

## HOW DID BRAZIL DO THAT? GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENTALITY AS ANOTHER WAY TO WIN WARS

## COMO O BRASIL FAZ ISSO? GOVERNANÇA GLOBAL E GOVERNAMENTAL COMO OUTRA FORMA DE VENCER GUERRAS

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### ABSTRACT

This essay will explore the cooperation in the international system and will evaluate if International institutions and governance can be considered means for international cooperation or merely tools in the hands of powerful actors to force weak states to cooperate. The study case will be the relations between The United States and Brazil, focusing in the events that triggered the actual political crises that resulted on the deposition of the president Dilma Rouseff and the implementation of a neoliberal agenda that has been for many years suggested by the United States.

**Keywords:** United States. Brazil. Political.

### RESUMO

Este ensaio explorará a cooperação no sistema internacional e avaliará se as instituições internacionais e a governança podem ser consideradas meios de cooperação internacional ou meramente ferramentas nas mãos de atores poderosos para forçar os Estados fracos a cooperar. O estudo de caso será a relação entre Estados Unidos e Brasil, com foco nos eventos que desencadearam as atuais crises políticas que resultaram na deposição da presidente Dilma Rouseff e na implementação de uma agenda neoliberal que há muitos anos vem sendo sugerida pelo Estados Unidos.

**Palavras-chaves:** Estados Unidos. Brasil. Política.

### 1. EXTENDED INTRODUCTION

This essay will explore the cooperation in the international system and will evaluate if International institutions and governance can be considered means for international cooperation or merely tools in the hands of powerful actors to force weak states to cooperate. The study case will be the relations between The United States and Brazil, focusing in the events that triggered the actual political crises that resulted on the deposition of the president Dilma Rouseff and the implementation of a neoliberal agenda that has been for many years suggested by the United States.

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The main question is interpreted from the concept of global governance, defined by Corry (2014, p. 93) as "the conduct of conduct' (the power to guide or shape the actions of others)", thus, the question "To what extent can global governance be pursued as a cooperative endeavour?" brings the assumption that global governance may (or may not) be cooperative or, even being cooperative, may or may not produce satisfactory results to all states engaged on that cooperation.

To narrow down the question, this essay will bring the realist view that governance serves to powerful actors to condition the action of the weak (The Open University, 2017a), what brings the question: Is international governance for cooperation or to force to cooperate? Focusing the analytical approach to the case study, this essay will analyse to what extent governmentalities, defined by Neumann as "the indirect way of making people do what they would not otherwise have done." (The Open University, 2017b), are developed to serve cooperative or unilateral interest, and how Transnational Advocacy Networks, that are defined by Sikkink as "group of relevant actors, working together, who share a common discourse, a common set of ideas. And they engage in dense exchanges of information and services." (The Open University, 2017b) can be used as new tools to work towards the goals of strong actors over weak states. This bring us to the narrowed question: Transnational Advocacy Networks: Ends or means?

The phrase ends or means was used to paraphrase Kant (1785, cited in Cottingham, 2008, p. 511), that stated that humans can never be treated as merely means but, end on themselves. That thought is pertinent to this essay because, as it will be demonstrated, people involved on TANs strongly believe that they are fighting to a noble cause, but, leaded by think tanks and other producers of ideology, what they do is to work accordingly with the interest of powerful corporations that create an environment that rewards who is aligned with their interest. This strategy has caused changing in government in the middle east, what became known as The Arab Spring, followed by events in South America, where the major exponent is Brazil that has, until now, lost around 7.2% of its GDP (Estadão, 2017)

The case under study was chosen because, for being actual and ongoing event, the way the events has been registered offers opportunity to apply the theory without having to rely on deep research and controversy versions. The acts of the governments involved have been widely criticized by specialists and media commentators and both

The United States and Brazil are manifesting officially about the issue. The events have been accompanied closely by the author of the essay, and, from the start of the events until now, important data, as GDP, level of unemployment, people's opinion about the crises are broadly available, making it possible to analyse a contemporaneous event with a considerably new IR theory.

## 1.1. Method

The essay will try to “marry the case with the theories”, showing how the Brazilian case support some points and challenge other points of the theories chosen. A short background of “governance relations” between The USA and Brazil will draw on regime theory to explain why Brazil has submitted to the US when in need for international fund and how Brazil has found its way out of the IMF.<sup>2</sup> Regime theory is defined by Krasner (The Open University, 2017a) as. “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations”. Later, it will be explained how liberal governmentality was imposed on Brazil though TANs, leading Brazil back to the same international submission lived in the past. Once analysed the way international governance has decided the political and economic models for Brazil, the essay will follow to the study of the achievements and results of the last changes in government resulted from the popular protest triggered by TANs.

## 2. LOCAL CONCEPTS

MPL has started as a network but the name was later used by a think tank agency. MPL can be translated as “Free Transport Movement” and MBL “Free Brazil Movement”. MBL as think tank agency is a continuity of MPL. Its power of influence was strong, especially because it has boned as a central institution (MPL as thinktank) that claimed for itself the legitimacy to represent the network (MPL as network). MBL, among other think tank agencies were important to drive the protests that triggered the political change under study.

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<sup>2</sup> IMF – International Monetary Fund will be explained later.

### 3. IR THEORY

This work intends to focus on TANs, but will not consider TANs only as a segment of governance, but as an instrument to impose international governance. The IR theory will start wide, showing international institutions regimes and governance, that will be seen by this essay as “ends”, presenting later network theory and TANs, that on this essay will be analysed as means to achieved those ends.

#### 3.1. International institutions, regimes and governance

To understand the three concepts, we can start by the definition of regimes given by Krasner: “regimes are principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge” (The Open University, 2017a), and, complementing with the comparison given by Eilstrup-Sangiovanni “think of regimes as the ‘rules of the game’ in a particular issue area, whereas international organisations and states are the ‘players’.” (2014, p. 55), we can join the concepts as: International players joint to found institutions aiming to set rules to govern certain areas of mutual interest.

The justifications for setting rules is in one sense to make sure that countries will agree on those rules and once agreed, there will be no incentive to leave the agreement, resulting on superior outcomes for the international community “If actors simply act on their own in purely self- interested ways, they'll end up with Pareto inferior outcomes.” (The Open University, 2017a).

The criticism of this way of “governing the world” is, as Krasner mentions, that not all actors are better off, and normally the rules are made to reflect the interests of the more powerful

“So every party is better off. But not every party is equally better off. And the outcome of deals often very much reflects the power capabilities of the actors engaged in the deal.” (The Open University, 2017a)

#### 3.3. Governmentality

Governmentality can be understood as a set of ideas that frame from what is good to what is wright. As Corry defines, “governmentalities are bodies of knowledge and technologies of governing that condition what types of rule can develop and bestow



authority on certain actors and practices.” (Corry, 2014, p. 101).

From governmentality it is possible to, instead of forcing or even to convince people to act on a certain way, instigate the assurance that there is a “right way to act”, what makes people not only accept, but work towards that way of thinking. Neuman explains governmentality as

“having people as acting individuals and trying to orchestrate the way they think by suggesting to them over the long haul, socialising them into thinking that this is the natural thing to do.” (The Open University, 2017b)

This essay shows how governmentality is used to control TANs and to impose indirect governance on developing countries.

### 3.4. Network Theory and Transnational Advocacy Networks

The concept of network can be explained as an informal organization of people with a common goal or common interest. The main characteristic of a network, that will be in part challenged by this essay, is that there is not hierarchy, thus, all nodes are independent and horizontally related. On a network, each person is considered ‘a node’ and nodes are interconnected to many nodes. New nodes start to participate, and redundant nodes are eliminated from the network.

The network of people that is the focus of this essay are the Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs), defined by Sikkink as a

“group of relevant actors who are working together, who share a common discourse, a common set of ideas. And they engage in dense exchanges of information and services.” (The Open University, 2017c)

And explained by Eilstrup-Sangiovanni as

“individuals, groups and organisations that are bound by shared values and beliefs and that cooperate across borders in order to advance principled issues.” (2014, p. 69).

According to Sikkink (The Open University, 2017c) network theory proposes to explain not why states stayed the same, but how change occurred. The theory moves the focus from states and analyses how a bottom-up process of change can be forced, from non-state actor to political governments. This point of the theory will be partly

acknowledged by this essay, but concept of “bottom-up” will be challenged with questions as “who controls the networks?”. Sikkink points out that the theory focuses on non-state actors, but do not ignore the importance of states:

“Transnational advocacy networks are important, because they often are pressuring states to try to change state policies. No one is more aware of the importance of states than transnational advocacy networks. States are their main targets.” (The Open University, 2017c)

#### **4. BRAZIL: INTERNATIONAL IMPOSITIONS AND GOVERNANCE**

##### **4.1. From IMF regime to a welfare state**

The global North has imposed its liberal agenda on Brazil from its military regime, established with the interference of the US in 1964 (Abril, 2014). As Shipman (2014, p.10) explains, to access international fund as IMF, the government normally needs to adopt policies like budget cuts, higher interest rates, exchange-rate depreciation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises. Those policies started to be abandoned from in 2003, when the Worker’s Party took power and stopped recurring to the IMF.

Free from IMF, Brazil started to adopt a more social agenda: Instead of budget cuts, the government started an intense program of investments on health, education and programs to reduce poverty. The privatizing agenda was interrupted and replaced by heavy investment on public companies.

In 2007, Petrobras – the public owned company responsible for petroleum extraction, found the Pre-salt, described as a “major offshore deep-water discoveries”. (The Economist, 2008). After the discovery, a law was passed on parliament to regulate extraction and to define the government as exclusive extractor, with 100% of the royalties destined to health and education. (Senado, 2017). The government also raised the level of “the local content policy”, defined by Lima (2016, p. 8) as “a requirement that firms have to use goods and services of national origin and not imported.”

Protecting its local industry and giving to state owned companies the monopoly of extraction and refinery of oil, Brazil has on that time challenged liberal mentalities as the importance of privatization as a way to improve efficiency. And the free market to boost efficiency

“(under certain conditions) competition among producers and consumers,



operating through free markets, can achieve the most efficient allocation of resources leading to the best attainable living standard.” (Shipman, 2014, p.7).

The important point to consider here is that that liberal mentality just ignores the “under certain conditions”, and the once Brazil abandoned the liberal agenda imposed by IMF, there was a considerable raise on GDP, lowering on unemployment rate and social inequality.

The Lula<sup>3</sup> government ended with popular approval of 87% (Bonin, 2010). The subsequent president, Dilma Rouseff, continued the previous agenda. Brazil started two new programs of study funding and raised considerably the investment in health and education.

## 4.2. The spread of a liberal governmentality

In 2013 there was already a growth of networks spreading liberal ideologies in Brazil, on that time living the lowest level of unemployment of its history (Ferreira, 2015) and among few countries around the world that was not suffering the world crises (Paulani, 2010)

Governmentality, as Neuman defines, is “the indirect way of making people do what they would not otherwise have done.” (The Open University, 2017b). There was not an economic or political justification for people start asking for things such as privatization, free market and minimum state, but American liberal think tanks found their way to into Brazilian society:

The anti-corruption argument was already a cause that reached millions of people across the country. (Bernardini, 2013) From arguments in favour of liberalism to fake news projected against the worker’s party, the TANs brought the political debate to obscure themes, such as a possible secret plan for the adoption of the communist regime. (MBL, 2014) In 2014 Brazil had its first presidential election strongly influenced by think tanks agencies.

Through an agenda setting that, according to many experts, was funded directly by the USA (Amorim, 2017), GLOBO, Brazil's largest media channel, created a sense of financial crisis that triggered a spiral of recession, culminating in a drop of 7.2% in national GDP. (Estadão, 2017)

After two years of coup in Brazil, politicians, experts and journalists have agreed

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<sup>3</sup> Lula – Brazilian president from 2003 to 2011.

on the role of the USA on the crisis that the country is experiencing today. According to Maretti (2016), unable to impose its liberal agenda through a diplomatic route, the USA used a think tank network scheme in order to convince, not the government, but the people of Brazil, that they were living an inefficient economic model of extreme corruption in the public sector, demanding immediate privatization of all Brazilian public assets.

## **5. FOCUSING ON THE ROLE OF TANS ON THE CHANGE ON POLITICAL AGENDA.**

Opposing to network theory, that assumes a network as a horizontal relation with no hierarchy, the Brazilian case shows that, even not formally, the ideology spread by networks follow a pyramid model, in which at the top, producing knowledge and opinion, are the American think tanks, that are followed by the Brazilian think tanks. Freedom House, Heritage Foundation, Austrian School of Economics are the main sources of information for local agencies as MBL, Instituto Mises Brazil, Students for Liberty Brazil, among others, that are locally, the sources of information for the liberal network.

Neumann (The Open University, 2017b) has already made this point about NGOs: “the way they work is not that they challenge the state as other and discreet actors. It is that the states use these organisations to work through them in order to get results.”. This essay studies a case of an international actor using NGOs to impose governmentality, operating not through government-to-government, but on a bottom up process. For analytical simplification, all networks involved on this case will be grouped on two main networks:

‘The Right’ is the network fighting for privatisation and the end of Brazilian welfare state. ‘The Right’ is intellectually controlled, internationally by liberal think tanks and locally by MBL. MBL creates biased versions of factual news and fake news against political opponents. The nodes spread the material developed by MBL through all social networks. The liberal ideology is strongly supported by the mainstream media, then, many artists have become speakers and supporters of liberal ideas. The discourses provided by MBL are recorded by many voices and the whole network works to share the videos.

‘The Left’ is the network fighting for the maintenance of the Welfare State, state



owned companies, employment laws and other protectionist laws in Brazil. The network doesn't have formal intellectual and financial supporters. The ideology is presented in many different, and sometimes, inconsistent ways. Artists, speakers and intellectuals that share ideals with 'The Left' tend to keep themselves neutral fearing punishment from the mainstream media. 'The Left' does not coordinate to share the materials. The videos are normally confined to the followers of the nodes on their blogs or social media.

The theory assumes that a bottom up governance is possible from TANs, and people organized are able to influence on state decisions, but the reality lived in Brazil can show that the power of change or power of influence does not belong to networks. This can be noticed when we analyse the way how some networks were promoted, when some networks were "boycotted".

"The right" is supported by platforms biased towards the economic liberal spectrum, what can help to explain why the right-wing networks were able to achieve thousands of nodes, with tens of millions of followers, as Bemvindo Siqueira, a Brazilian actor and activist, puts it

"The *conversa afiada* channel [left-wing] has more than 200 thousand followers and each video achieves 5 thousand views. Most right-wing channel achieves more than 100 thousand views in each video". (2017).

In the same video he denounces another way YouTube uses to disincentive left-wing channels, that is do not monetize such channels "Once I upload a video it appears as not appropriate for announce (...) my channel is already stamped by YouTube." This form of control, defined as gatekeeping, completely distorts the idea of horizontal relation on networks.

"They're like a hub and wheel network, which is one description we use of one possible network structure. In those types of networks, those organisations can be what we call gatekeepers. So Charli Carpenter has written that the powerful organisations within networks can be gatekeepers and decide which issues get adopted and which issues are not accepted." (The Open University, 2017c).

Any speech in favour of free market, lowering employment rights and privatization of public assets and attacks against the president in power were rewarded with media exposition. This logic of "I rewarding what I want to hear" gave to media

channel, social media and other powerful actors the control over the network.

## **6. SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF THE NEW AGENDA**

Immediately after the deposition of Dilma Rouseff, the mainstream media changed the agenda setting from economic crisis into economic recovery. Although being the actual government involved on many corruption scandals, MBL has changed its focus from corruption to criticizing arts and making jokes about the old government. “The right” network has never, since then, came back to the streets on demonstrations against corruption. This reassures the claim that TANs are not about social preferences, but to make social the preferences of who controls the TANs. Neumann raises this point on his interview:

“this whole idea that what is being done by powers that be is simply their own will and their own power is mistaken, because there is something about the, should we say, the bandwidth, the book ends, of a certain way of thinking about the world that gives you the leeway to do this or to do that.”  
(The Open University, 2017b).

Even not formally, Brazil has fully adopted the same impositions of the IMF regime, that are, accordingly to Shipman: budget cuts, higher interest rates, exchange-rate depreciation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises. (2014, p. 10)

The first act of the new government in power was to reduce the amount of funds directed to education and health. The constitution was amended to freeze the levels of government expenditure for 20 years. The employment law was modified against the workers, even after a public consult that resulted that 91.1% of the population were against the change (Senado, 2017). It was the first time in two decades that the minimum wage in Brazil had its adjust bellow the inflation (Guimarães, 2017).

The new government changed the constitutional provision that the royalties of the petroleum must be invested in health and education and dropped the “national content policy”. The results of the doubt about who gains and who loses with international trade, in this case can be clearly seen: The result of free trade was the bankruptcy of many industries correlated to oil production. (Thuswohl, 2017)

The privatizing agenda, abandoned by the Worker’s Party since 2003 not only

came back but as a matter of urgency: The pre-salt had some camps already sold and some camps are approved to be sold during this year. Strategic companies as ELETROBRAS – the most important company on the Brazilian electrical sector and CORREIOS – The Brazilian post company, has been received government efforts to be privatized. (Costanti, 2018)

At the time of writing, Brazil was been paralyzed by a truck protest claiming for reduction in the price of diesel. Accordingly to specialists, (Rosário, 2018) the abrupt raise in price would be less pronounced if the government had not adopted a liberal agenda that has led to a reduction on diesel production in Brazil.

The unemployment that was the lowest in Brazilian history on the beginning of the protests (4.3%), is now estimated 13.1% (UOL, 2018). The new employment law permits informal contracts and many employees are now being dismissed to be informally contracted, without the need to pay the FGTS (employment warranty fund), which is not only an important insurance for the employee, but also an important economic stabilizer for the economic sector.

The change on focus from industrial sector to primary sector can be seen on the results of Brazilian GDP that registered a shortage of 7.2% on March of 2017 (Estadão, 2017)

Going now from actual results to predictions, using the Economic Growth theory, that takes technical progress and innovation as an important factor for growth, we can say that abandoning investment in education would lead the country to a negative or less positive outcome.

It is impossible to predict the numeric results of the truck protests, ongoing on the time of writing, but many cities in Brazil are now living restriction of supply, from standard goods to food (Gazeta, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The modus operandi and outcomes resulted from TANs influencing politics on developing countries opens important questions about cooperation and conflict in the international sphere:

In the field of security, we can ask: Does it make sense for non-nuclear country to concentrate on the state security solely on investment on military defence, if using ideological control and fake news could lead that country to serve the interests of

another country, that is the same result as losing a war?

We can imagine situations where social interaction may be sacrificed in name of state protection. As China, Iran, and North Korea have Facebook blocked, among other countries that had block it in the past or are now considering to block Facebook and other social media (Wikipedia, 2018).

Seeing the world as society of states, it is not possible to imagine that capitalism an liberalism will produce only positive results around the world. Since there is a conflict of interest between the countries, a governance that will serve some, would not be interesting for others. From a national perspective; there is an interest that a developing country grows as they need a growing internal market, but, outside, on the international arena, the interests are divergent: A developing industry on a Latin country, for example, means that a developed economy, say the USA, will not only have to confront another competitor in the international arena as they would eventually be less served by the primary sector of that country; or because the country is focusing production on industrialized products, or because the country is able to consume its primary factors internally.

In response to the main question, International institutions and global governance can be pursued as a cooperative endeavour only if we exclude the outcomes from the analyses. As the study case shows, the international governance are, most of the time, developed in a sense that would produce different outcomes for different participants, and because the governances are normally developed from developed to developing countries, the rules are designed not to favour or to respect the economic and political self-determination of the developing countries, but to impose rules over those who are not invited to participate on a cooperative endeavour, but forced to cooperate towards an unflatter result.

Forced to adopt a liberal agenda, Brazil had lost many industries, especially those related to heavy construction, production and refinery of petroleum. Stepping each time more to the primary sector, Brazil is exchanging the preponderance of its GDP, from industrial production to agricultural production. Although finding some justifications under the theory of terms of trade, the deindustrialization and specialization of Brazil on the primary sector may, in the future, produce a higher international outcome, but this outcome will not produce an equal quality of life for the people of all countries involved.

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