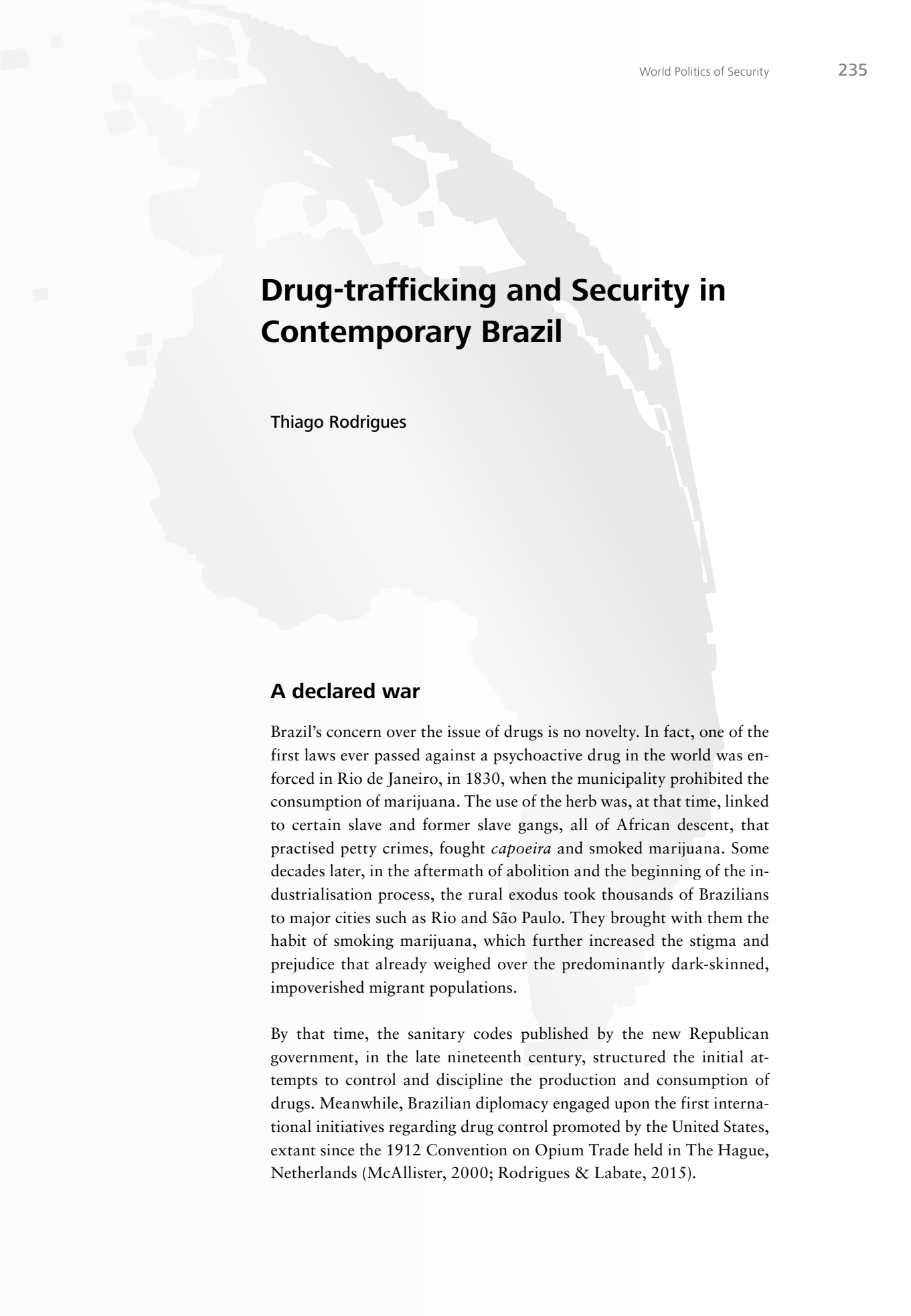


Thiago Rodrigues is a Professor at the Institute of Strategic Studies (INEST) of the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. He is an Associate Researcher at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and at the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research think tank in Argentina. Rodrigues is head of the research project 'Drug-Trafficking, Militarisation and the National Strategic Environment: lessons for Brazil' supported by the Ministry of Defence and the Brazilian National Council for Research.



Drug-trafficking and Security in Contemporary Brazil

Thiago Rodrigues

A declared war

Brazil's concern over the issue of drugs is no novelty. In fact, one of the first laws ever passed against a psychoactive drug in the world was enforced in Rio de Janeiro, in 1830, when the municipality prohibited the consumption of marijuana. The use of the herb was, at that time, linked to certain slave and former slave gangs, all of African descent, that practised petty crimes, fought *capoeira* and smoked marijuana. Some decades later, in the aftermath of abolition and the beginning of the industrialisation process, the rural exodus took thousands of Brazilians to major cities such as Rio and São Paulo. They brought with them the habit of smoking marijuana, which further increased the stigma and prejudice that already weighed over the predominantly dark-skinned, impoverished migrant populations.

By that time, the sanitary codes published by the new Republican government, in the late nineteenth century, structured the initial attempts to control and discipline the production and consumption of drugs. Meanwhile, Brazilian diplomacy engaged upon the first international initiatives regarding drug control promoted by the United States, extant since the 1912 Convention on Opium Trade held in The Hague, Netherlands (McAllister, 2000; Rodrigues & Labate, 2015).

Following the international wave of increasing State regulation over psychoactive drugs, Brazil passed a law in 1921 that still did not effectively prohibit sale and consumption of substances such as opiates (heroin, morphine) and cocaine, but established controls based on permission for medical use only. Nevertheless, the path for prohibition had been prepared, and the 1938 Criminal Code reform included the first decisions regarding the actual criminalisation of producers, traders and users of drugs such as opiates (heroin and morphine), cocaine and marijuana (Rodrigues, 2015).

However, the Brazilian case regarding regulation and criminalisation of drugs was not an isolated one. On the contrary, it was part of a larger and worldwide construction of a global regime for drug control mainly spear-headed by US Foreign Policy, yet actively adapted to and accepted by many governments in all continents. This global regime was initially constituted under the umbrella of the League of Nations. After 1945, with the United Nations system in the saddle of such multilateral norm creation, the fight against some drugs was universalised gaining further strength in light of the organisation's Security Council prerogatives, as well as of the entire system's status of human rights gatekeeper. Since the 1970s, this scenario increasingly shifted to parallel the scope of the US' declaration on the 'war on drugs' which brought to the scene vital geopolitical and security issues. Taking this episode as a turning point in the history of drug prohibition, this article seeks to analyse the 'war on drugs' focussing on Brazil's insertion in this process with special attention to the current militarisation of the country's public policies regarding security issues in Rio de Janeiro, while justifying it through the urgency to fight narcotrafficking organisations.

The emergence of a 'problem'

As recently as a century ago, there was no drug trafficking, no transterritorial cartels, no narco-guerrillas. None of these actors and processes existed because the vast majority of drugs that nowadays feed this impressive worldwide illicit business were simply not prohibited.

Between the 1910s and the 1930s, the advent of the so-called *drug prohibition* transformed producers, traders and consumers of particular drugs into criminals. Drug prohibition tried to eliminate markets and habits related to certain substances; it was, however, unsuccessful in this, managing only to render the activity and many related social practices illicit, but having no effect upon markets or habits. As a result, producers and traders turned into illegal traffickers, while consumers became outlaws (some treated as addicts, others as criminals, usually depending on their racial and social origins). Embedded in prohibition, via what was initially seen as a moral and public health problem gradually translated into cases of public security. During that same period, the combination between social prejudices and moral principles against the use of drugs occurred within a context of governmental attempts to control the growth of industrial cities – both in Europe and in the Americas. In fact, the later decades of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century were times of tremendous transformation in Western cities. The effects of the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the consequences in the US of the major process of industrialisation after the Civil War, transformed the economic and demographic equation between rural areas and new urban zones.

According to Michel Foucault (2008), the concentration of people in the new industrialised cities, and the necessity to discipline them towards accepting the hard work while diminishing their capacity to rebel, forced the production of a new set of government strategies. The French philosopher called it a new *governmentality* understood as a set of governance practices that mobilise state policies, aiming simultaneously the *discipline* of individual bodies and the regulation of the masses taken as a 'living collective body' or a "species body" (Foucault, 2008, p. 138). With this in mind, specific policies were developed to regulate the general level of health in order to produce an improvement in quality of life so as to maintain a controlled and pacified working class.

This *governmentality* gave birth, according to Foucault, to "an era of biopower" (2008, p. 140), i.e. the formulation of government policies aimed at offering an "additional element in life" (bios) through urban, sanitary, and disciplinary interventions. Thus, the *biopolitics* could be understood in terms of producing healthy bodies, which were "useful and docile" (Foucault, 2008, p. 141), while controlling their oppositional political potential.

The biopolitical attention devoted both to collective and to individual health constitutes one of the dimensions of the exercise of political power. The other one is the traditional use of the coercive power in order to enforce the law and to maintain internal political and social *status quo*. In other words, following Foucault's analyses, political power is not just a form of physical strength held by someone or some group entrenched in the state apparatus and used solely to oppress or abuse, such as tyrants and dictators do. Quite the contrary, political power also works positively taking care of people's life and health in order to generate a useful and docile citizenry.

Therefore, the drug prohibition policy was conceived as part of a broad biopolitical strategy that combined interventions on individual and collective health with the enlargement of criminal categories represented by drug dealers and users. This enlargement allowed the state's repressive apparatus to persecute, imprison and, in the extreme, to eliminate people belonging to the social groups already traditionally targeted by security policies, namely the impoverished urban population, immigrants, and ethnic minorities. Thus, the 'drug problem' is a relatively recent chapter of the "biopower era": a chapter that articulated a new 'public and individual health problem' as and with a renewed 'public security problem'.

However, this new 'problem' was not born as an isolated 'national' question. Drug prohibition was instead established via a double-level game shaped by the production of national laws that were influenced by and at the same time influencers of international treaties. The 1920's and 1930's conferences hosted by the Opium Control Board of the League of Nations determined the internationalisation of the US criminal pattern with huge influence exerted by the American delegate Harry Anslinger (McAllister, 2000). Despite these early movements, the international regime settled itself only after the publication of the UN Convention on Narcotic Drugs, in 1961, establishing prohibitionism as a global framework for combating psychoactive drugs (Herschinger, 2011).

Thus, from the beginning, the issue of the control and criminalisation of drugs was an international one. This ‘international pattern’ was also verifiable by observing the increasing movement of international illegal drugs organisations that started to act in what was becoming an increasingly profitable market. The more complex the global regime of control, the more widespread the consumption of drugs became, especially in the central economies of Europe and North America (Bergen-Cico, 2012). During the 1960’s, the rise in interest for psychoactive drugs such as marijuana and the so-called psychedelic drugs (LSD and mescaline for example) formed part of the general rebellion against the ‘American way of life’ represented by the youth practices known as the counter-cultural movement (Escobedo, 1998). This crucial moment in US political and social life resulted in a conservative reaction symbolised by the election of the Republican Richard Nixon in 1967.

One of the main platforms of Nixon’s government was the ‘America’s moral recovering’ which included the fight against illegal drugs. According to Paley (2014, p. 40) “the war on drugs kicked off on the heels of 1968, when world-wide protest and students movements shook the world, from Mexico City to San Francisco”. It came, suggests the author, “at a critical moment of the United States war in Vietnam (by the fall of 1971, half of all the US soldiers in Vietnam had tried heroin, and two were dying of overdoses each month), and at a time when youth were experimenting with legal and illegal drugs”.

It was in this context that, in 1971, President Nixon proclaimed that “drugs” were the “number one enemy” of the US and that combating them required declaring a “total war on drugs” (Nixon, 1971). This *war* would have both domestic targets – consumers and traffickers – as well as external ones: the countries classified as the producers of illegal drugs and their organisations. This ‘enemy’ identified by the ‘war on drugs’ discourse simultaneously reinforced the traditional construction of the drug dealer and drug user as types of ‘internal enemies’ while identifying another kind of ‘danger’ (the narcotrafficking organisations) operating from abroad. This division between ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ is, however, artificial and ignores the more complex dynamic of global drugs production and trafficking (Passetti, 1991). Nevertheless, this strategy allowed the US to point to ‘external sources’ of the problem, triggering a national security oriented approach to the issue (Rodrigues, 2015; Carpenter, 2015). Following Buzan, Wæver and De Jaap (1998, p. 24), it is possible to identify the Nixon declaration as a starting point for the securitisation of drug trafficking, because it considered the production, trade and use of illegal drugs as “an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure”.

Because of the declared war on drugs, the US reformed its repressive apparatus (creating the Drug Enforcement Administration, in 1973) and initiated anti-drug operations in the Caribbean and Mexico in an attempt to intercept the international flows of illegal drugs (mainly cocaine, heroin and marijuana). At the end of the 1970’s, with the growth of cocaine trafficking, the US focussed its initiatives on the Andean countries (Bolivia, Peru and Colombia), because of the concentration in that region of the main producers and international traffickers of coca leaf and cocaine. Since that time, the US has defended

the argument that successfully combating drug trafficking requires using military and highly armed and trained police forces from within the 'producing countries' (Santana, 2004). For this reason, the US has invested in the training and education of special military groups, first in Mexico and later in the Andean countries (Hargraves, 1992).

In the early 1980s, the emphasis on the *militarisation* of the war on drugs was underscored when the US identified the association between leftist guerrillas – the FARC in Colombia and the Shining Path in Peru – and cocaine trafficking (Labrousse, 2010). This phenomenon was called narcoguerrilla or narcoterrorism and served as additional justification for the US insistence on the need for military action to combat drug trafficking and for the Andean governments to adopt emergency laws and repressive measures, which would in fact result in the widespread increase of violence, without diminishing the supply of cocaine (Labrousse, 2010; Rodrigues, 2006). During the 1980s, the US increased its presence in Latin America to combat drug trafficking. Hundreds of 'military advisors' were sent to the region, some operations even involving US military participation, especially in Bolivia and Peru (Dale Scott & Marshall, 1998; Marcy, 2010). The Ronald Reagan administration strengthened the war on drugs by highlighting the drug trade as a threat not only to the US, but also to the political and social stability of Latin America. In 1986, Reagan sanctioned the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD-221) named "Drugs and National Security" in which he reinforced the Nixonian 'war on drugs' discourse by identifying "narcoterrorism" as a "new threat" for Latin American countries: in Reagan's evaluation, the communist guerrillas had converted themselves into narcotrafficking groups associated to other criminal gangs.

This declaration indicated a movement from the traditional threat of the Cold War era to another 'danger' represented by drug trafficking. Álvarez Gómez (2011) and Marcy (2010) point out, however, that the involvement of the military in fighting drug trafficking began even earlier when, in 1982, the *Posse Comitatus Act*, the 1878 law prohibiting the employment of armed forces in law enforcement operations on US soil, was modified. Since then, the US military has received extra attributions in support of anti-drug police and the operations of agencies such as the DEA. Due to these policy shifts, drug trafficking and illegal drugs took on another dimension: that of a regional security issue. Confirming this trend, the next president, George H. W. Bush, twice met with Latin American presidents to discuss the coordinated fight against drug trafficking on the continent. The first conference took place in Cartagena, Colombia in 1990, and the second one, in San Antonio, Texas, in 1992. The original US proposal involved creating and coordinating a multinational military. However both governments and public opinion in Latin America disapproved this idea, which resulted in a change of tone by US authorities.

In San Antonio, there was no further talk of a multinational military, but rather a re-affirmation, and general acceptance, of the need to combat drug trafficking. This commitment was grounded in the idea of 'shared responsibility' of all countries in waging a 'war on drugs', an idea that was developed by the Clinton administration. This principle of shared responsibility reflected the decisions made at the United Nations Vienna Conference on Drugs, in 1988, which brought the prohibitionist regime established in

1961 up to date. The Conference addressed new issues, such as money laundering, but continued to emphasise the use of the military and police to combat drug users and drug trafficking. Furthermore, the report produced at the Conference held that drug trafficking was a threat to international stability, a finding that went one step further than the conceptualisations put forward at previous conferences. After Vienna, drug trafficking has been considered not only a threat to various national securities (taken in isolation), but a major global menace with transnational connections and multiple articulations to several other threats such as terrorism, arms contraband, civil wars and ethnic conflicts (Herschinger, 2011; Rodrigues, 2012a).

In the 1990's, the Clinton administration also renewed an additional form of diplomatic and economic pressure, the *Certification*, a report published annually by the US Congress that certifies whether a given country has been or not an ally in the 'war on drugs'. Since then, a country that fails to be certified can suffer cuts in US military and financial aid, as well as trade barriers with the US. Despite the US military and diplomatic pressure, the wide acceptance of the 'war on drugs' by Latin American and Caribbean countries was not merely the effect of coercion. Each country has its own way of incorporating the prohibitionist model while taking into account its internal dynamics, conflicts, social values and traditions regarding the use of drugs.

In the Andean countries, for instance, the connection made between drug trafficking and leftist guerrillas gave governments support and moral authority to wage domestic wars. In other words, the support for the 'war on drugs' by Latin American countries has not been merely to succumb to the US agenda for hemispheric security. It means instead that the US security agenda intersected with the domestic goals of those countries that supported the prohibitionist regime in the continent. The case of Colombia sheds light on this relationship. The internal Colombian conflict has existed since the 1960s, involving leftist guerrillas, the state and rightwing paramilitary groups. The emergence of drug trafficking groups at the end of the 1970's has further complicated the situation in Colombia (Pécault, 2010). For the Colombian and the US governments, guerrillas and paramilitaries are involved, to some extent, with international drug trafficking. In light of this, both countries engaged in security plans in the 1980's and 1990's leading to the formulation of the most ambitious of them, the Plan Colombia, in 1999 (Herz, 2006).

The Plan Colombia was put in force in 2000 aiming to combat drug trafficking in the country. However, it was from its inception unable to identify with any degree of certainty if its targets were the drug cartels or the guerrillas. After the terrorist attacks in September 2001, and the resulting declaration of the 'war on terror' by the US, this problem was overcome since both the FARC and paramilitaries were classified as terrorist groups (Labrousse, 2005; Rodrigues, 2006). Since 2001, the FARC – the enemy most targeted by the Colombian government – have suffered serious defeats and are vulnerable, in contrast with their standing a decade ago (Torres del Río, 2010). One could thus assert that Colombia's adhesion to the US security agenda – regarding drugs and terrorism – linked its civil war to the global war on terror, strengthening the Colombian government's dominion over its territory while submitting Bogota to the US general security

logic. Plan Colombia also had an effect on the Colombian 'drug cartels' creating room for groups from other countries to flourish, such as the Mexicans.

It is possible that the rise of the Mexican drug trafficking business, during the 2000's is somehow linked to the effects of Plan Colombia on Colombian groups (Benítez Manaut, 2010). For authors like Rodríguez Luna (2010) this frontal combat of the Colombian cartels may have led to the transfer of logistical capacities, economic and political power to the Mexican cartels. In this manner, Mexican groups would, it is suggested, have gained control over the cocaine and heroin routes from the Caribbean and Central America to the United States. The worsening situation in Mexico, however, led the government to opt for the same Colombian recipe: toughening and militarising the fight against drug trafficking (Freeman & Sierra, 2005; Gutiérrez, 2007). However, the war on drugs does not have the same characteristics all over the continent. Each country has its own dynamics and history. Analysing the Brazilian case is an interesting way to comprehend the particularities that reveal the changing dynamics of drug trafficking in the Latin American region.

Brazil: Narcos, Favelas, and Pacification

Brazil was considered during the 1980s as a key "cocaine export corridor," (Labrousse & Depirou, 1988) carrying produce to the main consumer centres in the US and Western Europe. Since the end of the 1990s, the country is, however, also classified as both a major consumer and producer of illegal drugs, besides being an important site for money laundering (Farer, 2003; Glenny, 2008). The latest United Nations World Drug Report (2014) affirms that Brazil has reached the second place in cocaine consumption in the world following the United States.

Despite the fact that drug use is spread throughout social groups, drug trafficking (and the use of specific drugs such as crack) is commonly associated with the poor and slum (favela) dwellers, and is linked to the illegal narcotrafficking organisations based in these same favelas and ghettos. Although the situation regarding production, trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs in Brazil does not fit this simple framework, the link between drug trafficking and poverty has been used as a justification for the implementation of public security programmes that focus on prohibition and repression as a means to address the drug problem. Drug trafficking became an important issue for public opinion during the 1980s when rates of income concentration were extremely high and the growth of urban poverty increased. These social and economic drivers occurred in a context framed by the demobilisation of civil society movements that had organized the political and social demands of impoverished people during the last years of the dictatorship (1964-1985). Moreover, this scenario further coincided with the rising of the international cocaine economy that established its influence and connections in Brazil, especially in the major cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Some of these cocaine-related groups would come to benefit from organisational skills of former bank robbers and kidnappers previously arrested during the military rule. In maximum-security prisons, those convicted on drug charges could meet and learn from

arrested leftist militants who fought against the military dictatorship. The ‘political prisoners’ knew how to organise clandestine cells and how to plan operations such as bank assaults and kidnappings in a more sophisticated manner, and the so-called ‘regular prisoners’ profited from that knowledge. When the dictatorship relaxed its repressive policies, at the end of the 1970s, the former ‘regular prisoners’, once free, regrouped, full of fresh knowledge, to restart their drug-related activities. The first and most important of these new groups was the *Comando Vermelho* (‘Red Commando’) which took its name from the connection with the “reds” (communists) in the Ilha Grande political prison facility. Yet, it did not take long to see that the Comando Vermelho’s operations were not the spread of communism: the emergent business was drug trafficking.

During the 1980’s the Comando Vermelho established units (or “cells”) in many of Rio’s favelas from where they operated their business. The huge amount of money produced by the illegal drug business, combined with the internal rivalries of the Comando, led to partitions and new factions such as the *Terceiro Comando* (‘Third Commando’). The disputes for territories became violent. This occurred, according to Krauthausen and Sarmiento (1990), because the territorial base is crucial for an illegal group to keep up its activities. In Rio de Janeiro, many of the main favelas occupied by the Commandos surrounded middle and upper class neighbourhoods. Due to that, the wars for territory and the constant confrontations between the police and drug traffickers generated a feeling of increasing unsafeness amongst an influential part of the citizenry.

Thus, the government’s policies for public security became commensurately harder. The Military Police, under the State Governor’s authority, started receiving special training and weaponry that included techniques of urban combat, armoured vehicles, lifejackets and FAL 7.62mm rifles. During the 1990s, the Brazilian Army was required on certain occasions to occupy strategic areas of the city and to isolate some favelas. In 1992, the Army was called in to Rio during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (ECO-92) to guarantee the security of the diplomatic delegates and groups of civil society. In 1994, the state government once again requested federal support but now to ‘fight criminality’, responding to popular calls for a massive intervention to combat drug trafficking and other crimes in Rio (Coimbra, 2001). The so-called “Operation Rio” was limited to some “violent incursions into poor territories” (Barreira and Botelho, 2013, p. 118), but established a sort of landmark for future operations in the city.

The employment of the military in domestic affairs is a controversial issue in Brazil. The new democratic constitution, promulgated in 1988, defines in its Article 144 that the Armed Forces could be requested by the legitimate powers to defend the institutions or to act within national borders in cases of extreme urgency. However, the political climate in which this article was drafted was tense. Political forces that had opposed the dictatorship, wanted to separate the state-level Military Police from the federal-level Army central command. The connection between them was a heritage of the prior authoritarian rule which had fought all political opposition to its regime. During the years of the dictatorship, the Armed Forces Commander in Brasilia held direct control over the states’ Military Police. Conservative political forces, counting among them both civilian

and military elements, wanted to keep things that way in the new constitution. The solution reached was a third way formula: the Military Police (MP) would remain 'militarised' in terms of hierarchy and doctrine, and would remain as the Army's 'back up force' in case of war or social upheaval, but the ordinary command would be left in the hands of the democratically elected State governors (Hunter, 2007).

Perhaps because this polemic, the Article 144 did not detailed how this 'power to guarantee law and order' would be enforced. There were some attempts to do it during the Cardoso administration, in the 1990s, but it was only in August 2010 that President Lula da Silva signed a law on this issue (LC 136/2010). In November 2010, based on this law, the State Governor of Rio de Janeiro requested federal intervention to support Rio's Military Police in the invasion and occupation of a favela know as Vila Cruzeiro. The Federal government agreed and offered marines' transportation tanks to take soldiers of the Military Police's special forces branch BOPE (Battalion of Special Operations) into the favela. Troops of Federal Police and the Federal Highway Patrols also helped controlling the road-based accesses to the favela. The first incursion was hailed as a huge success by the press and by expressive portions of civil society. Due to that, the state administration requested the extension of the federal support to go forward in the occupation of connected favelas.

Once again, the Federal government agreed, and the Ministry of Defence prepared the 'Pacification Force' composed by Army troops. The first battalion entered the Complexo do Alemão (a set of connected favelas) in December 2010 and established a perimeter of occupation. The plan was to combat drug gangs, taking their positions and weapons. Then, the area would be gradually occupied by Military Police. The Army's 'Operation Archangel' lasted until July 2012, when the Military Police officially took control of the Alemão and Penha 'Complexos'. It is important to note that part of the troops engaged in Operation Archangel had had previous experience serving as peacekeepers ('blue helmets') in the United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti (MINUSTAH) (Rodrigues & Brancoli, 2012). As such, these troops had been exposed to "training modules and tactics and strategies specific to urban warfare (...) and high in-combat interaction with local population" (Kenkel, 2010, p. 133).

The relationship between the specific training for MINUSTAH and its ulterior use in Brazilian favelas is a significant question worth analysing in order to understand the degrees of intentionality and the possible transformations of the Army's domestic affairs after its experience in Haiti (see, for example, Rodrigues, 2012). For the moment, it is enough to say that the Pacification Force in the Alemão and Penha 'Complexos' was the longest urban military occupation in Brazilian history (Barreira e Botelho, 2013; Lima, 2012). Its formula was repeated in May 2014 when another similar Pacification Force occupied the Complexo da Maré, set of favelas which lie side-by-side the International Airport and the 'Linha Vermelha' ('Red Line'), one of the main motorway entrances to Rio de Janeiro. That happened one month before the beginning of the FIFA World Cup and two years before the Rio Olympic Games. Until the conclusion of this article, the second Pacification Force was still occupying the Complexo da Maré.

The Pacification Force experience is not only related to the previous period of brief Army intervention in Rio's favelas during the 1990s. More than that, it is connected to a broader public security programme created and enforced by the State Government, called the Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP), or Pacifying Police Units. The UPP Programme is an ambitious attempt to occupy favelas that have been under the control of illegal groups for decades. The project has three phases. The first is *invasion*, when the BOPE special force invades a favela, fighting the local gangs. Then, in a second moment, comes *occupation*, when the Military Police troops take charge of the situation establishing bunkers and 'strong-points' in strategic sites of the invaded favela. Thirdly, when the gangs' activities are supposed to have ceased, the favela is considered 'pacified'. That is the phase in which traditional state public services non-existent within the favela structures (such as public medical care, schools, postal services) are expected to arrive.

Between 2008 and 2015, the State Government introduced UPP's in 38 favelas of different size and population. Almost all of them are situated in a belt that surrounds the roadway entrance of Rio, the downtown area (the financial heart of the city), and the South Zone, Rio's touristic area with its landscapes and neighbourhoods of worldwide renown (Klinguelfus, 2012). Since its implementation, the UPP Programme has been accused of establishing a type of 'space of exception' where the Military Police, although allegedly trained to ensure human rights protection and human security, has instead been imposing a martial law governance style based on repression and authoritarianism (Serra and Zaccone, 2012).

These considerations aside, the UPP Programme has allowed for the emergence of a more complex set of control and governance tactics and practices that cannot be said to be focussed exclusively on repression. The so-called 'pacified favelas' have received a considerable amount of private investment (shops, hotels, restaurants, discos, banks) along with the presence of humanitarian and relief services run by business', foundations, churches, national and foreign NGOs in association with local organisations (Cabeleira, 2013). Nevertheless, despite these positive aspects, the illegal activities supposedly neutralised are reported to be still operating, but now with a low profile pattern and with a new type of illegal agreements and renewed connections with public authorities, security agents and private actors. The UPP and the Pacification Force operate beyond mere repression, putting in movement a biopolitical approach of governance.

The term 'Pacification' itself is not new to Brazilian history. The expression was used to describe the 'conquest' – which is to say the enslavement, forcible baptism or simple slaughter – of native peoples during colonial times (centuries XVI to XIX). After Brazil's independence from Portugal, in 1822, the term became attached to the Brazilian Army *ethos*. Initially, it was linked to the military victories of the Imperial central power based in Rio de Janeiro against regional rebel insurgencies. The main leader of the Brazilian Army during these military campaigns was the Duke of Caxias, nicknamed "The Pacificator". Caxias became a national hero and the patron of the Brazilian Army. Since the 1950s, as a tribute to him, one of the most distinguished medals offered by the Army was named precisely "The Pacificator Medal" (Gomes, 2014).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the word ‘pacification’ was evoked once more to describe the process of ‘integration’ of native people from the Amazon forest by a military mission that connected isolated regions through the installation of telegraph lines and the establishment of new villages. The commander of this operation, Marshall Cândido Rondon, had a paternalistic approach to the native Brazilians believing that the State – and the Army in particular – had the duty to protect and ‘civilise’ supposedly primitive peoples (Diacon, 2006). Rondon was the creator and first director of the Service for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples (SIP), established in 1910, in the hope of creating optimal conditions for the natives’ ‘acculturation’.

Thus, it can be said that the general idea of ‘pacification’ is firmly intertwined with the Army’s own vision of itself and its actions as an institution. The use of a term so heavy with historical and military connotations is a point worth analysing when it returns nowadays with regard to the occupations of favelas and the ‘war’ against drug gangs.

The Armed Forces’ self-assumed role as ‘civilization keeper’ in Brazil is illustrated by the long and hard experience of military rule in which the Army – as occurred in many other Latin American countries – took it upon itself to arrest, torture and kill fellow citizens branded criminals and ‘internal enemies’. Because of that, the presence of the Army in long-term favela occupation missions is a delicate issue quite regardless of all the efforts by the Federal administration and the Army commanders themselves to stress the legality and the exceptionalism of these operations. The simple fact of the matter is that drug dealers are Brazilians and the activities of the Pacification Forces opened once again the possibility of seeing the Armed Forces arresting, controlling or even killing Brazilians citizens.

The high level of social sensitivity to issues of public security, conjoined with generalised public opinion of the Military Police’s corruption and ineffectiveness, could lead to further pressure over the Army to involve itself in the securitisation of and from urban areas and favelas. In turn, this perceived pressure could seduce both politicians (due to the electoral potential of this question) and part of the Military (because of the illusion of a renewed social relevance for the Army – that would include, for instance, an increased budget and equipment provisions) to yet again involve the latter in domestic issues. For this reason, the debate surrounding the use of the Military in public security operations goes straight to the heart of a far broader discussion on the role of the Military within the Brazilian democratic regime.

Final Remarks: Militarisation beyond the Military

The presence of the military in the ‘war on drugs’ in Brazil is small if compared to other Latin American countries. Brazil has not received, since the 1980s, the same US pressure to reform its military apparatus in order to fight drug ‘cartels’, as have Colombia, Mexico, Bolivia and Peru (Kirchner, 1992; Marcy, 2010). Actual military engagement has also occurred in supportive missions on national borders, such as the Ágata Operations in collaboration with the Federal Police (since 2011), or the heading of projects such as the System of Amazon Surveillance (SIVAM) – a system of integrated satellites, radars and airplanes – that include, amongst other goals, the fight against

transterritorial illicit drug flows. In 2004, President Lula da Silva signed a law authorising the destruction of suspicious aircraft, but it has to date never been used (Feitosa & Pinheiro, 2012). In fact, the most impressive military mobilisation to combat drug trafficking was the military ‘pacification’ operation described in the last section. One could, thus, conclude that there is not a process of militarisation occurring concomitant to the Brazilian ‘war on drugs’. Authors such as Zaverucha (2000) affirm that a militarisation of public security occurs in one of two cases: when it involves the use of the military in activities traditionally undertaken by regular police forces like patrolling streets, controlling urban areas, and arresting criminal suspects; or when security agencies are under the command of military officers. Others describe this process less restrictively, stating that militarisation cannot be reduced to the mere presence of military personnel in public security procedures, but is instead a general policy orientation based on specific goals, tactics, and on the use of certain types of equipment within domestic security.

Graham (2010), for instance, views militarisation as a set of tactics and technologies taken from the military environment – or originally developed for military purposes – that are subsequently adapted for the control, repression, and surveillance of civilians in no-war zones in no-war times. He uses the concept of “urban militarism” to describe the generalised use in cities all around the world of GPS devices, video cameras, body movement sensors, biometric codes, surveillance drones, electric fences, and so forth. These devices have been in use not only by police forces, but also by private security contractors that copy and reproduce military techniques, technologies and behaviours.

In this context, the equipment, protocols, procedures and tactics of police forces, private security contractors and the military have been increasingly merging. The process of ‘policialisation of the military’ moves side-by-side with the ‘militarisation of the police’, a widespread phenomenon observed all over the world. Balko (2013), for instance, studies the increasing militarisation of the police forces in the US since the 1960’s, meanwhile Amar (2013) analyses the role of the military in internal affairs in cities like Rio de Janeiro and Cairo.

Moreover and beyond these considerations, the changing character of contemporary conflicts reinforces this tendency of fusion between police and military. We live, as stated Frédéric Gros (2010), in a time when traditional inter-state warfare has been surpassed by ‘states of violence’: an irregular and mutable set of conflicts that engage non-state actors as well as state forces, the latter being readapted to fight conflicts that cross political borders, and that have no clear jurisdiction, territoriality or temporal limitation. In this sense, drug trafficking could be defined as a transterritorial war that manifests itself in transnational flows and produces different and superimposed degrees of ‘states of violence’. The global ‘war on drugs’ engages internal security forces, but also activates the military both due to US external pressure and domestic responses to respective internal security crises.

Drug trafficking is, thus, an activity that crosses borders and as such can be defined, regardless of one’s starting point, as an enterprise originating in states external to

one's own. However, drug cartels are not Armed Forces from other states. Rather, they are private groups operating a transterritorial business, without traditional political goals. Nevertheless, drug trafficking has been understood since its inception as both a national and international problem. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the production, trade and use of illegal drugs began to be considered a public security issue. Throughout the century, it was securitised as a national, regional and global problem.

By viewing drug trafficking as not only a threat to public security, but also to national security, the US and certain Latin American countries, including in Brazil, defend the use of the Armed Forces in their fight. When the 'war on drugs' and drug trafficking are viewed through the prism of global security it includes them in the field of study of "new international conflicts" or "new wars" (Kaldor, 2006; Kan, 2009), characterised by transterritorial private groups that use combat modes which blur the distinction between internal and external *environments of security*.

From a political perspective, the impact of military involvement in combating drug trafficking or "organised crime" is a substantial one. Many countries in Latin America have recently emerged from long periods of dictatorship led by military governments. In these regimes, violent repression was justified by the necessity to fight political opponents deemed to be subversive "internal enemies". Defining these opponents as "enemies" had the impact of dehumanising them, treating them as an "Other", an element that does not belong to society and that contaminates it (Herschinger, 2011). This political and moral discourse is the foundation on which societies authorise or accept persecution, arrest, torture and murder (Foucault, 2003). In the case of dictatorships and totalitarian regimes, this "Other" is not a foreigner but instead a fellow citizen. In democratic regimes, it is the criminal justice system, not the Army, that is responsible for seeking, selecting, arresting and, in some cases, executing people from some social groups and dedicated to certain types of activities that contravene the law.

In Brazil's military dictatorship, the political opposition was identified as the "internal enemy". In democratic Brazil, the 'criminals' are the 'Other' to be fought; and chief amongst them, the 'drug dealer'. The Military Police and its special battalion BOPE adopt a military form of conduct when they invade favelas with heavy weaponry and shoot those seen as potential opponents or hostiles (Alves & Evanson, 2014). It is, therefore, not necessary to have the Army in the favelas to see that public security policies in Brazil, especially in major cities like Rio, have led to a certain level of militarisation. Nevertheless, despite this ongoing militarisation, Brazil still has not reached the level of other Latin American nations. As such, the possibility of a new alignment of Brazilian security policies, both at state and federal levels, to the Latin American trend of employing the military in the 'war on drugs' should ring analytical and political alarm bells. The historical effects in terms of violence and persistence of security problems in countries such as Mexico and Colombia ought to serve as warning.

In times when Brazil simultaneously occupies a position of an illegal drugs corridor to Europe, money laundering plaza, production hub and rising consumption market for illegal substances, it is of the utmost relevance to review the effectiveness of historical

responses. Both historical and current political decisions in Brazil, along with the cases of other Latin American countries, show that this form of illegal activity has been traditionally fought with militarised strategies. From an analytical standpoint one may thus say that militarisation – comprising both militarised practices and the deployment of the Military itself – as a strategy against drug trafficking has historically failed. On the upside, such a conclusion sheds light upon and renews critical questioning of the twenty-first century everyday war waged as a consequence of ideas structured by the prohibitionist approach. Being fought both close to national borders and far from them, these overlapping, never-ending battles reveal that the expression ‘war on drugs’ is hardly figurative. Meanwhile, although civil society in Brazil – as well as in most Latin American countries – finds itself constantly frightened and desperately playing all its cards in order to achieve security, it nonetheless simultaneously provides active support – or silent consent to – the continuing of this war, especially since its victimisation is highly selective, and usually of those with little voice within said societies. In the era of the ‘war on terror’, a form of logic expanded from and yet entirely similar to that of the ‘war of drugs’, this story is perhaps rather worth telling.

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