perception that the United Nations would be contributing to the “freezing of the world power” (AGUILAR, 2012). Nevertheless, in 1990s Brazil returned to the Organization as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, between 1988-1989, willing to be part of the political multilateralism, which was also, an inspiration for Brazil’s participation in the United Nations Peace Operations (NASSER, 2012).

During the 1990s, Brazil returned to multilateralism and to the participation of the so-called Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, guiding its actions within the following lines: the country believed that peacekeeping operations are instruments needed to assist in the
peaceful resolution of disputes, and therefore protects the precepts of impartiality, consent of the parties, non-use of force except in cases of legitimate defense, and also, considered the use of Chapter VII of the United Nation’s Charter as a last resort in resolving a conflict (FONTOURA, 2005).

In 2004 as a consequence of the crisis that led to the fall of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the international attention turned to Haiti. As the crisis in Haiti got worse, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the creation of a Peacekeeping Mission and Brazil pledged diplomatic efforts to bring attention to the issue, since the country was part of the Council between 2004 and 2005. In the moment, the Security Council approved the United Nations Mission for Stabilization in Haiti, under the Chapter VII of the United Nations’ Charter. The mandate of this mission provided support to the transitional government, stabilization of security conditions, restoring the rule of law, monitoring of presidential elections, parliamentary and municipal elections, restructuring the Haitian National Police and help to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups (NASSER 2012). Over the years, Brazil has demonstrated a broad interest in expanding their participation in the decision-making process in major international organizations. This excerpt from the speech given by Former Minister Amorim shows the position of Brazil in this context, stressing "the price of peacekeeping is the price of participation":

“Our participation in the UN mission in Haiti, moreover, assumes that peace is not an international free good: the maintenance of peace has a price. This price is participation. Be absent, or refrain from expressing opinions or act before a crisis can mean exclusion from the decision-making process, or worse, the dependence on other countries or regions" (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS 2010).

According to J. Nye, power is the ability of achieving their interests. More specifically, power is the ability to be able to influence and determine the action of other in order to meet their own interests. It should be stressed that, unlike the hard power, which has military and economic means to enforce certain actions, soft power rather than influence the action of other, it involves a process of convincing the action of others (NYE, 2004). The ability to establish the preferences of the action of another actor is associated with intangible assets
such as culture, political values, institutions and policies, which in turn, have the moral authority to legitimate such actions (Ibid.).

The literature about Brazil’s participation in peace operations, especially the one that deal with the country’s role in MINUSTAH, as well as the official speeches, tend to exalt the cultural proximity and the historical identification between Brazil and Haiti. The positive image that Haitians have about Brazilians was portrayed in a documentary called "The day that Brazil was here". The documentary focuses on the event that occurred in Haiti in 2004, when the Brazilian national football team participated in a friendly match for peace against the Haitian team. The film showed the exaltation of the local community to get autographs, shirts and flags of the players, thus emphasizing the "soft" character of the Lula’s government in what concernsto Peace Operations (VIANA, 2009).

Aguilar also talks about what he calls the "Brazilian Culture of Peace Operations". According to the author, the presence in the projects for peace, besides projecting Brazil within international institutions and act as an instrument of foreign policy, allows the formation of what we might call a "culture of Peacekeeping Operations" This "culture" would be based on psychological structures through which individuals tend to guide their behavior, thus differentiating the Brazilian performance in Peace Operations (AGUILAR, 2012).

The objective of this study is to understand to what extent the Brazilian role in MINUSTAH is actually defined by soft power strategies such as the literature affirms so. The purpose of this paper is to answer the following question: Does the Brazil’s role in MINUSTAH can only be understood through a perspective of "soft power"? My hypothesis is that the soft power diplomatic discourse is not sufficient to explain the Brazilian participation in Peace Operations. It is argued that linked to the Brazilian participation in MINUSTAH is the desire to prove that Brazil can be a military power capable of dealing with the efforts to promote peace and international security.

The article will be organized as follows: in the first section “The Brazilian’s multilateralism in Lula’s administration and MINUSTAH”, will present a brief history about the Brazilian foreign policy in the period of Lula’s administration and the reasons that led Brazil to participate in the United Nations Peace Operations. The second session, called “Brazilian Soft Power"
will discuss the sources of Brazil’s soft power. The third session “Hard Power” will discuss about how Brazil must advance its hard power credentials to reach a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

1. The Brazilian’s multilateralism in Lula’s administration and MINUSTAH

In the period immediately after the Cold War, Brazil turned increasingly to the multilateralism, mainly reflecting their willingness to participate in the development of standards and rules of global governance. To the extent that it recognizes the limits of its international policy integration, Brazil has shown great flexibility and innovation in dynamic political arrangements such as IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), or the initiative to mediate conflicts in the Middle East, in the period of the Lula’s government. It should be emphasized, however, that the focus on regional multilateralism has not removed the country of multilateralism in universal context, in fact, this proved to be a Brazilian strategy of global projection (MELLO 2012, p.169-171).

Political arrangements like IBSA and the G20 trade were important expressions of the Brazilian foreign policy of the early years of the Lula’s government. Lula’s foreign policy guidelines strengthened regionalism and multilateralism, but also adopted a critically perspective about the issue (Ibid.).

Another topic of great relevance in the Brazilian Foreign Policy during the President Lula’s government is the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Despite the low probability of achieving a consensus among the BRICS countries due to the division of interests among countries that are permanent members of the board (China and Russia) and those that seek a position in the category (IBSA), the issue has become a priority in the Brazilian political agenda since the beginning of the Lula’s government and formed the basis of inspiration for policy guidelines adopted thereafter(Ibid.).

Thus, Brazil has sought to strengthen bilateral relations with other countries of the South, especially African countries, in addition to increase its participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations as well as its role as a donor in the humanitarian aid and International Cooperation(Ibid.).
According to Souza Neto, Brazil took over in 2004, the military command of MINUSTAH, the eighth United Nations mission in Haiti in a period of eleven years (1993-2004) and based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This Mission is characterized by its complexity since the gangs that contributed to the destabilization of the country, did not agree with its disarmament when the Mission was created. In this sense, MINUSTAH can be understood as a peace enforcement mission, involving offensive actions, maintenance of traditional peace and stabilization, and provide humanitarian assistance. (MORNEAU apud SOUZA NETO).

In addition, according to Souza Neto the Brazilian participation in MINUSTAH is part of the commitments made by the country to join the United Nations as well as being an act of solidarity with an American continent, for the security and stability of the Central America and the Caribbean. Although, MINUSTAH may not be sufficient for Brazil to reach its goal of participation as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the country has the opportunity to participate more actively in discussions about planning and formulation of peacekeeping missions, performing duties as protection of civilians, humanitarian aid and reform of state institutions (SOUZA NETO, 2012).

The ultimate will of Brazilian Foreign Policy is to have a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. The former Foreign Minister, Celso Amorim, places this wish in his lecture on the "Second National Conference on Foreign Policy and International Politics – The Brazil and the world that comes":

"... The success of the peacekeeping operation in Haiti - Angola, Mozambique, East Timor - does not mean that the UN should continue as is. The predominant feeling among Member States is that the organization needs urgent reform. From the first moment, we support the creation of the Human Rights Council. Brazil had substantial involvement in the negotiations for its constitution. We trust that the Council will contribute to the effective promotion and protection of human rights around the world, and to put an end to the politicization and selectivity that both characterized the former Commission on Human Rights ..." (AMORIM, 2007).

2. Brazilian Soft Power
As already noted, according to Nye, power is the ability of achieving their interests, and be able to influence and determine the action of another. The soft power rather than influence the action of other, involves a process of convincing the action of the other (NYE, 2004). This ability is associated with intangible assets: culture, political values, institutions and policies, which in turn, have the moral authority to legitimize such actions. The soft power resources of a State are graded on three main pillars: culture, political values and foreign policy (Ibid.).

Indeed, we saw that the great Brazilian motivation to take command of a military mission with the importance and complexity of MINUSTAH is guided by the desire to be part of the great international policy-making forums, in particular the United Nations Security Council. This session, thus, proposes to understand what features present in this "soft power" strategy justify and determines the desire of Brazilian participation in major multilateral forums.

As previously mentioned, the literature on the topic has focused primarily on soft power while social practices developed between Brazilian soldiers and the Haitian people. In this sense, the cultural proximity and the more "friendly" posture of Brazilian troops would rather facilitate the execution of the mission, making it therefore successful. In fact, according to the Brazilian Soldier, Ricardo Carneiro who was part of the 15th Brazilian Contingent in Haiti:

"It is very good the relationship between Brazilian soldiers and the Haitian people believe that the Haitians have more sympathy with us due to the charisma and the joy that we demonstrate to be there and help people. Some soldiers often have experienced multiple situations of military conflict in their regions, these conflicts, which cause anything to these military is a novelty. We Brazilians do not live in peace in our country, so when we are in the midst of a precarious situation as it is Haiti, there is a commotion, by the Brazilian contingent" (TROTE, 2014)

The cultural proximity is an important factor when dealing with the Brazilian attitude towards the Peace Operations, especially in Haiti. It is argued, therefore, that the elements that support the Brazilians soft power emerge from three pillars: Economy, Foreign Policy and Cultural Values. Thus, these three
pillars reveal that Brazil's main motivation is to increase its participation in major international multilateral fora, in particular the United Nations Security Council.

2.1. The Economy

One of the areas in which Brazil is increasingly developing is the economic sector. Between 2007 and 2012, the Brazilian economy grew about 4.2% according to World Bank data. The country was the last among the group of emerging countries to be affected by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 and was the first to recover from it. Despite the growth rates in Brazil are below the rates shown by some of his BRICS partners, Brazil has been increasingly recognized for their methods of combating poverty. According to the Economic Commission of the United Nations for Latin America and the Caribbean, the portion of the population living in poverty fell from 37.5% in 2001 to 24.9% in 2009. Indeed, poverty reduction was more significant in China and India, however, when we consider the relationship between poverty reductions per unit of economic growth, Brazil has result 5 times better than India and China. (KASANOVA & KASSUM, 2013).

A major reason for the positive result with regard to poverty reduction was the implementation of the "Bolsa Família", which provides the transfer of money to poor families under the condition that the children must go to school and be part of government’s vaccination programs. This Program reached approximately 12 million households and has been considered an easily adaptable program in many countries. Being inspired by the Mexican government program called "Opportunities", the "Bolsa Família" has been replicated in 20 countries, including Chile, Morocco, Philippines, South Africa, Turkey, USA. More than the empirical results, the program has brought the image of Brazil as a country that invests on public policies but also a country that is increase social development (Ibid.).

Brazil’s trade strategy is to seek not just commercial empirical results, but associates increasingly socially oriented topics as subject of those negotiations.
Unlike the previous governments in the economy, Lula’s government had a less instrumental and more economically oriented political gains focus:

“The loss of relative importance of economic logic for the benefit of the policy is at the origin of the Brazilian gap in recent years in relation to pragmatism that prevailed in previous decades. This gap has caused a lot of criticism from those who see in Brazilian initiatives, more for prestige (political) than results (economic)” (VEIGA & RIOS, 2013).

Two main factors contributed to the Brazilian economic performance during this period. Firstly, there was a weight reduction of external vulnerability, in other words, the perception of risks and international insertion of Brazil (economic growth, settlement of accounts and external resistance to international crisis). Secondly, there was also the existence of an international environment susceptible to possible changes; where there is the emergence of new economic powers and goes on to discuss more about the greater participation of developing countries in the international political agenda (Ibid.).

2.2. Foreign Policy

More than domestic success with regard to innovative policies, Brazil has been focusing on the external environment in three main areas: sustainable development, international peace and development and cultural diversity. The country is trying to establish itself not only as an important factor in these aspects, but also, as a model to be followed (KASANOVA & KASSUM, 2013).

Brazil has been much criticized in relation to the high rate of deforestation in the Amazon basin, as a result of the expansion of soy plantations, the livestock use and the construction of hydroelectric plants. Against this criticism, since 1992 the country has been taking a more assertive environment position. In the same year, Brazil hosted the United Nations Summit in Rio and in 2012, organized an event named “Rio +20” with more than 45 000 participants. In 2009, under the command of President Lula, Brazil signed a national law pledged to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases between 36% and 39% by 2020. Both Brazilian successes focus on drastic
reduction of forest clearing, as well as its position as a world leader in renewable energy (Ibid.).

According Kasanova and Kassum, Brazil's participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations is growing increasingly in line with its commitment to diplomacy and multilateralism. The main role of the country was the military command of MINUSTAH. In addition, Brazil contributes with military efforts to 33 countries for Peacekeeping Operations including Angola, Mozambique, East Timor and recently, Lebanon. Through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, Brazil is able to bring assistance to 65 countries in and outside Latin America. The focus of Brazilian aid is in the implementation of programs that have already been tested internally in areas of health, agriculture, education and governance (Ibid.).

2.3. Cultural Values

Brazilian culture is likewise very important when it comes to "Brazilian soft power". Brazilian music, “Samba” and “Bossa Nova” are global references that can be called the "Brazilianess". Since the oldest songs to the most recent ones are highly successful and have millions of views through Medias like “YouTube”. Musical style known as "Sertanejo Universitario", for example, is currently very popular in Spain and countries of the Latin America community. (Ibid.).

Football is the main protagonist of the Brazilian international fame. Besides being the only country to win five World Cups, the popularity of the Brazilian team remains intact. According to Kasanova and Kassum, Neymar's name was the football player name most mentioned on twitter on the opening day of the Olympic Games in London - 2012. This year (2014), the World Cup is hosted in Brazil, taking the name of Neymar and other stars of Brazilian football worldwide (Ibid.).

In an interview for this job, Major Maurício Mendonça talks about Brazil's role in Haiti and the role of Brazilian culture:

"... Since we started operating in Haiti, we were the only country that could donate food and clothing from the companies and we gave out to the population during
operations. With that, the game of football and the unique feature of the Brazilian people, we can ensure the security in place (TROTE, 2014)

Some genuinely Brazilian brands represent and lead the Brazilian lifestyle to the world. The Havaianas brand, today, is an example of the diffusion characteristics associated with the Brazilian lifestyle: the casualness, the fun and the tropicalism (KASANOVA & KASSUM, 2013).

3. Brazilian Hard Power

Over the last ten years, more specifically, from the beginning of the first years of Lula’s administration, Brazil has been investing actively to increase its soft power. The improvement of its diplomatic skills, as well as the development of their socio-economic structure and cultural projection are elements that guarantee to the country certain influence and admiration in the international level. However, these elements are not enough for Brazil to guarantee a status of "Great Power" (Ibid.).

Some diplomatic failures and no guarantee of support regarding their desire to participate as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, could be indications that, perhaps, Brazil need to advance in some elements of hard power. One could say that some steps towards this goal have already been taken: first, Brazil has consolidated itself as the world’s sixth largest economy. The country has a great bargaining power in what concerns to its natural resources. Moreover, Brazil has, albeit slowly, consolidating itself as a military power focused on a defensive agenda (Ibid.).

Thus, this section of the article will seek to analyze how Brazil has been struggling ever more in an attempt to consolidate itself as a great power beyond diplomatic means. I argue that the opportunity to participate in Peace Operations, and especially MINUSTAH, represents an opportunity for Brazil not only to test their skills, but also to show the world that his military credentials offer them the necessary responsibility to be part of international spheres of decision-making.
According to Souza Neto, Brazil's participation in MINUSTAH and the Brazilian indication to compose the Force Commander of the Mission, allow the country to actively participate in the spheres of influence, specifically about military issues and even the very nature of the mission. The renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate would thus demonstrate the recognition of Brazil's military leadership in the mission by the members of the United Nations Security Council (SOUZA NETO, 2012).

According to the Minister Norberto Moretti, Chief of the Division of Peace and Security of the Foreign Office, the Peace Operations are a vital tool in ensuring multilateralism, peacekeeping and international security. The Peace Operations are an important tool for not only the purposes mentioned above, but also for the inclusion of medium and small states in important decisions in the International Community (MORETTI, 2013).

Also according to the Minister, Brazil's participation in Peacekeeping Missions, is necessary to create a trust entity to Brazilian and foreign armed forces, and contributes on the training of friendly armed forces. The Minister also pointed out that Brazil's role in MINUSTAH spreads the country's intention to actively participate in the United Nations Security Council (Ibid.).

The chart below shows the Brazilian effort in sending troops and resources to MINUSTAH and the UNFIL (Brazil has just joined this mission).
According to Major Maurício Mendonça, the role of MINUSTAH was projecting Brazil as a power capable of uniting both the cultural aspects that are undeniable, with the desire to prove itself capable of assuming a responsibility, which today is restricted to the five major world powers, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council:

"Brazil has an interest in a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Command the mission in Haiti would be a great opportunity to show the world and the United Nations that the country is competent for such a task. On the other hand, is an excellent deterrent to advertise any adverse forces that wish to act against Brazil. Note we do not use the term "enemies" because the foreign policy of Brazil does not consider the existence of them. As for the differential, Brazil is regarded by other nations of the world as a diplomatic and non-belligerent country. The friendly profile of the Brazilian people; the command form and the exquisite skills of the Brazilian military has proven perfect for the interests of the UN. In addition, Brazil only contributes troops to peacekeeping missions (Peacekeeping). In
cases of Peacebuilding and Peace Enforcement, as sometimes occurs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil only contributes to military observers and, when requested, with the mission’s Command. The national foreign policy is non-interference in the sovereignty of other countries; so Brazil only contributes to missions where peace has been negotiated and only needs to be maintained. This also represents a much lower risk to our soldiers. This stance is consistent with the general principles of the UN, which leaves us well on the international stage. Was the work done by Brazilian soldiers in Haiti that caused the invitation of a Brazilian general to command the mission in the Congo and to participate in the mission in Lebanon (this still under consideration). Brazil’s participation in MINUSTAH, especially in his command), Brazil designed as an armed power on the world stage” (TROTE, 2014)

According to Rezende, looking to the Table 1 below, it is possible to draw some conclusions about Brazil's participation in peace operations. Firstly, it is clear that numerically, Brazil becomes more involved in “large” peace operations than the “small” ones. According to the table, the country participated of 18 Peace Operations, but only 11 or 61% were considered “large” compared to 5 or 28% considered “mediums” and 11% or 2 considered “smalls”. As resource holder still limited in the International System, we can say that Brazil seeks to engage in missions that are considered more important by the UN. Secondly, Brazil tends to have greater participation in missions that are within their priority area of Brazilian Foreign Policy. Thirdly, considering the troops sent to MINUSTAH and UNMISET, we can say that except for these two missions, Brazil contributes with more observers than troops to Peace Missions (REZENDE, 2012).

The great inflection troops sent to MINUSTAH shows that for the first time, regional actors have traditionally opposed a possible candidacy of Brazil for a permanent seat on the Unite Nations Security Council, undergo the Brazilian Mission command are making room for a significant military cooperation in South America (Ibid.).
Table 2: Brazilian contributions to UNPO (United Nations apud REZENDE, 2012,165)

**Conclusion**

We can conclude then, that the Brazilian participation in peace operations has been translated by the Brazilian literature as a strategy of *soft power*, or even a product of such strategy, and therefore MINUSTAH is a goal of Brazilian politics. To be part of the exclusive group that has the responsibility to make important decisions at the international level, Brazil should be able to afford such responsibility.

Although authors such as Rezende argue that hard power is essential for Brazil to integrate a select group of countries that have the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, this argument, though complementary, is not able to replace the diplomatic argument of the Brazilian Government. Still, the economy, the political values and cultural values stands as a spotlight for the Brazilian participation in Peace Operations, especially in Haiti.

Join MINUSTAH military command is a task that demonstrates the great confidence in Brazil's capacity. As put by Major Mendonça, cultural proximity is
what makes Brazilian's soldiers different of all other soldiers and then, that is what makes the MINUSTAH, a successful United Nations Mission.

Even though Brazil cannot yet be considered as a military power capable of promoting international peace and security does not nullify the role that Brazil is playing at MINUSTAH. Moreover, it is a fact that the Brazilian *soft power* today, if not the principal, is largely responsible for Brazil's role in United Nations Peace Operations.

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