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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The pacification model in Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro as a prefiguration of Bolsonarismo? Reflections on the far-right turn and the role of military-religious actors in security governance in Brazil

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Abstract
While much critical scholarship has pointed out that liberal peacebuilding can contribute to consolidating authoritarianism in host countries, little is known about the political effects in the deployer country. This article analyses the relationship between foreign and domestic peace processes and far-right forces in Brazil. We ask if Brazil's leadership role in the United Nations' Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (2004–17) and its own domestic pacification efforts in Rio de Janeiro with the Pacifying Police Units (2008–14) contributed to the strengthening of the far right in Brazil. Relying on a combination of literature review, document analysis, and fieldwork interviews, we argue that Brazil's engagement in liberal peacebuilding processes strengthened the far right in Brazil in two important ways. The first was through a military capture of politics, as a large portion of the military elite that participated in both interventions enabled the military to take a more prominent role in Brazil's domestic politics. Second, Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro became crucial sites for experimentation with a range of policy ideas that Bolsonaro later capitalised on, namely, a punitive turn in security policies and the mobilisation of conservative Evangelical actors and morals to support and justify the military occupation.

Introduction

The rise of the far right in Brazil, under the government of Jair M. Bolsonaro (2019–22), represented a clear-cut break with the country's long-standing commitment and contribution to the International Liberal Order (ILO). Bolsonaro's foreign policy committed not only to an ideological alignment with kindred far-right and authoritarian governments around the world but also produced several withdrawals in terms of Brazil's participation in multilateral mechanisms and peace processes both at the global and regional levels.[1] Brazil's contestation of ILO involved a combination of conspiracy theories about globalism, home-grown anti-communist sentiments, and

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[1]Dawisson B. Lopes, Thales Carvalho, and Vinicius Santos, 'Did the far right breed a new variety of foreign policy? The case of Bolsonaro's "more-bark-than-bite" Brazil', *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2:4 (2022), p. ksac078; Daniel Buarque, 'Upside-down diplomacy: Foreign perceptions about Bolsonaro's intentions and initial transformations of Brazil's foreign policy and status', *Third World Quarterly*, 43:10 (2022), pp. 2450–66.

religious nationalism.[2] For the first time in the democratic period, a religious agenda stemming from conservative Catholic and Evangelical groups was channelled into foreign policy decision-making, which resulted in the government frequently chastising the human rights agenda.[3] This was in stark contrast with the previous cycle of centre-left governments (2003–16), which were internationally hailed for Brazil's leadership in liberal peacebuilding projects, especially in the case of the United Nations' (UN's) Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (2004–17).

This article seeks to analyse the relationship between foreign and domestic peace processes and far-right forces in Brazil. However, rather than focusing on the ways in which Bolsonaro's government aligned with and contributed to counter-peace dynamics and alliances, we shift attention to a less intuitive relationship: did Brazil's participation in recent peace operations contribute to the emergence and mainstreaming of the far right in the country? Underpinning this framing of the problem is the recognition by critical peace scholars that the International Peace Architecture (IPA) has been implicated in the rise of counter-peace due to its 'rejection of the expanded political claims of the Global South' with a narrow focus on basic human rights and limited democratisation.[4] Other studies have also suggested that liberal peacebuilding can contribute to the consolidation of authoritarianism in host countries,[5] and that while security sector reforms may strengthen the trust and power of state security forces, this can be divorced from the parallel development of accountability mechanisms.[6] While most of this scholarship focuses on conflict-ridden, underdeveloped countries, we follow a small but growing body of scholarship that argues that liberal peacebuilding can also enable authoritarianism and de-democratisation in the deployer country.[7]

Brazil offers an interesting case in point, as the main elements of the far-right political agenda, namely militarism, Christian moralism, and neoliberalism,[8] had been previously bundled as orienting principles of pacification efforts at home and abroad. This was the case in pacification operations led by the military in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* from 2008–14, and concurrently in the country's leadership in Port-au-Prince under MINUSTAH. We follow the suggestion of some scholars who claim that the Port-Au-Prince-Rio connection prefigured Bolsonarismo[9] and seek

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[2]Guilherme S. P. Casarões and Deborah B. L. Farias, 'Brazilian foreign policy under Jair Bolsonaro: Far-right populism and the rejection of the liberal international order', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 35:5 (2021), pp. 741–61.

[3]Ricardo Barbosa and Guilherme S. P. Casarões, 'Statecraft under God: Radical right populism meets Christian Nationalism in Bolsonaro's Brazil', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 50:3 (2022), pp. 669–99; Feliciano de S. Guimarães, Andre F. Miquelasi, Gustavo J. F. Alves, Irma de Oliveira e Silva and Karina S. Calandrin, 'The evangelical foreign policy model: Jair Bolsonaro and evangelicals in Brazil', *Third World Quarterly*, 44:6 (2023), pp. 1324–44.

[4]Sandra Pogodda, Oliver P. Richmond, and Gëzim Visoka, 'Counter-peace: From isolated blockages in peace processes to systemic patterns', *Review of International Studies*, 49:3 (2022), pp. 491–512 (p. 512).

[5]Sandra von Billerbeck and Oisín Tansey, 'Enabling autocracy? Peacebuilding and post-conflict authoritarianism in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *European Journal of International Relations*, 25:3 (2019), pp. 698–722; Adam Day, Sarah von Billerbeck, Oisin Tansey, Ayham Al Maleh, *Peacebuilding and Authoritarianism: The Unintended Consequences of UN Engagement in Post-Conflict Settings* (New York: United Nations University, 2021).

[6]Lou Pingeot, 'Policing, security sector reform and the rule of law: More state, more security?', *International Peacekeeping*, 30:1 (2023), pp. 53–61.

[7]Phillip Cunliffe, 'From peacekeepers to praetorians: How participating in peacekeeping operations may subvert democracy', *International Relations*, 32:2 (2018), pp. 218–39; Kai K. Kenkel, 'Stability abroad, instability at home? Changing UN peace operations and civil–military relations in Global South troop contributing countries', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 42:2 (2021), pp. 225–40; Christoph Harig, 'What difference does it make? UN peacekeeping's impact on civil–military relations in troop-contributing countries', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 17:5 (2023), pp. 517–35; Cristoph Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn" in UN peacekeeping: Internal public security missions of Brazil's military', *International Peacekeeping*, 26:2 (2018), pp. 137–64.

[8]Jeffery R. Webber, 'A great little man: The shadow of Jair Bolsonaro', *Historical Materialism*, 28:1 (2020), pp. 3–49; Marina B. Lacerda, *O novo conservadorismo brasileiro: De Reagan a Bolsonaro*, 1st ed. (Porto Alegre: Zouk, 2019); Ronaldo de Almeida, 'Bolsonaro presidente: Conservadorismo, evangelismo e a Crise Brasileira', *Novos Estudos*, 38:1 (2019), pp. 185–213.

[9]Tomas Salem and Bjørn E. Bertelsen, 'Emergent police states: Racialized pacification and police moralism from Rio's favelas to Bolsonaro', *Conflict and Society*, 6:1 (2020), pp. 86–107; Gilberto M. A. Rodrigues and Tadeu M. Maciel, 'Pacificação à Brasileira? O paradigma de caxias e os militares no governo de Jair Bolsonaro', *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa*, 6:2 (2020), pp. 13–36.

to contribute to better understanding how to conceptualise this relationship, which remains under-explored in the literature.

We argue that Brazil's engagement in the pacification of Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro contributed to the process of strengthening the far right in Brazil in two important ways. The first was through a military (re-)capture of politics, as a large portion of the high-ranking military elite that participated in both interventions enabled the military to take a more prominent role in Brazil's domestic politics, which ultimately weighed in on the far-right turn. Second, Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro became crucial sites for experimentation with a range of policy ideas that Bolsonaro later capitalised on. On the one hand, the stringent and repressive approach utilised by the military in these operations set the backdrop for the advancement of punitive reforms within the domestic security apparatus – actions relied on traditional role conceptions and pre-existing operational experiences by the Brazilian military.[10] This was justified based on the need for efficiency and legal support in combating crime. On the other hand, the military had also embraced a range of sensibilities underlying the local turn in peace operations – such as human rights and community policing – and reappropriated them to enhance counter-insurgency tactics. The most striking manifestation of this was the mobilisation of a constellation of religious actors and morals to support and justify the military occupation in Rio de Janeiro. Via the military chaplaincy, Evangelical conservative ideology was activated as part of a wider project of order-building and violence regulation in marginalised urban areas in Brazil – a strategy that echoed Bolsonaro's subsequent instrumentalisation of Evangelicalism for both electoral gains and policy ideals.[11]

The first section of this article briefly analyses the rise of counter-peace dynamics in Brazil, focusing on the dismantling of pro-IPA initiatives after the end of the Workers' Party governments. The second section analyses the context and dynamics of the Brazilian military's involvement in peacekeeping operations in Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro, outlining the strategies deployed in the field of operations and their mutual points of connection. The third section unpacks how the military mobilised religious actors and networks via the military chaplaincy to advance counter-insurgent actions in Rio de Janeiro. The last section explores how the military was politically empowered in the aftermath of the militarised interventions in Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro, becoming a key actor in the authoritarian turn in security policies as well as a co-protagonist in the mainstreaming of the far right.

For this study, we rely on a combination of literature review, document analysis, and interviews conducted by Rodrigo during fieldwork for his doctoral research. The literature review is based on scholarship around Brazil's leadership in MINUSTAH, the armed intervention in Rio de Janeiro's urban favelas, and the role played by Evangelical actors in the field of security in recent years. Regarding document analysis, we focus on the Brazilian army's religious doctrine in terrestrial operations, published in 2018, which crystallised years of experience using the military chaplaincy as a counter-insurgency asset in urban warfare operations. Finally, we rely on interviews with two insiders with extensive experience in Rio's pacification operations: one is a former Evangelical military chaplain who worked for the army's military-religious project during the occupation, and the other is a researcher who worked many years for NGOs in the occupied territories and conducted fieldwork research with the high commands of the army. Both names have been pseudonymised.

The far right and the rise of counter-peace dynamics in Brazil

Bolsonarismo was part and parcel of an ongoing backlash against ILO with the global rise of the far right and growing geopolitical protagonism of illiberal regimes on the global stage.[12] Within IPA scholarship, this backlash has been identified as the emergence of counter-peace, defined as 'formal

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[10]Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[11]de Almeida, 'Bolsonaro presidente'.

[12]G. J. Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', *International Affairs*, 94:1 (2018), pp. 7–23; Owen Worth, *Morbid Symptoms: The Global Rise of the Far-Right* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

and informal structures and processes that resist and reshape the political order sought by peace processes'.[13] By exploiting the weaknesses and unintended consequences of liberal-peacebuilding, counter-peace forces have mobilised nationalism and geopolitics not only to counter norms and practices associated with IPA but also to pose a more systemic challenge to the international system itself.[14]

Since Luiz da Silva's (or Lula's) first terms (2003–10), efforts to contribute to the IPA multiplied as Brazil took a much more proactive approach in multilateral forums, engaging in coalition-building with other rising economies across the Global South to reform global governance structures, especially the UN Security Council.[15] Examples of this were high-level attempts at conflict mediation around Iran's nuclear deal in 2010; increased budget for demand-driven development cooperation projects with post-conflict countries such as Angola, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, and Timor-Leste; greater participation in peacekeeping operations, the country's leadership of the military command of MINUSTAH from 2004 to 2017; and, on the home front, the expansion of its own pacification operations in Rio de Janeiro's marginalised urban areas, with the Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras (Pacifying Police Units [UPPs]), created ahead of the World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016).[16]

Underpinning Lula's rationale for deploying the military in peace operations was a belief that it could strengthen civilian control over the armed forces, what the literature has called the 'diversionary peace hypothesis', the assumption that peacekeeping missions help professionalise the military and steer them away from politics.[17] However, efforts to contribute to IPA have developed in step with the maintenance and, to a certain extent, greater institutional autonomy of the armed forces. Despite mild institutional reforms, such as the strengthening of the Ministry of Defence with a civilian character, the military ultimately succeeded in reversing key decisions by civilian authorities.[18] Significant shifts in Brazil's foreign policy started being felt already during Michel Temer's interim office (2016–18), following the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Lula's successor, in 2016. The more reformist, middle-power ambitions on the international stage were sidelined in favour of geopolitical alignment with the United States and the adoption of a neoliberal economic agenda.[19] Under foreign minister José Serra, humanitarian assistance programmes were deprioritised,[20] and there were pushes to change Brazil's position regarding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict at the UN in favour of Israel, although this was met with domestic resistance.[21] On the domestic agenda, public security policies also went through a markedly authoritarian turn, especially with the Federal Intervention in Rio de Janeiro between February and December 2018, which placed the security

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[13]Oliver P. Richmond, Sandra Pogodda, and Gëzim Visoka, 'The international dynamics of counter-peace', *European Journal of International Relations*, 30:1 (2023), pp. 126–150 (p. 131).

[14]Pogodda, Richmond, and Visoka, 'Counter-peace'; Sandra Pogodda, Oliver P. Richmond, and Gëzim Visoka, *Failed Peacemaking: Counter-Peace and International Order* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

[15]Barbara Motta and David Junior, 'Brazilian foreign policy for the war in Ukraine: Changing non-alignment, counterfactual, and future perspectives', *Globalizations*, 19:1 (2023), pp. 1–14.

[16]Despite being firmly situated within IPA, these engagements were not without contradiction. As many critics have pointed out, Brazil's involvement in Haiti was, at best, problematic, and international cooperation projects often led to opening markets to Brazilian exports, such as the arms trade. See Reginaldo Nasser, João Finazzi, and Isabela Lamas, 'Entre Davos e Porto Alegre', in Gilberto Maringoni and Juliano Medeiros (eds), *Cinco mil dias: o Brasil na era do Lulismo*, 1st ed. (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2017), pp. 133–7; David A. Magalhães, 'A política brasileira de exportação de armas no contexto da revitalização da base industrial de defesa', PhD diss., Pontifical Catholic University de São Paulo (2016), p. 303.

[17]Harig, 'What difference do they make?'.

[18]Juliano Cortinhas and Marina Vitelli, 'Limitações das reformas para o controle civil sobre as forças armadas nos governos do PT (2003–2016)', *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa*, 7:2 (2020), pp. 187–216.

[19]Tatiana Berringer and Luana Forlini, 'Crise política e mudança na política externa no governo Temer: contradições no seio da burguesia interna brasileira', *Conjuntura Austral*, 9:48 (2018), pp. 5–19.

[20]Adriana Abdenur and Charles Call, 'A "Brazilian way"? Brazil's approach to peacebuilding', in Charles Call and C. Cedric de Coning (eds), *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding: Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 15–38.

[21]Tullo Vigevani and Karina Calandrin, 'Brazil's policy toward Israel and Palestine in Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer's administrations: Have there been any shifts?', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 62:1 (2019), pp. 1–25.

apparatus of the state government under military administration, stripping the democratic and humanitarian facade of previous pacification efforts.[22] On this occasion, Torquato Jardim, then minister of justice, equated the military intervention in Rio's urban slums as 'asymmetric warfare', wherein 'anyone can be the enemy, there is no uniform, you don't know what the arms are. You are always ready against everything and everybody.'[23] The Federal Intervention was preceded by a significant change in Brazilian legislation in October 2017, which posited that military personnel who committed crimes during peace operations or in domestic operations would be prosecuted by the military justice system, rather than in civilian courts.[24]

Bolsonaro's government radicalised this trajectory. Brazilian diplomacy has historically played a relevant role in peacebuilding debates and practices, especially in the areas of development coop-eration, international conflict mediation, and humanitarian assistance.[25] However, Bolsonaro's government deepened relations with the Israeli far right, promising to move the Brazilian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Although this was not carried out, his government opened a commer-cial office in Jerusalem after an official diplomatic visit in March 2019.[26] In the same month, the country opposed a series of resolutions at the UN's Human Rights Council condemning violations against Palestinians perpetrated by Israel.[27] At the end of 2020, the government decided to phase out its participation in the UN's Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where Brazil commanded its maritime force. This resulted in the lowest participation in peacekeeping operations in Brazil's history.[28] Ernesto Araújo, foreign minister between 2019 and 2021, was ideologically enthusiastic about this isolationist foreign policy: 'if this makes us an international pariah, then let us be this pariah.'[29]

Rather than deploying military troops in peace operations abroad, however, the military was politically deployed on the home front. Bolsonaro's government was the most militarised since the end of the civilian-military dictatorship (1964–85). In 2018, members of the armed forces held 2,765 posts in the federal government. Under Bolsonaro, this number rose to 6,175 in 2020, with the military occupying key areas in government.[30]

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[22] Ana C. Morellato and André F. dos Santos, 'Intervenção federal e a guerra contra os pobres na cidade do Rio de Janeiro', *Dilemas: Revista de Estudos de Conflito e Controle Social*, 13:3 (2020), pp. 711–36.

[23] Cited in Bruno P. Manso and Camila N. Dias, *A guerra: A ascensão do PCC e o mundo do crime no Brasil* (São Paulo: Todavia, 2020), p. 313.

[24] 'Sancionada a Lei que dá à Justiça Militar competência para julgar crimes dolosos cometidos por militares contra civis', *Superior Tribunal Militar* (10 October 2017), available at: {https://www.stm.jus.br/informacao/agencia-de-noticias/item/7901-sancionada-a-lei-que-da-a-justica-militar-da-uniao-competencia-para-julgar-crimes-dolosos-cometidos-por-militares-contra-civis}.

[25] Monica Hirst and Reginaldo Nasser, 'Brazil's involvement in peacekeeping operations: The new defence–security–foreign policy nexus' (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), September 2014), p. 9. available at: {https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184486/1f05a3ed4e305be65263b1dd53f1bd64.pdf}; Abdenur and Call, 'A "Brazilian way"?'.

[26] 'Após cogitar transferir embaixada, Bolsonaro anuncia escritório comercial em Jerusalém', *G1* (31 March 2019), avail-able at: {https://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2019/03/31/apos-cogitar-transferir-embaixada-bolsonaro-anuncia-escritorio-diplomatico-em-jerusalem.ghtml}.

[27] Thaís Chaves, 'Bolsonaro vota contra Palestinos na ONU e fere tradição diplomática', *Carta Capital* (22 March 2019), avail-able at: {https://www.cartacapital.com.br/mundo/bolsonaro-vota-contra-palestinos-na-onu-e-fere-tradicao-diplomatica/}.

[28] Marcelo Godoy, 'Com Bolsonaro, tropas brasileiras deixam as forças de paz da ONU após 21 anos', *Estadão* (30 November 2020), available at: {https://www.estadao.com.br/brasil/bolsonaro-e-os-militares/com-bolsonaro-tropas-brasileiras-deixam-as-forcas-de-paz-da-onu-apos-21-anos/}.

[29] Rafael Bitencourt and Matheus Schuch, 'Se falar em liberdade nos faz um pária internacional, que sejamos um pária', diz Ernesto Araújo', *Valor Econômico* (22 October 2020), available at: {https://valor.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/10/22/se-falar-em-liberdade-nos-faz-um-paria-internacional-que-sejamos-um-paria-diz-ernesto-araujo.ghtml}.

[30] 'Mais militares assumiram cargos no Executivo no governo Bolsonaro: Nosso Papo Reto', *JOTA* (10 June 2022), available at: {https://www.jota.info/jotinhas/mais-militares-assumiram-cargos-no-executivo-no-governo-bolsonaro-10062022}. This trend, however, precedes Bolsonaro's government. Considering only civilian posts, the presence of military personnel had tripled between 2013 and 2021. See Vinicius Valfre, 'Número de militares em cargos civis no Executivo triplica em menos de 10 anos', *Estadão* (31 May 2022), available at: {https://www.estadao.com.br/politica/presenca-de-militares-em-cargos-de-confianca-cresce-193-no-governo-bolsonaro/}.

However, the political reactivation of the military under Bolsonaro's government was a testament not only to vestiges of the military regime during the democratic period, but of a much older tradition of militarisation of political life that dates to the colonial period. Historically, Brazil's development as a dependent capitalist country has been inseparable from the construction of a centralising, militarised state anchored in structures of war, enslavement, and violence directed against marginalised populations, with the imperative to protect and reproduce a racialised, hierarchical, and authoritarian social order.[31] In the transition from Empire to Republic, the military constituted itself as a 'moderating force', periodically intervening in politics to uphold the dominant order when it was challenged either by revolts or attempts to democratise institutions and incorporate the popular sectors through redistributive social policies.[32] Militarism reached its highest expression during the military dictatorship, in which a far-right regime was sustained via a National Security Doctrine that utilised repression, torture, and political terror to neutralise working-class mobilisation.[33]

With the end of the military dictatorship, security policies saw a shift from discourse and practices based on fighting political subversives to targeting urban criminality and narcotics through an almost-exclusive attention to militarised police models.[34] However, the National Security Doctrine was re-adapted to policing, with techniques of political repression being transferred to the patrolling of everyday criminality by the military police.[35] Not only was the military not held accountable for human rights violations in the transitional period,[36] but military officials have also since become increasingly involved with public security policies at the domestic level.[37] For instance, many generals have occupied key positions in the security secretariat of different state governments, and security actors continued to participate in electoral politics.[38] Further, the 1988 Constitution granted that the military can be internally deployed under a legal instrument named the Garantia da Lei e da Ordem (the Law and Order Guarantee [GLO]), which can be summoned by the President of the Republic in cases of depletion of security forces, severe disturbances of order, or for the security of large events. In GLO operations, the armed forces are trusted with police powers for a provisional period to perform 'actions of preventive and repressive nature necessary to assure the outcome of operations'.[39] In sum, the boundaries of domestic safety and national

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[31]Adriana B. de Souza, Angela M. D. da Silva, Luís E. de S. Moraes, and Maud Chirio, 'Uma nação ordeira: A longa história da violência "pacificadora" no Brasil', in A. B. de Souza, Angela M. D. da Silva, Luis E. de S. Moraes, and Maud Chirio (eds), *Pacificar o Brasil: das guerras justas às UPPs*, 1st ed. (São Paulo: Alameda, 2017), pp. 9–20; N. Hoff and R. Blanco, 'Civilizar o Brasil: uma análise genealógica sobre a noção de "pacificação" e a formação do Estado no Brasil', in *12° Encontro ABCP 2020* (João Pessoa: ABCP, 2020), pp. 1–34.

[32]Christoph Harig, 'What difference does it make?'; Alfred C. Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016); José Murilo de Carvalho, *Forças armadas e política no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2005).

[33]Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Markus-Michael Müller and Andrea Steinke, 'Community policing's extended military history: Brazilian pacification from the Global Cold War to the Global War on Terror', *Policing and Society*, 31:9 (2020), pp. 1–19.

[34]Roxana Pessoa Cavalcanti, *A Southern Criminology of Violence, Youth and Policing: Governing Insecurity in Urban Brazil* (London: Routledge, 2020); Renato S. de Lima, Samira Bueno, and Guaracy Minguardi, 'Estado, polícias e segurança pública no Brasil', *Revista Di*, 12:1 (2016), pp. 49–85.

[35]Fiona Macaulay, 'Presidents, producers and politics: Law-and-order policy in Brazil from Cardoso to Dilma', *Policy Studies*, 38:3 (2017), pp. 248–61.

[36]Henrique Tavares Furtado, *Politics of Impunity: Torture, the Armed Forces and the Failure of Transitional Justice in Brazil* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022); Martha K. Huggins, 'Legacies of authoritarianism: Brazilian torturers' and murderers' reformulation of memory', *Latin American Perspectives*, 27:2 (2000), pp. 57–78.

[37]Ricardo Rodrigues Freire, 'O papel das forças armadas do Brasil na segurança multidimensional', *Revista Política y Estratégia*, 132 (2018), pp. 95–123.

[38]Cavalcanti, *A Southern Criminology*.

[39]'LEI COMPLEMENTAR No 97, DE 9 DE JUNHO DE 1999. Dispõe sobre as normas gerais para a organização, o preparo e o emprego das Forças Armadas'. Brasília: Presidência da República, Casa Civil, Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos (1999), p. 15.

security/defence have been continuously blurred since re-democratisation, making it difficult to distinguish, for instance, the roles of policing from militarism.[40]

Bolsonaro, a former captain in the army who throughout his political career echoed a militarist discourse, was able to capitalise on the long-term legacies of militarism, using it as the backbone of his far-right platform. This platform was also shaped, however, by more recent developments. We argue that the far right was strengthened by, and relatively dependent on, the experience of the Brazilian military in peacekeeping operations both in MINUSTAH and in Rio de Janeiro under the UPPs project, both of which took place under the progressive governments of the Workers' Party and under a liberal ticket of peacebuilding efforts.

The Port-au-Prince–Rio connection

Brazil's engagement in MINUSTAH (2004–17) was a clear turning point in its history of contributions to peacekeeping. It was Brazil's largest mission by number of troops since World War II (more than 30,000), with a continuous engagement that lasted 13 years. Brazilian generals were also the military leaders of the mission, occupying the role of Force Commanders. As a Chapter VII mission, MINUSTAH was authorised to use force to fulfil its mandate. This was grounded on the 'robust turn' in UN peacekeeping since the late 1990s, contrasting with traditional peacekeeping missions that were based on the principles of limited use of force in cases of self-defence, on impartiality, and on consensus.[41] In the robust turn, Chapter VII missions have become more commonplace, not only authorising the use of force but deliberately taking sides in conflicts.[42] In the case of Haiti, as the country was not in civil war, the Security Council considered armed gangs as 'mission spoilers', some with a relatively high degree of legitimacy in local communities. Thus, in MINUSTAH military operations were marked by armed intervention in working-class neighbourhoods, the use of snipers, the deployment of special forces units, and the use of informers among the local population.[43]

Although initially reluctant to use force, Force Commander General Augusto Heleno yielded to pressures from Haiti's transitional government, foreign ambassadors from the United States, France, and Canada, and the business community in Port-au-Prince. He introduced joint military-police interventions in impoverished urban neighbourhoods like Cité Soleil and Bel Air, targeting armed groups labelled as 'gangs'.[44] Most of these robust operations were concentrated in the period between 2004 and 2007, and they were usually led by a taskforce comprising foreign military and police personnel as well as members of the National Police of Haiti. On 6 July 2005, for example, in Haiti Heleno commanded the Iron Fist Operation in Cité Soleil, a densely populated area with around 350,000 residents at the time. Reports by human rights organisations highlight the disproportionate use of force by the heavily armed peacekeepers, who fired 22,700 rounds of ammunition and used 78 grenades in a single operation.[45] According to Wils and McLaughlin,

> MINUSTAH closed all exits from and entrances into Cité Soleil, and prevented anyone, including the Red Cross, from entering for between 24 and 48 hours after each UN operation. This prevented gang members from leaving but it also meant that people could not escape the heavy onslaught of fire. Dr. Armstrong Charlot … spoke of his extreme shock at the number of young children who were so badly injured they could not be saved … US Ambassador to

[40]Thaiane C. Mendonça, 'Uso interno das forças armadas e controle civil no Brasil: Uma leitura a partir do setor de segurança', *Hoplos*, 2:1 (2018), pp. 77–96.

[41]Lise M. Howard and Anjali K. Dayal, 'The use of force in UN peacekeeping', *International Organization*, 72:1 (2018), pp. 71–103 (p. 74).

[42]Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[43]A. Walter Dorn, 'Intelligence-led peacekeeping: The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), 2006–07', *Intelligence and National Security*, 24:6 (2009), pp. 805–35.

[44]Pingeot, 'Policing, security sector reform'; Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[45]Pingeot, 'Policing, security sector reform'.

Haiti, James Foley, acknowledged that on the night of 6 July 2005 UN forces 'expended over 20,000 rounds of ammunition'.[46]

MINUSTAH's 'robust' operations followed a military strategy known as 'stronghold' (or *ponto forte* in Portuguese). The objective was to conquer strategic areas and facilities in the neighbourhoods, establish a permanent or temporary base, centralise regular patrols, maintain a constant presence, and extend the state's control over targeted territories, thereby removing or diminishing the influence of armed gangs. During those missions, it was common for the taskforce to employ resources such as armoured personnel carriers and helicopters.[47] Stronghold operations were followed by the implementation of so-called Ações Cívico-Sociais (Social-Civic Actions programmes [ACISOs]), a dictatorship-era instrument widely utilised by the Brazilian military in domestic urban operations.[48] With the aid of non-state actors, the military provided free social services to locals such as medical treatment, football tournaments, and engineering installations. International NGOs, such as the Brazilian Viva Rio, were key partners in the implementation of these initiatives, acting as consultants to the mission and engaging in reconciliation measures within affected communities.[49]

With ACISOs, the Brazilian had the opportunity to experiment with more 'soft approaches' to security that were 'attuned to global sensitivities regarding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law'.[50] However, they also represented an important tactical element for the military success of operations, which was to obtain legitimation from the population.[51] These innovations were also related to a doctrinal change in peace operations, in which intelligence gathering became a key aspect of the mission. The UN Security Council established a hub for intelligence collection and analysis, resorting to a network of paid informants to help identify gang members (viewed as 'peace spoilers') to arrest or kill.[52] General Heleno claimed that ACISOs were important to gain locals' 'hearts and minds', resulting in Haitians 'going overnight [to the base] to pass information about bandits'.[53]

At the same time, in Rio de Janeiro's working-class neighbourhoods known as *favelas*, the stronghold strategy was also being mobilised by the Brazilian military in the implementation of the public security program called Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras (Pacifying Police Units [UPPs]). 'Pacification' has a long tradition in Brazil's political and military history since colonialism, invariably signifying the utilisation of state violence to conquer, subjugate, and control territories and marginalised populations.[54] Pacification discourses are also routinely deployed as a key concept in the military's projection of an imagined homogeneous national identity.[55]

[46] Siobhán Wills and Cahal McLaughlin, 'The production and use of the film it stays with you: Use of force by UN peacekeepers in Haiti to challenge the exclusion of survivors' experiences from peacekeeping success stories', *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 12:3 (2020), pp. 646–7.

[47] Dorn, 'Intelligence-led peacekeeping'.

[48] Plinio F. Guimarães, 'Assistindo a população, combatendo o comunismo: as Ações Cívico-Sociais no contexto da ditadura militar brasileira', in *XXVIII Simpósio Nacional de História* (Florianópolis: Associação Nacional de História, 2015), pp. 1–13.

[49] Hirst and Nasser, 'Brazil's involvement in peacekeeping'.

[50] Markus-Michael Müller, 'Policing as pacification: Postcolonial legacies, transnational connections, and the militarization of urban security in democratic Brazil', in Michelle D. Bonner, Guilhermina Seri, Mary A. Kubal, and Michael Kempa (eds), *Police Abuse in Contemporary Democracies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 221–247 (p. 231).

[51] Müller and Steinke, 'Community policing's extended military history'.

[52] Dorn, 'Intelligence-led peacekeeping'.

[53] L. Garbin, 'Após 13 anos, Brasil deixa o Haiti', *Estadão* (26 August 2017), available at: {https://internacional.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,apos-13-anos-brasil-deixa-o-haiti,70001950952}.

[54] Natali Hoff and Ramon Blanco, 'Do Haiti ao Rio de Janeiro e vice-versa: A pacificação enquanto pilar da governamentalidade brasileira acerca da paz', *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa*, 8:2 (2021), pp. 63–97; João Pacheco de Oliveira, 'Uma guerra sem fim: A retórica da "pacificação" e práticas institucionalizadas de produção da desigualdade', in Adriana B. de Souza, Angela M. D. da Silva, Luís E. de S. Moraes, and Maud Chirio (eds), *Pacificar o Brasil: das guerras justas às UPPs* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2017), pp. 49–76.

[55] When the Brazilian military arrived in Port-au-Prince, they erected a statue in tribute to the Duke of Caxias, a 19th-century military commander commonly known as 'the pacifier' for his role in violently repressing popular uprisings. See Maíra Siman

UPPs began shortly after the 2007 announcement that Brazil would host the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. Rio had been inserted in the global circuit of sport mega-events (previously, the Pan-American Olympics in 2007 and the Military Games in 2010), which transformed its security governance into a global issue that required engagement from a range of state and non-state actors. The idea of Rio as a 'global competitive city', which would place it on a governance network of public policy 'best practices' and signal attractiveness to foreign investors, was a key branding component of the UPPs project. Most of UPP units were localised in the southern region of the city, surrounding the famous Maracanã stadium and middle-class neighbourhoods.[56] In total, 38 UPPs were implemented between 2008 and 2014, covering 196 *favelas* with around 700,000 residents.

The UPPs represented a strategy to reinstate state control over *favelas* dominated by drug gangs through military force, and later to establish permanent community policing units, which would include social programmes. The latter aimed to integrate *favela* spaces and residents into the wider city in terms of services, infrastructure, investments, and rights.[57] Although the UPPs were a welcomed project by locals at first, perceptions soon shifted as it became clear that the 'warfare' logic was much more present than the 'social' one. Social movements criticised the rationale behind UPPs, which prioritised the 'conquering' of territories, the 'neutralisation' of real or suspected enemies, and the establishing of a 'tutelar' form of authority.[58] As a colonel who commanded the Pacifying Force in the Complexo do Alemão, Vladimir Ferreira, claimed about the operation:

> The greatest difficulty we have here is in acting against Brazilians. It's different to other typical military operations where we have a defined physical enemy in uniform. In urban confrontation, we cannot see the enemy on the other side. The drug dealer, the thief and the suspects are among the people.[59]

Similar to the Haitian experience, it was a counter-insurgency perspective that oriented UPPs' 'soft' approach to security once the military occupation had taken place. The idea was that residents could supply security forces with privileged information about ongoing unrest, social mobilisation against police presence, and intelligence about suspected criminals.[60] Thus, pacification in Rio and in Haiti were much more about the police becoming the regulating force of social order rather than tackling structural problems of inequality, poverty, and lack of public services.[61]

The UPPs and MINUSTAH operations were not isolated from one another. Officials have long recognised the points of intersection between them. General Heleno, for instance, argued that social projects developed in Port-au-Prince 'helped a lot in the pacification and became the embryo of the Pacification Police Units in Rio de Janeiro'.[62] By the end of 2010, around 60 per cent of military

Gomes, 'A "pacificação" como prática de "política externa" de (re)produção do self estatal: rescrevendo o engajamento do Brasil na Missão das Nações Unidas para a Estabilização do Haiti (MINUSTAH)', PhD diss., Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (2014), p. 16.

[56]Sebastian Sabrio, 'The pacification of the favelas: Mega events, global competitiveness, and the neutralization of marginality', *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes*, 9:2 (2013), pp. 130–45; João Pacheco de Oliveira, 'O nascimento do Brasil: Revisão de um paradigma historiográfico', *Anuário Antropológico*, 35:1 (2010), pp. 11–40; Rodrigues and Maciel, 'Pacificação à Brasileira?'; Hoff and Blanco, 'Do Haiti ao Rio de Janeiro'.

[57]De Oliveira, 'Uma guerra sem fim'.

[58]Salem and Bertelsen, 'Emergent police states'; Hoff and Blanco, 'Do Haiti ao Rio de Janeiro'.

[59]Tahiane Stochero, 'Para exército, ocupar Alemão é mais difícil que guerra e missão no Haiti', *G1* (15 August 2012), available at: {https://g1.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2012/08/para-exercito-ocupar-alemao-e-mais-dificil-que-guerra-e-missao-no-haiti.html}.

[60]De Oliveira, 'Uma guerra sem fim'; Müller, 'Policing as pacification'; Mendonça, 'Uso interno das forças armadas.

[61]Renata de Melo Rosa, 'El nuevo militarismo del gobierno brasileño concebido desde Haití', *Saskab*, 15 (2020), pp. 1–19; M. Franco Franco, 'UPP – a redução da favela a três letras: uma análise da política de segurança pública do Estado do Rio de Janeiro', MA diss., Fluminense Federal University (2014), p. 136.

[62]Garbin, 'Após 13 anos, Brasil'.

troops deployed in the pacification of the Maré favela in Rio had participated in MINUSTAH.[63] According to Müller and Steinke:

> Brazil's MINUSTAH experience allowed for a fine-tuning of previous pacification experiences and their 'upgrading' to globally dominant counterinsurgency standards, which, in turn, influenced pacification-related military doctrinal revisions processes and intervention practices at home.[64]

The Port-au-Prince–Rio connection has also been regarded as synergically co-constituted in both Brazil and Haiti, with elements of reciprocal learning between the two contexts.[65] The techniques of repression and social control, developed in contexts of violent actions and local resistances, have been imported and exported in a 'boomerang effect' that crossed international borders.[66]

Perfecting counter-insurgency: The mobilisation of religious actors

One key element that the Brazilian military sought to improve at home based on its experience in MINUSTAH was a strategy of obtaining legitimacy for the intervention among the affected population. According to Oosterbaan and Machado, Haiti forced the military to learn that 'pacifying practices demand more than enemy identification, weapons and brute force. One also needs symbolic, cultural and political devices to secure and control occupied territories.'[67] In Rio, this was sought through the mobilisation of conservative Christian ideology, especially Evangelical Pentecostalism. In this process, religion was instrumentalised to bolster legitimacy for militarised forms of intervention and utilised as a blueprint for order-building in urban peripheries.

The relationship between religious actors and security governance is not a new one in Brazil. Since re-democratisation, religious actors have been engaged as mediators, alongside human rights activists and NGOs, in tackling issues of urban violence and crime.[68] Evangelicals – which in Brazil comprise both mainline Protestants and Pentecostalist traditions – have been at the forefront of this trend, incorporating the security agenda into their discourse and practice both from a top-down and bottom-up approach.[69] In the case of the former, Evangelical political activism has become entwined with law-and-order, militaristic policies formed in alliances with so-called bullet caucuses in legislative institutions such as city councils, state assemblies, and the National Congress.[70] In Congress, for instance, the articulation between the Evangelical Parliamentary Front and the Public Security Parliamentary Front reached its peak in the 2015–18 legislature, when it shifted from a survival strategy of fringe political groups to become an influential political force during

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[63] Rodrigues and Maciel, 'Pacificação à Brasileira?'.

[64] Müller and Steinke. 'Community policing's extended military history', p. 14.

[65] Cristoph Harig, 'Synergy effects between MINUSTAH and public security in Brazil', *Brasiliana*, 3:2 (2015), pp. 142–68; Hoff and Blanco, 'Do Haiti ao Rio de Janeiro'

[66] Alexander Dunlap, 'Permanent war: Grids, boomerangs, and counterinsurgency', *Anarchist Studies*, 22:2 (2014), pp. 55–79; Stephen Grahan, *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism* (London: Verso, 2011); Moritz Schuberth, 'Brazilian peacekeeping? Counterinsurgency and police reform in Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro', *International Peacekeeping*, 26:9 (2019), pp. 487–510.

[67] Martijn Oosterbaan and Carly Machado, 'Postsecular pacification', in Rosemarie Buikema, Antoine Buyse, and Antonius Robben (eds), *Cultures, Citizenship and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 104–120 (p. 111).

[68] Patricia Birman, 'Cruzadas pela paz: Práticas religiosas e projetos seculares relacionados à questão da violência no Rio de Janeiro', *Religião & Sociedade*, 32:1 (2012), pp. 209–26; Cavalcanti, *A Southern Criminology*.

[69] On Brazilian Evangelicalism, see among others Andrew Chestnut, Born Again in Brazil: The pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press (1997); and Eric Miller and Ronald Morgan, Brazilian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth-First Century: An Inside and Outside Look. London: Palgrave MacMillan (2019).

[70] Ana Paula Galdeano, 'Salmo 127, Versículo 1: Ativismo religioso e ordenamentos da segurança em uma periferia de São Paulo', *Religião & Sociedade*, 34:1 (2014), pp. 38–60; Lacerda, 'O novo conservadorismo'; Roberta H. Novello and Marcos C. Alvarez, 'Da "bancada da segurança" à "bancada da bala": Deputados-policiais no legislativo paulista e discursos sobre segurança pública', *Dilemas: Revista de Estudos de Conflito e Controle Social*, 15:1 (2022), pp. 81–101.

President Rousseff's impeachment proceedings. From the 376 votes in favour of her ousting, 101 votes came from MPs that participated in both Fronts.[71] Additionally, Lacerda's study found that there was 'association between being a police or military officer and participating in the evangelical caucus', and 'in being protagonist in public security-related commissions and being a member of the Evangelical Front'.[72]

In the case of the latter, the rapid spread of Pentecostalism on the outskirts of urban areas – affected by high rates of violence exercised by both non-state and state actors, and aggravated by neoliberal adjustments – has led to new forms of violence regulation and solidarity networks. These networks navigate the porous borders between licit and illicit activities, and state and non-state actors.[73] The logic of violence produced on the urban margins, and compounded by a Pentecostalist theology of spiritual warfare, was crucial to the rise of Bolsonarismo as a mass movement.[74]

Machado notes that Evangelicals have developed a 'very specific repertoire for tackling violence', ranging from 'devotional practices focused on the "spiritual battle" against crime, to an intense evangelization of imprisoned criminals, or direct negotiations with criminal gang leaders in order to convince them to release "bandits" condemned to death by "drug gang courts"'.[75] A noticeable element of these interventions is militarisation: scholars have observed the emergence of Evangelical drug cartels and militias.[76] Evangelical police culture,[77] and Evangelical churches and pastors increasingly making use of militarised vocabulary, uniform, and military-style 'prayer patrols'.[78]

Such religious–military entwinement was also present during the UPP project in Rio de Janeiro. In many UPPs, the military police engaged with religious actors as a strategy of winning the hearts and minds of local residents. Examples ranged from partnering with Evangelical churches controlling so-called therapeutic communities for the treatment of drug addicts[79] and the organisation of gospel concerts promoted by Rio's Special Operations Battalion,[80] to the use of military police chaplains to build trust relations with local residents.[81] Salem and Bertelsen's ethnographic work also noted that UPP police officers routinely manifested a form of police moralism in their relationship with locals, anchored in a Pentecostal morality and racialised tropes that cast locals as 'easily corruptible and morally inferior people in need of salvation'.[82]

[71]K. Hinz, J. Vinuto and A. Coutinho, 'Por Dios y por las armas: el ascenso neopentecostal y securitario en Brasil (2003–2019)', *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, 126 (2020), pp. 185–213 (p. 199).

[72]Lacerda, 'O novo conservadorismo…', p. 201.

[73]Stephan Lanz and Martijn Oosterbaan, 'Entrepreneurial religion in the age of neoliberal urbanism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40:3 (2016), pp. 487–506; Virginia Garrard, 'Hidden in plain sight: Dominion theology, spiritual warfare, and violence in Latin America', *Religions*, 11:12 (2020), pp. 1–14; Oosterbaan and Machado, 'Postsecular pacification'.

[74]Gabriel Feltran, 'The revolution we are living', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 10:1 (2020), pp. 12–20; Mariana Côrtes, 'A revolta dos bastardos: do Pentecostalismo ao Bolsonarismo', *Caderno CRH*, 34: (2021), e021025.

[75]Carly Machado, 'Peace challenges and the moral weapons of pacification in Rio de Janeiro', *L'Homme: Revue française d'anthropologie*, 219–220 (2016), pp. 127–8.

[76]Kristina Hinz, Doriam Borges, Aline Coutinho, and Thiago Andries, 'The rise of Brazil's Neo-Pentecostal narco-militia', *Open Democracy* (6 May 2021), available at: {https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/rise-narco-militia-pentecostal-brazil-en/}; Cesar Teixeira, 'O Pentecostalismo em contextos de violência: Uma etnografia das relações entre Pentecostais e traficantes em Magé', *Ciências Sociais e Religião*, 10:10 (2008), pp. 181–205.

[77]Elizabete Albernaz, 'Na fronteira entre o Bem e o Mal: Ética profissional e moral religiosa entre policiais militares evangélicos cariocas', *Caderno CRH*, 23:60 (2010), pp. 525–39.

[78]Carly Machado, 'Morte, perdão e esperança de vida eterna: "ex-bandidos", policiais, pentecostalismo e criminalidade no Rio de Janeiro', in Patricia Birman, Marcia Leite, Carly Machado and Sandra Carneiro (eds), *Dispositivos urbanos e trama dos viventes: ordens e resistências* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2015), pp. 451–72.

[79]Carly Machado, 'The Church helps the UPP, the UPP helps the Church: Pacification apparatus, religion and boundary formation in Rio de Janeiro's urban peripheries', *Vibrant*, 14:3 (2017), 1–16.

[80]Carly Machado, 'Morte, perdão'.

[81]Birman, 'Cruzadas pela paz'.

[82]Salem and Bertelsen, 'Emergent police states', p. 97.

However, this post-secular pacification logic[83] was much more pervasive under the army's military occupation of three large favela complexes, Alemão, Penha, and Maré. These occupations were staged as preliminary phases before the implementation of UPPs. The occupation in the Alemão and Penha occurred between 2010 and 2014, with a contingent of 1,800 soldiers, and in Maré between 2014 and 2016, with a contingent of 2,400 soldiers.[84] These interventions were tellingly titled Operation Archangel (Alemão and Penha) and St Francis (Maré) and were designed by the Rio de Janeiro state government to push criminal factions away from rich neighbourhoods adjacent to these territories. This was to secure the flow of business investments and tourists ahead of the World Cup and Olympics.

As in Haiti, the prolonged period of military occupation in Operation Archangel had forced the military to develop strategies of approximation with the local population. Initially this was done via neighbourhood associations and local NGOs, but cultivating these networks proved difficult as the military grew suspicious of their contact and interaction with criminal factions.[85] In the military's interpretation, the difficulty and ambiguity in distinguishing friends from enemies in this urban warfare setting, together with growing public criticism towards the occupation, indicated the need to establish partnerships with groups that shared similar values. Local religious actors were thus activated as trustful partners who could be mobilised to mediate the increasingly tense relationship with residents.[86] According to Jonas (fictional name), a former Evangelical military chaplain who served during the occupation,

> The military had this view that the rest of the population was contaminated, that it bears the mark of impurity, especially among neighbourhood associations. And other things were also reason for mistrust, you know? They [the military] would accept dialogue, but always with suspicion. 'People from hip-hop and from funk [a popular musical genre], who are they?' 'These people have contact with and are co-opted by drug trafficking, I don't trust them.' 'Pastors and priests are more trustworthy.'

The establishment of networks with religious actors was assigned to the Department of Religious Assistance of the East Military Command of Rio de Janeiro. Military chaplains were deployed on two simultaneous fronts, internal and external. Internally, they were used as a tool of ideological coherence to boost troop morale. This follows from traditional attributions of the military chaplaincy, which according to a federal law, 'aims to provide religious and spiritual assistance to the military, civilians of military organisations, and their families, as well as to answer to the incumbencies related to the activities of moral education undertaken within the Armed Forces'.[87] In practice, it translated to chaplains conveying to young soldiers on the frontline that pacification was part of a divine plan to bring civilisation to urban peripheries.[88] According to Jonas:

> I had an internal function, to give support to the troops, and there is a psychological dimension to this. They were very debilitated, they had little leisure time. At some point they didn't even shower anymore, only wanted to sleep. They were on their feet the whole day with the sun burning … Stress all day long, and there were fewer soldiers than what was needed in the territory … There was a soldier who died, and in my opinion when his body arrived, it

[83]Oosterbaan and Machado, 'Postsecular pacification'.

[84]Carly Machado, Vinicius Esperança, and Vinicius Gonçalves, 'Militarização e religião: alianças e controvérsias entre projetos morais de governo de territórios urbanos pacificados', in Márcia Leita, Lia Rocha, Juliana Farias, and Monique Carvalho (eds), *Militarização no Rio de Janeiro: da pacificação à intervenção* (Rio de Janeiro: Mórula editorial, 2020), pp. 142–60.

[85]Machado, Esperança and Gonçalves, 'Militarização e religião'.

[86]Oosterbaan and Machado, 'Postsecular pacification'.

[87]'LEI No 6.923, DE 29 DE JUNHO DE 1981. Dispõe sobre o Serviço de Assistência Religiosa nas Forças Armadas' (Federal Law). (Brasília: Presidency of the Republic, 1981), available at: {https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l6923.htm}.

[88]Vinicius Esperança, '"São Francisco na Maré": Religião e pacificação numa ocupação militar', *Relgiao e Sociedade*, 42:1 (2022), pp. 11–35.

looked like he had killed himself, but the press said it was an accident. So, it's an explosive combination, a lot of demand, discipline, and guns in hands.

As confrontations with criminal factions soared in 2013 and 2014, with some resorting to guerilla-style attacks on military outposts, the cycle of violence that ensued led Jonas to abandon his military career. In his own words:

I said to myself, I won't justify this. My role there was to legitimise this, you understand? For the troop but also for the population. I won't do this anymore, I give up. I left in 2014 … Because I was being instrumentalised, you know? … a good part of my job in the army was to convince the boys that they were sent by God, they wanted me to do that. Sent by God for pacification, it's a divine call to pacify, a vocation. And that there was the other side which represented absolute evil, [people] who wanted the downfall of the territory.

On the external front, chaplains were enlisted as community brokers tasked with broader counter-insurgency initiatives. Their role was to cultivate trust among religious leaders in order to legitimise the pacification project and to act as intelligence gatherers on criminal activities. Jonas commented that the army started making meetings to invite religious actors to become informal mediators or 'ambassadors' of the army in the territories. In turn, they would provide access and mediation with the population. Military chaplains were thus transformed into counter-insurgency agents whose work developed on two lines:

The first is to consider local religious [leaders] as those who are more legitimate and trustworthy local voices … as they wouldn't have any connection with crime or politics. Thus, when local demands or feedback on the operation were to be heard, they would bring in religious [actors]. The second is through joint actions, where the army would provide the necessary infrastructure to organise large, religious events.[89]

Among the 'products' developed by the military on this front were: local events celebrating specific holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and Children's Day[90]; training courses to engage religious leaders in 'peace culture', covering topics such as conflict mediation, drug addiction, and domestic violence; the creation of chambers where religious leaders could express community demands to the occupying forces and public authorities; ecumenical meetings at the Pacification Force's base; and the promotion of reflections about the pacification process during masses.[91] While both Catholics and Evangelicals had been mobilised for these activities, the military ended up prioritising Evangelical leaders given their stronger base-building networks in the territories as well as their ideological convergence with the strategic aims of the mission.

Such was the depth of this type of engagement that in 2018 the army published its own doctrine for the mobilisation of religion in operations. Titled *Campaign Manual: Religious Assistance in Operations*,[92] the doctrine acknowledges the strategic dimension of the military chaplaincy, or

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[89]Vinicius Lopes, '"São Francisco na Maré": Memórias de uma ocupação militar na cidade dos megaeventos', PhD diss., Rop de Janeiro State University (2019), p. 279.

[90]About these events, Jonas said that Children's Day reached a peak of 2,000 attendees. There, the army distributed 'food all day, there was hot dog, coca-cola – coca-cola donated for the event – so we had soft drinks, food, toys, activities … children went crazy, they got to hop inside helicopters, ride the army's horses, pet the trained dogs. Can you imagine? So I did this type of mediation with Christian leaders, so that they could in return appease the environment because it was very tense. You had locals throwing stones at soldiers, cursing, spitting at them, it was like this.'

[91]Oosterbaan and Machado, 'Postsecular pacification', pp. 111–2.

[92]Brazil. Manual de Campanha: A assistência religiosa nas operações. Exército Brasileiro – Comando de Operações Terrestres. Brasília: Ministério da Defesa (2018), available at: {https://bdex.eb.mil.br/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2652/1/MC%20Assistencia%20Religiosa%20EB70-MC-10.pdf}.

'the religious legitimacy to directly contribute with the mission's success'.[93] The manual considers two roles for chaplains in military operations. First, that of a religious minister who works to 'nourish the spirit, assist the ill, and participate in funerary honours'.[94] While the latter two are related to more conventional pastoral activities, the task of 'nourishing the spirit' receives a more detailed elaboration. Its purpose is, among others, to 'mitigate the stressing effects of continuous action in operations', 'trigger competencies of spiritual nature that contribute as mechanisms of confrontation and overcoming of internal conflicts', and 'contribute to dissipate dichotomies or ethical dilemmas in face of the difficult and complex decision to kill'.[95]

The second role is that of that of advisor to the Commander, which involves advising on:

> the impact of religion within their unit and on the specificities of the religious environment in the area of operation that may affect the mission's fulfilment. This can include native religions in the area of operations; sacred days that may affect military operations; and the importance of local religious leaders and structures.[96]

Here, the military chaplain is considered as a sort of operations' ethnographer who (1) surveys 'information about ethical, moral, and religious issues, which can be of interest to the command';[97] (2) has 'functional knowledge of world religions and the dynamic religion of native populations, afro-descendants, nomads, immigrants, and equivalent';[98] and (3) 'preserves memory' by 'gathering and analysing facts that are transformed into information and, from this, contributes to knowledge production'.[99] Not only does the military chaplain assist in this form of intelligence-gathering service,[100] it is the chaplain's responsibility to be directly involved in the psychological front of operations, working closely with the command to 'settle religious, moral, ethical, and cultural issues related to the programs, civic-social initiatives, exercises, and operations'.[101] In this sense, the military chaplain is a key instrument in winning the hearts and minds of the local population:

> the knowledge of local religious beliefs and its repercussions in the relationship of the troop with the population are fundamental in the formation of public opinion. Military chaplains facilitate the relationship with religious leaders and military Commanders.[102]

This knowledge is then brought back to the 'Information Operations' division, where the military chaplain obtains 'orientation around the ideas-force discussed in the contact with local religious leaders or councils, and which are of interest to the Command, aiding in the formation favourable opinions to operations'.[103] The emphasis on forming positive public opinion is once again emphasised in the chaplain's responsibility to 'integrate communitarian and Civic-Social Actions', where 'religious assistance collaborates with the effort of the Command in conquering support from authorities and the population via the provision of religious tasks such as weddings, baptisms, confessions, counselling, among others'.[104]

If this military doctrine reflects an acknowledgement of the centrality of religion in modern-day military operations, as well as the importance of the shifting religious landscape in urban Brazil, it

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[93] Ibid., p. 29.
[94] Ibid., p. 18.
[95] Ibid., p. 33.
[96] Ibid., p. 19.
[97] Ibid., p. 22.
[98] Ibid., p. 26.
[99] Ibid., p. 37.
[100] Although the Manual clearly states the military chaplain does not act like 'intelligence officials or combat proponents' (p. 25), it is hard not to draw the parallels here.
[101] Brazil, 'Manual de Campanha', p. 26.
[102] Ibid., p. 37.
[103] Ibid., p. 37.
[104] Ibid.

leaves out another important dimension of the experience of pacification in Rio: a politically conservative project of order-building that can be translated as a civilising and spiritually redemptive mission.[105] Pacification bundled notions of territorial liberation with 'moral and spiritual liberation' from crime through the use of force, militarised prayer, and the ideal of citizens converting to both Christ and the state order.[106] Reports and discourses by military officials during the occupation cast *favelas* as unruly places. According to one Force Commander, the military's work was to:

> show the population that another form of life exists … It is an enormous cultural work to change this reality. The message of pacification is that there is a pacific and orderly way of life … So if their wish is to live as they do now, they can maintain this, we are giving this instrument to them; the security institutions are entering, the state enters with other structures: school, education, sport, infrastructure, water, sewage, litter, energy, wellbeing. This is progressive, does not come from night to day, and it is the choice they make. Is this what you wish, or would you rather go back to the previous stage?[107]

Bernardo (fictional name), a researcher with over a decade of fieldwork experience in the Alemão and Maré, had the opportunity to participate in official meetings held between military officials and religious leaders and to speak to key military strategists. He claimed that aside from the institutional dimension, many officials themselves espoused a religious justification for the pacifying operations. In his own words, there was a widespread view shared among officials:

> as if God had placed them in the army to fulfil a mission of the Kingdom of God. I remember seeing a uniformed colonel wielding a rifle at hands and shouting: '[Favela] Complex for Jesus!' So these individuals, as military, believe that God opened a door for them, the armed wing [of the state], and gave them the power to bring the Kingdom of God – under bullets or force if necessary.

Jonas expressed a similar perception: 'I think there is really this view [in the army] that these territories are decayed, taken by evil, and in need of salvation.' A colonel who was commanding operations in Maré had told him, '"I entered Maré and could feel spiritual oppression, you know? The dirt, lack of order, social order."' For churches participating in the partnership with the military, such a vision could not resonate better. Having negotiated with many churches for support to the military occupation, Jonas recalled the average perception of religious leaders about the occupation:

> 'Now we have a collaborator in the task of redemption for the territory and its residents. We have someone joining us to … break away from the claws of evil, the enemy – who is the devil, named in the Bible as the enemy – and deliver Good and order.' The partnership was [for them] very natural, and even though there was an official convocation, from the moment [religious] people discovered the project, they embraced it. It was an added effort to save Alemão … State and religion together, the cross and the sword.

Moreover, Bernardo claimed that what the army was proposing was a conservative model of citizenship in which subjects would be obedient to the ruling order, would not engage in 'sexually promiscuous behaviour' nor contest the standards of traditionally verticalised, patriarchal, authority – a suite of characteristics that 'pleases the military worldview of society' as well as the Evangelical.

[105]Stephanie Savell, 'Performing humanitarian militarism', *Focaal*, 75 (2016), pp. 59–72; Salem and Bertelsen, 'Emergent police states'.
[106]Carly Machado, 'Morte, perdão'; Birman, 'Cruzadas pela paz'.
[107]Vinícius Gonçalves, 'A cruz e a espada: Disputas e negociações pela pacificação de indivíduos, nações e cidades', MA diss., Departamento de Ciências Sociais, Rio de Janeiro Federal Rural University (2014), p. 101.

Table 1. High-ranked officials who served in Port-au-Prince and Rio and then in Bolsonaro's government.

Name	Role during Bolsonaro's government (2019–22)	Served in MINUSTAH	Year of graduation in AMAN*
Gen. Augusto Heleno	Presidency's Institutional Security Bureau (2019–22)	Military Commander, 2004–5	1969
Gen. Santos Cruz	Government Secretary (2019)	Military Commander, 2007–9	1974
Gen. Floriano Peixoto	General Secretary of the Presidency (2019)	Military Commander, 2009–10	1976
Gen. Eduardo Ramos	Government Secretary (2019–21), Casa Civil (2021), General Secretary of the Presidency (2021–2)	Military Commander, 2011–12	1979
Gen. Edson Pujol	Commander of the Army (2019–21)	Military Commander, 2013–14	1977
Gen. Porto Pinheiro	Advisor to the president of the Supreme Court (2018–20)	Military Commander, 2015–17	1980
Gen. Fernando Azevedo e Silva	Advisor to the president of the Supreme Court (2018), Defense minister (2019–21)	Brazil's Chief of Operations, 2004–5	1976
Gen. Rêgo Barros	Government Spokesperson (2019–20)	Battalion Commander (2010)	–
Tarcísio de Freitas	Minister of Infrastructure (2019–22) and later governor of São Paulo (2022–)	Technical Chief of the Engineer's Corps, 2005–6	1996
Gen. Hamilton Mourão	Vice-President (2019–22)	–	1975

*Academia Militar dos Agulhas Negras (AMAN) is the largest graduation centre for combatant officers in the army. Source: the authors.

Pacification and the strengthening of the far right in Brazil

Despite widespread consensus among analysts that Brazilian pacification in Port-au-Prince and Rio failed, these experiences yielded important returns for the military. Besides the modernisation of equipment and technical learning curves in urban operations, one of the most important results of MINUSTAH and UPPs was the return of the military into national affairs and the political mobilisation of a military elite that had not occurred since re-democratisation.[108] According to General Heleno, MINUSTAH was a 'fundamental experience for the current generation of officials in the Brazilian Army', providing the Brazilian troops with more management knowledge in periods of crisis and allowing them to know better 'their capabilities', including that of leadership.[109] According to Bernardo, the military was:

> for decades looking for a space of re-signification. They tried first with the Amazon – 'the Armed Forces as protectors of the Amazon' – but it didn't work. But then came Haiti and later Alemão and Penha. Luciano Hulk [a popular TV host] dedicated a full show to the army. Then Esporte Espetacular [a weekly sports TV programme] also dedicated a full show about Haiti. All TV networks were giving fuel to it. It became the theme of a primetime soap opera, Salve Jorge, about an army captain who was in Alemão. Even Prince Harry visited the Alemão Complex in 2012. And in Haiti, they were in contact with a universe of global NGOs and international organisations such as the UN. All this was just hatching the snakes' egg.

[108]Rodrigues and Maciel, 'Pacificação à Brasileira?'.
[109]Garbin, 'Após 13 anos'; Godoy, 'Com Bolsonaro, tropas'.

During Bolsonaro's government, this military elite occupied key political positions in the state (see Table 1).[110] Generals who were Force Commanders in Haiti became top-tier ministers, such as Floriano Peixoto, who became General Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic; Fernando Azevedo e Silva (Defence Minister between 2019 and 2021); Santos Cruz (Government Secretary during the first semester of 2019 and later a critic of Bolsonaro); Eduardo Ramos (Government Secretary who succeeded Santos Cruz). General Augusto Heleno, the first Force Commander of MINUSTAH, was Bolsonaro's right-hand man, leading the Presidency's Institutional Security Bureau (Gabinete de Segurança Institucional, GSI) between 2019 and 2022. Otávio Rêgo Barros, another MINUSTAH veteran who later commanded the Pacification Force in the Alemão Complex, and who oversaw the military–religious partnership, was the government's spokesperson between 2019 and 2020. General Walter Braga Neto – who was the Commander of the East Military Command in Rio de Janeiro during the occupation in Maré and then became the intervenor of the Federal Intervention in Rio in 2018, which effectively succeeded UPPs, held several posts. He was chosen as Chief of Staff between 2020 and 2021, Minister of Defence between 2020 and 2021, and then Bolsonaro's running mate in the 2022 elections. Tarcísio de Freitas, a captain who served at MINUSTAH, was Minister of Infrastructure from 2019 to 2022 and was recently elected as the São Paulo state's governor in the 2022 elections. De Freitas recently made the headlines by saying he was 'extremely satisfied' with a police operation in a poor neighbourhood in Guarujá, São Paulo, in which the police left 16 dead. He claimed that 'there was no excess' in the operation.[111]

As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of officials graduated in the 1970s, at the height of the military dictatorship. Although some of these names left the government and became critical voices against Bolsonaro, others, such as Heleno and Braga Neto, remained loyal allies and were key articulators of the democratic backsliding process, including a coup plot after Bolsonaro lost the elections in 2022.[112]

Besides this recapture of politics by a group of the military elite, the MINUSTAH and UPPs experiences also became crucial sites of experimentation with a range of policies that would later become the hallmark of Bolsonaro's political agenda. Bolsonaro's hard-line public security platform had in Haiti a 'testing ground', where it was able to be put into practice, improved upon, then reintroduced in Rio de Janeiro, and reapplied by the Federal Government under Bolsonaro and his group of peacebuilding and pacification veterans.[113]

Members of the armed forces with experience in MINUSTAH frequently complained about what they understood as a limited authorisation to deploy use of force during GLO operations domestically.[114] Compared to the latitude and protections granted to them by the rules of engagement in MINUSTAH, they felt frustrated with the possibility of facing legal consequences, which effectively occurred after the Federal Intervention in Rio de Janeiro in 2018 – authorised under a GLO provision. During such operations, the military was not legally authorised to make arrests or searches in houses solely on the basis of suspicion or intelligence reports. Further, authorisations to engage in exchange of fire was also limited, as troops could only respond to hostilities in self-defence. In contrast, MINUSTAH, a Chapter VII mission, permitted the use of lethal force

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[110]In some cases, Haiti had also served to raise military officials to political leadership positions even before Bolsonaro's government. José Elito, force commander of MINUSTAH between 2006 and 2007, was one of them. He was appointed as Chief of the Joint General Staff of the Armed Forces and later chief of the GSI during Dilma Rouseff's mandate between 2010 and 2015.

[111]'16 mortos em 6 dias: o que aconteceu na operação policial no Guarujá', *BBC* (2 August 2023), available at: {https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/c2x54ynjzx4o}.

[112]'Quem são os 18 militares bolsonaristas no coração do golpismo, segundo a PF', Agência Pública (9 February 2024), available at: {https://apublica.org/2024/02/quem-sao-os-18-militares-bolsonaristas-no-coracao-do-golpismo-segundo-a-pf/}; Bryan Harris, 'Anatomy of a coup plot: How Brazil's Bolsonaro tried to cling to power', *Financial Times* (10 February 2024), available at: {https://www.ft.com/content/97582a42-cad7-467a-8f52-9b02d6d5dc16}.

[113]Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[114]'Um pedido dos militares a Bolsonaro: evitar missões de garantia da lei e da ordem', *Gazeta do Povo* (28 June 2019), available at: {https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/republica/garantia-lei-ordem/}; Stochero, 'Para exército'.

beyond self-defence, allowing troops to employ it to achieve mission objectives.[115] The experience in both environments led to a growing demand by the military to widen the legal scope of their actions:

> As the military experienced that comparatively fewer restrictions in rules of engagement and more legal protection for soldiers in MINUSTAH were key factors for what they consider a successful mission, they aim to re-import this framework to their internal role.[116]

In an interview for *Jornal Nacional* – the largest newshour programme from the Globo corporation – during the 2018 presidential campaign, Bolsonaro referred to the initiatives developed by the Brazilian military in Haiti as a 'success' and a model to be reproduced in Brazil during operations to deal with organised armed groups in marginalised urban areas.[117] In fact, the complaints about perceived legal limits of action in domestic public security operations were taken up as one of the main agendas during Bolsonaro's 2018 and 2022 presidential campaigns. In the same interview, Bolsonaro defended the creation of *excludente de ilicitude* (exclusion of unlawfulness), a measure to exempt or reduce punishment for security agents engaged in lethal armed conflict. In November 2019, Sergio Moro, then Bolsonaro's Minister of Justice and Public Security, sent a bill to Congress to include the concept of legitimate self-defence for military and public security officers engaged in GLO operations. The bill stated that 'there is no crime when the agent practises the fact: in a state of necessity; in self-defence; in strict compliance with legal duty or in the regular exercise of rights'. The project was ultimately rejected, and, in April 2023, Lula's government withdrew it from Congress.[118] In February 2019, another bill submitted by Moro attempted to broaden the concept of self-defence by including acts committed out of 'excusable fear, surprise or violent emotion'. The measure was widely criticised by public security experts and human rights organisations and was subsequently archived later that year.[119]

Despite the broad reporting of human rights violations committed by MINUSTAH personnel – such as sexual abuse, exploitation of women and children, physical threatening of civilians, and disproportionate force – there has been thus far no forms of accountability or reparations to victims.[120] Similar patterns have been observed in Rio de Janeiro's UPP project.[121] In both realities, the military intervention and occupation were based on a perception of them being spaces of violence and exceptionality. This favoured a logic of war and death epitomised by General Heleno's infamous remark that, in Rio, 'the verb of the mission is to eliminate'.[122] The military understood the deaths of innocent bystanders in both operations as 'collateral damage', and the appraisal of different national and international stakeholders strengthened this perception.

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[115]Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[116]Ibid., p. 14.

[117]'Jair Bolsonaro (PSL) é entrevistado no Jornal Nacional', *Jornal Nacional* (August 28), available at: {https://globoplay.globo.com/v/6980200/}.

[118]Janary Júnior and Rachel Librelon, 'Governo solicita retirada de tramitação de projeto sobre excludente de ilicitude', *Câmara dos Deputados* (10 April 2023), available at: {https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/951422-governo-solicita-retirada-de-tramitacao-de-projeto-sobre-excludente-de-ilicitude}.

[119]'PL 882/2019'. Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados (2019), available at: {https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=2192353}; Igor Mello, 'Para especialistas, projeto sobre crimes cometidos por policiais é vago e pode incentivar impunidade', *O Globo* (4 February 2019), available at: {https://oglobo.globo.com/politica/para-especialistas-projeto-sobre-crimes-cometidos-por-policiais-vago-pode-incentivar-impunidade-23407910}.

[120]Cahal McLaughlin and Siobhan Wills (dir.), 'It Stays with You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti'. Queen's University Belfast, 50" (2017); Human Rights Watch, 'Living a nightmare': Haiti needs an urgent rights-based response to escalating crisis', *Human Rights Watch* (14 August 2023), pp. 89–96, available at: {https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/08/14/living-nightmare/haiti-needs-urgent-rights-based-response-escalating-crisis}.

[121]Cahal McLaughlin and Siobhan Wills (dir.) 'Right Now I Want to Scream: Police and Army Killings in Rio – the Brazil Haiti Connection'. Queen's University Belfast, 62", (2020); Müller, 'Policing as pacification'.

[122]Marco Aurélio Canonico, 'Rio, Haiti, Araguaia', *Folha de S. Paulo* (8 March 2018), available at: {https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/marco-aurelio-canonico/2018/03/rio-haiti-araguaia.shtml}.

This widespread silence regarding violations also contributed to the construction of a positive image of Brazilian peacekeepers, fostering the idea of a 'success case' in Port-au-Prince and Rio. This, in turn, also influenced military perceptions on domestic public security operations, their view of themselves as a competent 'political moderator', with the expertise to manage political instability and social conflicts – a viewpoint which has been cultivated since the 19th century.[123]

The politics of religion is another element to be taken into account. The rise of the far right in Brazil is inextricably linked to the political mainstreaming of the Christian far right. The core of this social force lies in transforming fundamentalist Evangelical and Catholic ideology into a popular political agenda. This agenda opposes progressive social movements and aims to steer state policies towards establishing a religiously infused social order based on patriarchal relations, obedience to authorities, the primacy of militarism, and the naturalisation of racial, gender, and class inequalities.[124] Bolsonaro's government effectively weaponised these groups with the widespread use of disinformation campaigns and conspiracy theories that tapped into popular fears about crime, violence, and corruption, associating them with the threat of communism or the 'globalist elite agenda'. The process of radicalisation that led to violent mobs storming government buildings on 8 January 2023 was equally planned, operated, and ideologically justified by military and religious groups.[125] As shown in the last section, the lines of division between them are not always clear.

Following Salem and Bertelsen's insight that the 'experiment with new policing practices at the UPPs can aid us in understanding the moral framework underpinning Bolsonarismo',[126] we consider the pacification in Rio as a laboratory for engaging religious actors in political-military projects. In both Haiti and Rio, the military learned that success for operations could not rely on force alone and that mobilising symbolic elements was an effective way of bolstering ideological support for militarised forms of interventions.[127] Instead of a top-down imposition – alien to liberal peacebuilding standards and human rights sensibilities – a bottom-up engagement empowering religious networks could generate intelligence gains and shield the military from external criticism by social movements opposing the occupation, as well as deflecting media pressure.

The fact that an official doctrine was published in 2018 enshrining the principles of engagement with religious groups in operations is no coincidence. It shows that the accumulated experience in Rio has been carefully considered by military strategists, in a context of intense politicisation of Evangelicals at the national level. Although Bolsonaro's government drew support from various ideological sources and social groups, a number of scholars have highlighted that the far-right government should be regarded primarily as a military government. They contend that the higher echelons of the military instrumentalised Bolsonarismo for their own goals and guided many of the government's policies.[128] This is no stretch of imagination, as Bolsonaro himself was a former army official and was spotted attending meetings with military leaders before he was officialised as a presidential candidate. Lentz and Penido have suggested that this broader military–religious nexus is also reflective of internal dynamics to the military, such as shifts in recruitment processes that favour demographic growth of Evangelicals within the ranks and convergence between the military's National Security Doctrine and Christian conservatism.[129]

[123]Harig, 'Re-importing the "robust turn"'.

[124]Lacerda, 'O novo conservadorismo'; de Almeida, 'Bolsonaro Presidente'.

[125]'Quem são os 18 militares'.

[126]Salem and Bertelsen, 'Emergent police states', p. 88.

[127]Oosterbaan and Machado, 'Postsecular pacification'.

[128]Piero Leirner, 'Hybrid warfare in Brazil: The highest stage of the military insurgency', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 10:1 (2020), pp. 41–9; Rodrigo Lentz, *República de Segurança Nacional: Militares e Política No Brasil* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2022).

[129]Rodrigo Lentz and Ana Oliveira, 'Com a Bíblia e com o fuzil: Notas exploratórias sobre a ascensão evangélica nas forças armadas', *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*, 10:2 (2022), pp. 351–67.

Exactly how much the military guided the religious affairs of the government is something that warrants further research, but there is evidence that this was pursued by the above-referenced military elite. In an interview with the press in July 2019, General Rêgo Barros, who oversaw the military-religious project in Rio, claimed that the government would 'naturally seek an ideological alignment [with Evangelicals], which is something natural for those who have in the core of their daily lives the values of family, values against corruption, which is what our country needs so much'.[130] General Braga Neto, during a campaign rally in an Evangelical church before the second round of the elections, said to the audience that 'we are all brothers in Christ. I believe in the prophecy that Brazil will be the fatherland of the Gospel. I really believe it. This is not politics, ok?'[131] Then, he made an association between moral values – which in his views were being destroyed by 'gender ideology' – and warfare:

> I have been in war, I was in East Timor during combat, and I realised that those who suffer the most are children, the elderly, and women … And I began to worry a lot about children, because I saw many children suffering, both abroad in [East] Timor and in the communities in Rio, where, you know, I was the federal intervenor … [During the intervention] I also learned this: to destroy is easy, but to reconstruct is very difficult.[132]

Reconstruction, or order building, is precisely what pacification operations and doctrine entail.[133] However, just like in the UPP experiment, Braga Netto was associating the task of reconstruction with the spread of moral religious values. Underpinning this approach is an embrace of the logic of proximity or community policing,[134] in which the reconstruction phase of pacification implies building trust relations with the population and attending a local community's needs. Whereas in the case of Rio's pacification community policing was translated as a conservative alliance with Evangelical organisations, the same process can be observed elsewhere in the country in terms of policing, with many military police forces utilising the Evangelical military chaplaincy to achieve similar goals.

In São Paulo, for instance, the Association of Evangelical Military Police Officers, known as PMs de Cristo (or Officers for Christ), has become the de facto military chaplaincy of the state and since 2015 has established a partnership with the state government to work on community policing projects. According to PMs de Cristo ideologues, community policing is an instrument to 'orient political transformations'[135] and the police chaplain, a community broker who can 'potentialise what is good in society' so that 'evil doesn't take hold of public spaces'.[136] PMs de Cristo, alongside many other Evangelical police associations across the country, have been key articulators of far-right politicisation within military police barracks.[137] According to a recent survey, Evangelical police officers have been disproportionately

[130]'Porta-Voz: Bolsonaro busca "alinhamento ideológico" em novo ministro do supremo', *Isto É* (15 July 2019), available at: {https://acervo.istoe.com.br/porta-voz-bolsonaro-busca-alinhamento-ideologico-em-novo-ministro-do-supremo/#google_vignette}. While Evangelical influence in policy is not something particularly new in Brazil, Bolsonaro's government was the first to fully align ideologically with conservative Evangelicalism.

[131]Igor Passarini, 'Em igreja em BH, Braga Netto e Zema pedem voto para Bolsonaro e atacam o PT', *Estado de Minas* (19 October 2022), available at: {https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2022/10/19/interna_politica,1409281/em-igreja-em-bh-braga-netto-e-zema-pedem-voto-para-bolsonaro-e-atacam-o-pt.shtml}.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Tyler Wall, Parastou Saberi and Will Jackson, 'Introduction', in Tyler Wall, Parastou Saberi and Will Jackson (eds), *Destroy, Build, Secure: Readings on Pacification* (Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2017), pp. 5–12.

[134]Müller and Steinke, 'Community policing's extended military history'.

[135]Evandro T. Alves, *A Polícia e a Igreja: uma parceria para o desenvolvimento da comunidade e o combate à violência* (Pompeia: Universidade da Família, 2012), p. 11.

[136]Fieldwork interview, 2022.

[137]Rodrigo D. E. Campos, 'The new Christian militarism: Evangelical base-building with the oolice in Brazil', PhD diss., University of York, Department of Politics and International Relations (2024), p. 288.

more engaged in online radical activities compared to officers from other religions, agnostic, or atheists.[138]

In Brazil, the introduction of community policing has been hailed as the strengthening of democratisation processes within police institutions and regarded as an important step in modernising security governance to include human rights provisions. Since the 1990s, many military police organisations have undergone institutional reforms and incorporated community policing as a move to distance the image of the police from the authoritarian era. The same logic was present in the military's engagement in Port-au-Prince and Rio. Incentives for participating in MINUSTAH were part of Lula's broader foreign policy strategy, utilising the discourse of 'non-indifference' and 'solidarity diplomacy' to participate in cooperation initiatives and peacekeeping operations with the active role of the Ministry of Defence.[139] For the Workers' Party governments, this was also an opportunity to set a new role and public image for the military as an institution guided by human rights principles. The National Defence Strategy of 2008 and the White Book of National Defence of 2012 were official documents that reflect attempts to create a democratic and transparent defence policy.

While community policing and the local turn in the Brazilian military's international and domestic operations received political support from progressive sectors, these mechanisms were reappropriated as counter-insurgency assets on the one hand, and as a means to enable political projection, on the other. Jonas's testimonial is instructive here. As a military chaplain during the occupations in Rio, he began his career 'believing in that which in Public Security people call proximity policing'. In reality however, the experience turned out to be a lot different:

> When you see the thing in *locus*, I became disillusioned completely, and that's when I left the army. So many things can go wrong, I don't even know where to start. You expose locals, whoever supports you is exposed … You invite some people to take part in the project, some accept it willingly, but within a year the army leaves [the territory]. There was a pastor who dived deeply in the project with us, but as soon as the army left, he had to flee from the territory. He called me and I couldn't do anything. What was I supposed to do, put him inside my house?

This passage reflects not only the failure of the military occupation – which, as soon as the military left, opened ways for criminal organisations to rearticulate territorially and seek revenge against supporters of the occupying forces – but also how the instrumentalisation of religious leaders fell short of introducing better public services for the population. Describing similar cases in the United States, Griffith argues the 'social sentimentalization of community policing' by Evangelicals does not 'fundamentally challenge the power, funding, or deployment of police as a response to social problems that could be addressed in other ways'.[140] In fact, in Brazil it has been an important pathway to strengthening the far right.

Closing remarks

This article explored the connections between Brazil's recent contribution to peace processes and the rise of the far right. While much scholarship examines how authoritarian tendencies in conflict-ridden nations may be intensified by peacebuilding, this study has shed light on how liberal

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[138]Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 'POLÍTICA E FÉ ENTRE OS POLICIAIS MILITARES, CIVIS E FEDERAIS DO BRASIL', São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (2020), available at: {https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/pesquisa-politica-e-fe-entre-os-policiais-militares-civis-e-federais-do-brasil-0608.pdf}.

[139]J. F. Finazzi and R. Amaral, 'Brazil's international insertion in the military aspect, defence and international security: The Brazilian Ministry of Defence, its armed forces in UN peacekeeping operations and the case of Haiti', in Luís Moita and Luís Valença Pinto (eds), *Espaços económicos e espaços de segurança* (Lisbon: Observare, 2017), p. 435462.

[140]Aaron Griffith, 'Policing is a profession of the heart': Evangelicalism and modern American policing', *Religions*, 12:3 (2021), pp. 14–15.

peacebuilding can contribute to authoritarianism and de-democratisation within the deploying nation itself.[141] This phenomenon is exemplified by the connections between Brazil's leading role in the pacification of Port-au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro and its effect on strengthening the process of far-right mainstreaming.

The contradictions of the liberal project of promoting democracy, social justice, and human rights through a militarised logic have brought different results compared to those announced by the official optimism in both Port-au-Prince and Rio. Pacification efforts ultimately meant a strong resort to military and repressive actions. Praise for the military and its 'robust actions' in Haiti, without accountability, led to growing demands for a relaxation of the internal rules regarding the use of force by domestic security actors. Violent militarism became one of the hallmarks of Bolsonaro's government, a trait significantly moulded by the military's pervasive presence in critical civilian posts. As shown, veterans from Port-au-Prince and Rio became some of the most important agenda-setters in the far-right administration.

Another key vector of this was the mobilisation of religion in the pacification of Rio de Janeiro. The military strategically engaged with religious actors, both internally to boost troop morale and externally to bolster legitimacy for the occupation and as a mechanism of intelligence gathering. This engagement extended to the development of a doctrine recognising the crucial role of religious assistance in operations. Underlying this experiment was a politically conservative project, characterised by a civilising mission entwined with a spiritually redemptive discourse as part of the military's blueprint for order-building. The military-crafted vision of pacification depicted *favelas* as places in need of salvation, a narrative embraced by both officials and religious leaders. According to Salem and Bartelsen, at the UPPs, 'increasing police [and military] involvement in favela sociability reflects broader trends toward a reconfiguration of the social through the logic of security – including the merging of security politics with right-wing moralism and reactionary discourses on gender, sexuality, and race'.[142] Thus, we have argued that one way in which the far right has been strengthened in Brazil is through the Port-au-Prince–Rio connection. While it certainly did not cause the rise of Bolsonarismo – which also draws on other ideological sources of legitimation and social bases – both experiences prefigured the ways in which Bolsonaro's government later capitalised the politics of militarism and religion as a far-right platform.[143]

However, the origins of these dynamics were already being created in the heart of democracy and under the progressive governments of the Workers' Party. With the military elevated to a position of national political significance, it embraced, at least in theory, the core principles of liberal peacebuilding, adapting its own doctrines to reflect new global standards enshrined in the local turn in peacebuilding. The result, however, was a conservative reappropriation of these principles, which were used to advance military counter-insurgency rather than a commitment to contribute towards the development of marginalised communities. This points to the need to further investigate the nuanced forms with which liberal peacebuilding and counter-peace dynamics are co-produced in a hybrid fashion, as well as the impact of peacebuilding in the deployer country.

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[141]Harig, 'What difference does it make?'; Cunliffe, 'From peacekeepers to praetorians'.
[142]Salem and Bartelsen, 'Emergent police states', p. 102.
[143]Ibid.

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