



## THE CONTEMPORARY HUMANITARIAN DOMAIN OF PEACE

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**ABSTRACT:** This article intends to shed light on how relations of power (the imbrication of discourses, political practices and subjects) are being configured and re-configured since the mid-20th century in relation to peace, humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberalism. The methodology applied here is the “ethnography of documents”, developed by Annelise Riles, which considers the document as an analytical category and a methodological orientation. Therefore, the article is divided by the following subsections: i) relevant background literature on humanitarianism in order to situate the article with the current debate; ii) humanitarian peace discourses emerging in the mid 20th century, focusing on documents such as the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Human Development Report (1994); iii) humanitarian peace subjects that emerge in the humanitarian domain of peace: the neoliberal, resilient and adaptive subject and the rights holder subject, still waiting. By presenting the power dynamics of a new domain of peace, linked to humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberalism, we also engage on exploring how violence, inequality and abandonment are (re)produced in this process, so that it can help improving a work-in-progress by reflecting on the current state of human rights.

**KEYWORDS:** humanitarianism; human rights, resilience.

## O DOMÍNIO HUMANITÁRIO DE PAZ CONTEMPORÂNEO

**RESUMO:** Esse artigo tem como objetivo elucidar as relações de poder (imbricações discursivas, práticas políticas e subjetividades) que estão sendo configuradas e reconfiguradas desde a metade do século 20 no que concerne a paz, o humanitarismo, a resiliência e o neoliberalismo. A metodologia aplicada aqui é a “etnografia de documentos”, desenvolvida por Annelise Riles, que considera documentos como categoria analítica e orientação metodológica. Dessa forma, o artigo se divide nas seguintes seções: i) revisão de literatura relevante sobre o humanitarismo para situar o artigo com o debate atual; ii) discursos de paz humanitarista que vem emergindo desde a metade do século 20; iii) sujeitos de paz humanitarista que emergem no domínio de paz humanitarista, tais quais o sujeito neoliberal, resiliente e adaptativo e o sujeito de direito, ainda a espera. Ao apresentar essa dinâmica de relações de poder desse novo domínio de paz humanitarista, vinculado ao humanitarismo, resiliência e neoliberalismo, nós buscamos explorar como a violência, a desigualdade e o abandono acabam sendo reproduzidos nesse processo, de modo que possamos ajudar a refletir a respeito do estado atual dos direitos humanos e como avançar nessa temática.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** humanitarismo; direitos humanos, resiliência.



## Introduction

This article intends to present a new domain of peace - the humanitarian domain - that emerges after 1945, still in a gradual way, gaining strength after 1990. The political architecture of the Westphalian peace still persists after 1945, which means the notions of public-private, collective goods, borders, population, order, political unity, sovereignty, *et cetera*, did not simply dismantle in the course of this historical discontinuity. To indicate a transition between two domains of peace does not mean that we are asserting the end of notions inside and outside, or even the end of the police dispositive and diplomatic-military dispositive<sup>1</sup>. What we can perceive is the shift towards a new understanding of peace, in the sense that it acquires its own political agenda, with its specific political technologies and subjects in the “fabrication of peace”.

Therefore, we are able to capture a historical moment in which the notion of peace detaches from the Westphalian political scheme - even though there is still dialogue among them - guaranteeing new preoccupations, new discourses, practices and subjects. With a new understanding about what peace “is” or “must be”, it becomes epistemologically independent from the principle of sovereignty, meaning that, if thinking about peace meant we had to think about “sovereignty”, “political unity” and “inside-outside” in an indispensable way, now there are other pillars that sustain this new field of knowledge – new discourses on peace – like “universal human rights”, “human security”, “linkage between security and development”, “global responsibility”, *et cetera*.

With that in mind, what changes with the emergence of the humanitarian peace domain is that the ontological subject of peace used to revolve around the “State”, and now it extends to the “Planet” or the “Humanity” as a whole. In a few words, it is defined by its direct mechanisms of intervention intended to manage resilient and vulnerable populations and introject democratic-liberal conducts in the subjects. By trying to understand “peace” historically and discursively, without essentializing it as a “thing-in-

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<sup>1</sup> While the dispositive of police was responsible for ensuring the consolidation of a “state political unity” through the political technology of public administration and development of internal forces, the diplomatic-military dispositive was concurrently engaged on the pursuing of an equilibrium of power among nations and on fostering an architecture of a political-military matrix (FOUCAULT, 2008).



itself”, our main objective is to shed light on how relations of power (the imbrication of discourses, political practices, subjects) are being configured and re-configured since the mid-20th century in relation to peace, humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberal practices. In other words, we will draw a “humanitarian peace” not in its essence, but according to its effects and subjects that are constituted and constitutes themselves in a historical process. By disentangling from the idea of a “peace *per se*” and, by accepting a peace as a discursive ontology, our effort here is to shed light on the complexity of relations among political discourses, micro political practices and subjectivation processes.

On the next section, we will first present the methodology to be used during the article, which is the “ethnography of documents”, developed by Annelise Riles, which considers the document as an analytical category and a methodological orientation. In the second section, we will present recent and relevant literature on humanitarianism in order to situate our article with the current debate. Our third section refers specifically to the humanitarian peace discourses and how humanitarianism goes on to become central to an international politics of peace. Fourthly, we outline two subjectivities intertwined with these discourses: the “neoliberal, resilient and adaptive subject” and the “rights holder subject, still waiting”. We try to highlight how these subjects, embedded in this power dynamics, no longer sees resistance as an action of structural transformation. As a conclusion, we not only aim at presenting the power dynamics of a new domain of peace, linked to humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberalism, but we also perceive how violence, inequality and abandonment are reproduced in this process.

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

In order to highlight the specific connections that bring together the humanitarian discourses in the U.N. documents and their various effects on politics and on the subjects, we will follow the “ethnography of documents” approach developed by Annelise Riles. In accordance with the author, documents are “artifacts of modern



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knowledge practices and, in particular, knowledge practices that define ethnography itself" (RILES, 2006, p.7). Therefore, accepting a document as an “ ethnographic object, an analytical category, and a methodological orientation” (p. 7) can be a sharp strategy to shed light on the field of the ethnographer and to assist him in finding patterns, distortions, specificities, connections, processes of subjectivation, mentalities or emerging political practices.

Documents are representative of a specific historical context and, very often, they are constituted by webs of discourses already existent before them. In this sense, documents should be analyzed beyond their content and authors. What we mean is that the discourses inherent in these documents, concepts, preoccupations, values, *et cetera*, transcend their essence, or their work (artifact), representing, in reality, the extension of a political-historical context of the time (POCOCK, 1995). Moreover, these documents reflect practices and concepts already historically “normalized” or that are in the process to become “normal” and “natural”. Documents, henceforth, should be treated as a cultural and political artifact that not only reproduces but also sustains numerous webs of power (RILES, 2006).

The author invites us to comprehend political connections through institutional and bureaucratic channels, which can highlight new problematics, discontinuities, transformations and perspectives. In a first moment, it is possible to epistemologically engage with the documents and its content, with the means to better understand the way in which a certain individual, group or people has thought it and produced it, and how that knowledge stands in relation to other parallel sets of knowledge. In a second moment, there is a possibility of approaching the document through a strategic-political bias, in order to specifically comprehend the power relations that precede it, the textual techniques that are mobilized (key concepts, focus on specific populations, constructions of space-time notions, *et cetera*), the later effects generated by the document, its symbolic value in that specific context, its capacity for political influence, among others.

The following questions are some of which may assist the researcher when analyzing a document? i) Which documents are relevant for the purpose of your



research? ii) If your documents are formal reports, which were the background documents used to produce those reports? iii) Which are the limits and borders (conceptual, geographical, epistemological, methodological, moral, social, *et cetera*) implicitly or explicitly stipulated by the document? vi) How the narratives of “positive information” and “negative information” are constructed? v) What is the rationale behind privileging certain information, methodology, perspective or speeches/discourses? vi) how does the document define the political and social networks contextualized? vii) In addition to the background documents, which other way does the document interact with other artifacts? (SHANKAR; HAKKEN, 2014, p. 33).

Therefore, it is essential to analyze the relationship among discourses, political practices and subjects, not only identifying the discourses that are on the surface of a domain of knowledge considered as legitimate, but also understanding the mechanisms that codify these discourses and materialize specific realities and mentalities.

The main documents to be analyzed in this article will be the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Human Development Report (1994). Throughout the ethnography of documents approach, we chose those three documents for our analysis because they represent historically in a more meticulous way the ontological and epistemological borders, limits, divisions and ruptures that occurred in relation to peace and humanitarianism. These documents are historically important to such extent that they create the discursive possibilities for new reports and texts to come, most of the times in a clearer and more explicit way. Even though many other documents shed light on the new understandings of peace, their political mechanisms and new processes of subjectivation<sup>2</sup>, we chose these three documents because they are building blocks for a historical, epistemological and ontological *discontinuity* in the realm of peace and humanitarian action.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, we could have explored also the following documents: An Agenda for Peace, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (The Capstone Doctrine) and the Yearbooks of the United Nations.



## 2. BACKGROUND LITERATURE ON HUMANITARIANISM

Different meanings were attributed to humanitarianism throughout time, with shifts in its discourses and practices. Humanitarian action as a “moral reason” (sustained by a vocabulary of compassion<sup>3</sup>) aligned to a political rationality of liberal society, for instance, can be traced back to the early Enlightenment, “inspired by the new belief that you could do something to intervene in what fate, or God, had in store for you or others” (REID-HENRY, 2013, p. 421). This moral reason, embedded historically in the discourses of humanitarianism, has been followed by the triad notions of neutrality, impartiality and independency<sup>4</sup> (CHRISTIE, 2015).

Anchored on these historical discourses, humanitarian action was undertaken throughout the last centuries, for instance in the abolish slavery movements of 1830 onwards (HASKELL 1985; SKINNER & LESTER, 2012), in the import of liberal national economic systems with market-oriented policies to European colonies, or in war theaters accompanying troops. Where moral responsibility was underpinning humanitarian action in order to face problems of famine, tropical diseases, civil war violence or poverty, a political economy rationality was accompanying it by setting the most effective public policy market-based techniques and underlying the best laws to be framed in these localities (REID-HENRY, 2013). The works of Lester and Skinner (2012) and Lambert and Lester (2004) are very illustrative of the web of relations that played out during colonialism and anti-slavery discourses post-1830 between humanitarianism (with its moral reason) and the structures of the empire (with its liberal economic rationality). If humanitarian action, with its moral reason and liberal economic political role, used to be activated in the interstices of sovereignty – for instance accompanying soldiers abroad – nowadays, since the mid of the 21st century, it has gained centrality in the politics of peace and started to play the role of redefining the own concept of sovereignty, of war, interventionism and government (GUILHOT, 2012; BORNSTEIN &

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<sup>3</sup> Some of these discourses comprise the ethos of helping others, the notion of shared humanity, the willing to sacrifice oneself for another and the moral duty to do so (CHRISTIE, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Redfield (2013), by analyzing the history of *Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)*, explores further how neutrality has been used as a strategic discourse (never materialized) in order to create spaces of possibility of humanitarian action.



REDFIELD, 2011; FASSIN, 2011). This discontinuity, which will be presented in the next sections, is reflected on how the realm of humanitarianism and peace changed in relation to new practices of international politics, to new understandings of sovereignty and to the constitution of new subjects (REID-HENRY, 2013).

Numerous critical perspectives on humanitarianism arose over time, questioning the games of truth that has been surrounding humanitarian action and its reproduced violence. For instance, the critical peace studies perspective aims at criticizing mainly the neoliberal practices and its production of violence and economic inequality generating, consequently, local resistance<sup>5</sup>. Richmond, for example, reiterates the need to resist neoliberal practices by valuing culture, tradition and local ontology and by accepting peacebuilding as an emancipatory process where the day-to-day practices, human security and social development are of utmost importance. By words of Richmond:

Critical theory offers a normative view of the world in which an emancipatory peace should be the objective of IR, this means that nature of the system, social structures and human nature are not immutably rooted in dynamics and cycles of violence, enabling its transformative agenda to transcend that of disciplinary and regulative liberal agendas. The issues of marginalisation, exclusion, domination and inequality provide an important focus then, in the critical quest to reconstitute IR as a site of a search for an emancipatory peace rather than deterministic and rationalistic institutional governance, oppression or revolution. This ontology of peace is dispersed, multi-centred, indicative of agency, and anti-hegemonic, and requires a complex interrogation of sites of power, resistance and marginalisation, in order to achieve its ontological ambitions (RICHMOND, 2008, p. 125-126;147).

There is also a scholarship that draws on Foucault's concept of *governmentality*<sup>6</sup> in order to assess current transformations on humanitarian international practices and to capture how a contemporary humanitarian rationality is governing precarious conditions

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<sup>5</sup> Worth mentioning theorists aligned to this critical perspective: Oliver Richmond, Roland Paris, Ken Booth, Kristoffer Lidèn, Roger Mac Ginty, Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, Timothy Donais, John Paul Lederach, John G. Cockell, Michael Pugh and others.

<sup>6</sup> Governmentality refers to the structures which indicate how individuals or groups should conduct themselves. "To govern, in this sense, is to control the possibility field of action of others" (FOUCAULT, 2002).



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of life (FASSIN 2011; DUFFIELD, 2012; SELMECZI 2015; SOKHI-BULLEY 2011; NGUYEN 2010). Duffield (2012), more specifically, focuses on the link between humanitarianism and liberal development, shedding light on the notions of free market, democracy and intervention. Reid (2010), Edkins (2000) and Laqueur (1989) explore the shift from humanitarian disaster to humanitarian emergency type of intervention, where the objective is to preserve life (or a community), but not to the extent of empowering and restoring the means of livelihood. The ultimate goal is to produce means to make the precarious governable.

Alongside these works, scholars have been investigating resilience as a form of neoliberal governmentality that foments individual adaptability *vis-a-vis* externally imposed change in emergency or dangerous environments (JOSEPH, 2013; CHANDLER, 2014; EVANS & REID, 2013). Mark Duffield, for instance, engages on a critique of the digital humanitarianism that draws upon resilience and disaster management. Drawing on examples of cash-transfer programmes, Duffield comes to conclude that “resilience helps operationalize systems of experimental welfare abandonment under conditions of pervasive security surveillance. The aesthetic of smart is not to directly confront problems but, through immediate access to value-added information, to endlessly sidestep them” (DUFFIELD, 2016, p. 148). Suzan Ilcan and Kim Rygiel (2015), in a similar perspective, draw attention to the link among resilience, neoliberal government and the issue of humanitarian emergency governance of refugees through camps, in order to criticize a particular reason of care that ultimately responsabilizes the other.

Other literature contributions have been focusing more on the connectivity of humanitarian practices and capitalism, such as Haskell (1985), Butler (2011), Reid-Henry (2013) and Mitchell (2010), while other scholars have been given attention to the “innovation turn” in contemporary humanitarianism, where new technologies and markets become the tool to emergency relief and humanitarian action, promoting the notion of self-reliant subjects (SCOTT-SMITH, 2016, 2014; AGATHANGELOU, 2017; JACOBSEN, 2015).



Drawing on the aforementioned background and literature, our intention for the next sections is to shed light on the interconnectivity of the notions of humanitarianism, peace and intervention, by illustrating the knowledge-power-subjects nexus at work through an ethnography of documents approach. What is central here is the functioning of a new discursive ontology of peace alongside a redefined way of humanitarian practices through direct mechanisms of intervention intended to manage precarious lives<sup>7</sup>. In a few words, by presenting the power dynamics of a new domain of peace, linked to humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberalism, we engage on exploring how violence, inequality and abandonment are (re)produced in this process, so that it can help improving a work-in-progress by reflecting on the current state of human rights.

### **3. HUMANITARIAN PEACE DISCOURSES**

The nuclear period that followed the end of World War II, distinguished by the narrative of the potential total destruction of the globe by nuclear weapons can, in fact, be considered a narrative in which the peace discourses fit a Westphalian domain, if we take into consideration those discourses on sovereignty, inside-outside, peace as something achieved by the avoidance of war among countries, *et cetera*. However, the knowledge on humanitarian peace starts to acquire notoriety – even though still gradual and timid – in relation to the domain that precedes it. The nuclear threat narrative should not be taken for granted as the *only history* in this period, and we will try to “excavate” humanitarian knowledge that is yet emerging in the mid 20th century. Hence, differently from affirming a drastic historical turn, we want to highlight the fight for political space between these two domains of peace, with an emphasis on the humanitarian one.

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<sup>7</sup> The focus of the article will be on the discourses and subjects that are involved in these dynamics of humanitarianism and peace. Due to the size and focus of the article, the political mechanisms will be mentioned only briefly during a few examples.



The games of truth<sup>8</sup> that start to take shape after World War II, giving legitimacy to humanitarian peace discourses, can be divided in three great discursive strategies: i) the peace discourse about the individual (one) and about humanity (whole), to the detriment of a State-like peace discourse; ii) the security discourse as a “civilizing mission”, “cosmopolitan project”, “global responsibility”, which goes beyond any principle about “sovereignty” or “inalienable national political autonomy” (JABRI, 2010) and iii) the discursive link between security and development (DUFFIELD, 2007). The sets of knowledge to be presented below are based on these three strategies.

The first knowledge we consider to be responsible for the shift from domains of peace is the transition from the *jus gentium* notion, established by authors such as Suárez, de Vitória and Gentili, to the *jus inter gentes* notion. This transition meant a new understanding of peace (ontological turn), which before was based on the peaceful relationship among States, but now gives space to a humanitarian law that advocates in favor of the peaceful relationship among equal men (universally). States, however, continue to be discursively accepted as an important instrument to guarantee this humanitarian law. Differently from the classic law framework (*jus gentium*), the sets of knowledge that emerge with the *jus inter gentes* manifest themselves more explicitly through international multilateral documents, such as the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Human Development Report (1994), among others. According to Emmanuelle Tourme-Jouannet (2013):

After 1945, several new phenomena were developed, which affected incontestably the international law: the expansion and the subsequent collapse of the communist regimes, the development of international organizations, especially United Nations family, the abolition of the right to war, the decolonization and the acclaim for the right of peoples (the self-determination of peoples), the international recognition of human rights, the end of Cold War and the advent of the last neoliberal globalization wave. All of that enhanced the opening of classical categories about which of the

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<sup>8</sup> The Foucauldian idea of “games of truth” is, first and foremost, a criticism to the logocentric science, based on a universal and rational truth. The games of truth refer to a constellation of rules of discourses that historically produce regimes of truth; in other words, to analyse the games of truth is to deny the search for a rational and transcendental truth, focusing instead on reality and on what is constituted historically as a truth. In sum, they are the rules that lead the subjects to distinguish the “true” from the “false” (REVEL, 2005).



international rights were fortified: the distinction between public and private, inside and outside, hierarchical inner order and policentric outer order, State as subject and individual as object, the principle of the equivalence of norms, the distinction between internal needs and international interests (TOURME-JOUANNET, 2013, p. 15, Translated by Us).

With that in mind, the Charter of the United Nations of 1945 already display its first discourses embedded in the logic of a law based on the ontology of the individual and of humanity, by affirming in its article 1 of “purposes and principles”:

To achieve international cooperation in order to solve international problems of an economic, social, cultural or **humanitarian** nature, and in order promote and stimulate the respect for **human rights** and for the **fundamental freedoms of all**, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion (UN CHARTER 1945, 5, Highlighted by Us).

Discourses present in the legal framework of the Charter go beyond the *jus gentium* paradigm, reaching out to the *jus inter gentes*, when they highlight political preoccupation with human rights and rights of the peoples. In addition to article 1, it is possible to identify similar discourses on the preamble, on article 11(3b), article 26, article 61(2), article 68 and article 76(c) (UN CHARTER 1945).

Another notion that conforms the humanitarian domain of peace can be perceived in the transition from the *jus ad bellum* to the *jus contra bellum*. Meanwhile the *jus ad bellum* refers to the “just wars” theories and to the right of the State to engage on war (as theorized by Pufendorf and Gentili), *jus contra bellum* is defined as a legal mechanism *against* war and the use of force. Article 2(4) from the Charter of the United Nations, for example, affirms that “all members should avoid the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or the political dependency from any State” (UN CHARTER 1945, 6).

In the wake of these discourses in favor of *jus contra bellum*, there is imbued the concept of “collective security”, where war is not anymore recognized as an instrument of legitimate action. What is legitimate now is a collective international action aimed at guaranteeing world peace and preventing “acts of aggression” from dissident States.



The maintenance of peace, in this collective logic, do not depend anymore on each State *per se*, nor on the balance of power that foments equilibrium among States; it depends on a collectivity that must act through a logic of intervention, with surgical and punctual actions, and with the mentality to seek to correct anomalies from a established international order. With that in mind, the order continues to be international, and the State continues to have its central role in this disposition, but now having to work alongside humanitarian actors, such as NGO's, UN Agencies, civil societies, *et cetera*, not anymore in the interstices of politics. A new domain of peace emerges with new political practices to serve as surgical actions - and the individual/humanity becomes the new objectified target of these practices.

Responsibility for security now belongs to everyone – at least in the Charter's discourse – and the Westphalian peace categories start to be confronted. On article 1(1), for example, it is mentioned the need to “take, collectively, measure to avoid threats to peace and repress acts of aggression or any other type of disruption to peace”; equally, this argument is reproduced on article 42 of chapter VII.

Hence, it is evident how the Charter of 1945 reflects, although timidly, discourses from the humanitarian domain of peace that opposes the Westphalian domain of peace and fortify two great discursive emergent strategies: i) the ontological turn of the individual/humanity and ii) security as a global responsibility. On the other hand, there is a direct dialogue between humanitarian discourses and modern Westphalian categories, since States are the ones that mobilize the Charter in order to call upon human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Another important international document to be analyzed is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which underlines the idea of “individual with equal and inalienable rights” and of “human security”. Although visible the acknowledgement of the State as an ontological reality, the Declaration is still strong here because it regards the individual as a global actor with rights and duties. The discourses here consider individuals as agents that exist in an universal humanitarian space above any government or territorial delimitation. As mentioned by Jabri (2010, p.46), the “whole ‘human’ is then perceived in relation to the cosmopolitan right, which in turn positions



itself in opposition to the sovereignty right”. On articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration, for instance, it affirms:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (UNIVERSAL DECLARATION... 1948, Art. 1).

All human beings have the capacity to enjoy rights and freedoms established in this Declaration (...). No distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. (UNIVERSAL DECLARATION... 1948, Art. 2).

The need to think security beyond States also is present in the discursive strategy of the Declaration, as on article 3, which affirms that “all human beings have the right to life, freedom and personal security”, argument that repeats itself on article 22 stating that “Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization(...) of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”.

In the post-Cold War scenario, it is worth mentioning the UN Human Development Report of 1994, which directly challenges the ontology of the State as a central entity to promote security, development and peace. In other words, the individual becomes the object of security and the subject of peace. For instance, security is not related solely in the lens of “nuclear holocaust”, but rather it relates to threats linked to “global poverty traveling across international borders in the form of drugs, HN/AIDS, climate change, illegal migration and terrorism” (HDR, 1994, p.24), meaning that threats to human security are of economic, food, environmental, individual and communitarian concern. Henceforth, this report reifies the individual as ontologically unique and, at the same time, as part of Humanity, concomitantly with the discourse of a diffuse security that can no longer limit itself to national terrains. Moreover, it is explicitly in this document the emphasis on the nexus security-development.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The link between security and development started being consolidated since the beginning of 1960, mainly with theorizations related to “sustainable development” (DUFFIELD, 2007).



Another set of knowledge that constitutes the humanitarian peace and complements *jus inter gentes* and *jus contra bellum* is the *peace studies*, specifically its contributions to *positive peace*. Peace studies, having its own epistemological delimitation, arose in the beginning of 1950, acquiring more academic strength in the mid-1960s. Important to shed light on Johan Galtung's contributions on "positive peace", since it is through this concept that peace studies gained strength to consolidate itself as an autonomous field, detaching from notions of a Westphalian peace taught under the fields of Political Science or International Relations. By opposing positive peace, which values interpersonal relations and culture, to a negative peace, which values a peace based on a temporary state of non-violence among States, Galtung reinforces the idea of thinking peace through a new ontological perspective, not based anymore on relation among States, but rather among individuals (GALTUNG, 1964, 1969). Such knowledge had direct influence in the development of peacekeeping operations. In accordance to Galtung, positive peace offers individuals conditions to emancipation from a series of dependencies that they face daily (GALTUNG, 1969).

Therefore, Galtung explicitly tries to disrupt the traditional paradigm of peace, both epistemologically and ontologically, showing the limitations of negative peace and giving emphasis on the need to rethink peace as a positive one, oriented by the promotion of a social system underpinned by the individual, by non-violence culture, human security, universal needs, solidarity and collective administration of potential conflicts. In this context, new perspectives and debates gained ground, such as bottom-up, transnational networks, civil diplomacy, local resistance, human emancipation, NGO global roles, peacebuilding, statebuilding and hybridism. In other words, with the contributions of Galtung, in order to think about peace and international relations one cannot limit its analysis considering only relations among States, but also individuals and its importance to constitute systemic peace, humanity, security and development. Ontology of the individual/humanity, cosmopolitan project, link between security and development, is the triad that will cross a majority of peace perspectives, forging this historical domain of peace that we are speaking of, and necessarily bringing to the front the need for interventionist humanitarianism.



Furthermore, Scott-Smith well illustrates these neoliberal practices embedded in the humanitarian action and vocabulary. Even though the private sector has followed western humanitarian agents since its very early days, there has been a relatively recent discursive shift on the public-private collaborations for humanitarian action. The author tracks down this emerging “business vocabulary”: for the traditionally recognized “beneficiaries” of aid, they are now referred to as “consumers of aid”. For the “aid agencies”, they are often considered as “suppliers of humanitarian goods”. The “donors” of the humanitarian programmes come to be recognized as “buyers” (SCOTT-SMITH, 2016). As a consequence, other concepts arise in the day-to-day discourses, such as “consumer protection”, “data protection”, “effectiveness”, “market-integrated relief”, “humanitarian market” (SANDVIK, 2017). In this perspective, humanitarianism becomes a market-oriented phenomenon, transforming it into an economic transaction and removing the human relationship among actors. Since aid has become a commodity, its “efficiency” is based on technical market strategies and on an impersonal relationship among independent parties.

An example of this is given by Sandvik (2017), who analyses the partnership between the World Food Programme (WFP) and MasterCard during a humanitarian action aimed at financially capacitating the “aid recipients” or, in their case, the “clients”. By providing digital innovation in order to tackle poverty and hunger, this programme wants to incorporate these people living under precarious conditions into a market economy through finances, with the rationality that they now have the tools to exercise their resilience amidst precarity. However, as Scott-smith argues, the “efficiency” and “market gains” is more directed towards aid workers and companies than to the beneficiaries, since it is often a limited change that does not have fundamental or structural impact in the community. With an attempt to transfer responsibility to the “recipient aid” with the argument that they need to be resilient and help themselves other than relying on the state, these humanitarian practices of population management become “oriented around the production of neoliberal citizens: disaster-affected people



who are linked to global markets and trained to see risk as an opportunity for enterprise and reinvention” (SCOTT-SMITH, 2016, p. 9-10).<sup>10</sup>

In summary, *jus inter gentes*, *jus contra bellum* and *peace studies* represent a few of the many political discourses that form a new web responsible to activate new political technologies. Moreover, to borrow the concept of Sokhi-Bulley, it constitutes a rationality that allows one to *govern through rights*, where rights are used as “truth weapons” in order to produce governable subjects, foreseeable conducts and normalized categories. We observe the emergence of a narrative of the individual as the central object in the game of international politics of peace, followed by the discourse on human security – focused on development – that goes beyond the Westphalian territorial delimitations and advocates in favor of a global, civilized humanitarian project. Conceptually, the fabrication of peace as a global politics comes to be deeply imbricated with humanitarianism. It is this new political idiom that reifies categories such as “individual”, “global governance”, “emancipation”, “development as freedom”, “responsibility to protect”, “cosmopolitan society”, “sustainable development”, “humanitarian intervention”, “bottom-up politics”, “peacebuilding” *et cetera*. Through these imperatives, we watch the activation of a domain of peace with a preoccupation towards the globe (or the planet), focused on global management and with cross-border conducts, rules and police mechanisms.

#### **4. HUMANITARIAN PEACE SUBJECTS**

The knowledge-power humanitarian link, which when activated creates these dynamics of global management of vulnerable populations, do not sustain itself without the new subjects of peace, that emerge through processes of subjectivation<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> For case studies illustrating the link between the management of precariousness and neoliberal mechanisms of market expansion, see PANDOLFI (2003); COLEMAN (2015) and NGUYEN (2010).

<sup>11</sup> “subjectivation modes” or “processes of subjectivation” correspond, in reality, to two types of analysis: on the one hand, processes of subjectivation transform human beings in subjects, meaning that there are only objectified subjects and, therefore, processes of subjectivation are practices of objectivation; on the



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Humanitarian new historical subjects that we will point out should not be seen in an absolutist, omnipresent and universal perspective, but rather as part of plural, dynamic, intertwined productions of subjectivity that configure and reconfigure every second in relation to knowledge and power.

In this section, we will bring to the surface subjects considered “vulnerable” and who live in target places being affected by these humanitarian micro powers and discourses. The question to be asked is: who is the subject that is sought when promoting a peacebuilding operation, when implementing an international police training or when helping precarious populations economically? Our preoccupation here is aimed at understanding the fabrication of the subjectivity of the “vulnerable” ones, and not the “emancipated willing to emancipate the other”. Amidst this web of knowledge and power, we identify the emergence of two specific subjects, divided in the economic and political-juridical realms, such as: *homo oeconomicus* (neoliberal, resilient and adaptive subject) and *homo juridicus* (rights holder subject, still waiting).

### ***Homo oeconomicus or neoliberal, resilient and adaptive subject***

Humanitarian peace drawn here is crossed by a neoliberal rationality, manifested for instance by peace operations with propositions of agriculture marketization, micro-financialization and rights to property. As highlighted by Foucault (2008), population management made under neoliberal politics – both internally to each country and internationally – is only possible if there exist subjected subjects that feedbacks these dynamics, such as *homo oeconomicus*. *Homo oeconomicus* is important for it is the subject that accepts, agrees upon, claims and abide to interventionist practices of governmental management, as long as these practices are dedicated to *produce conditions of freedom*. This environment, with possibilities for one to exert its freedom, is produced through political practices such as micro-finance, delivery of food for therapeutic feeding, *et cetera*. Hence, *homo oeconomicus* is captured as a subject of *self-government*, with eager to freedom, and awaits his governors to limit their action as

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other hand, it is the relationship one has with oneself, through certain techniques, allowing for oneself to be constituted as a subject of its own existence (REVEL, 2005, p. 82).

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to create an environment where this freedom can be exercised, by either consumption, lifestyle, mobility or economic opportunities.

*Homo oeconomicus*, who perceives itself as free and having sovereignty over itself, is a self-interested, rational being – always maximizing his utility and cost-benefit – and must respond in a fast and flexible way to the changes it may face in its environment. In addition, *homo oeconomicus* becomes the “entrepreneur of itself” (FOUCAULT 2008, 225, Translated by Us), having to invest capital in itself, unstoppably. This self-investment, called human capital, is what sustains the dynamics of competition among subjects amidst the game of power. Considered sovereign of itself, entrepreneur of itself, and free to exercise his own freedom, this subject also becomes responsible for its own failure or glory. To reinforce the point: political practices must not have as their objectives the guarantee of success, well-being or prosperity of the vulnerable governed ones; instead, politics becomes a tool for the production of spaces of possibilities for individuals to overcome precarity (ODY SSEOS, 2010).

*Homo oeconomicus* is the one that does, acts, has autonomy of decision, directs itself and do not depend on others to *adapt*, nor to face threats. In accordance to Julian Reid & Brad Evans (2013), neoliberal subject causes the *valorization of resilience*, where life can only thrive, grow and develop if exposed to the various threats, surpassing them afterwards. It is, therefore, a *resilient subject*. In sum, it is a matter of accepting the inevitability of the dangers of the world and not trying to dodge them, but to supplant them. As mentioned by Reid (2012, 148), “resilience is the human art of living (and loving) dangerously”. By understanding resilience as a constituent part of neoliberalism – at least historically – Evans & Reid affirm that “resilience is a form of neoliberal interventionism” that awakes in the subject a “self-propelling tendency and emancipatory orientation” (EVANS & REID 2013, p. 94).

For example, Duffield (2016) makes reference to the cash-transfer programmes ran through a digital smart technology and managed by humanitarian agencies from far distance. Resilience, in this case, is repositioned and aligned to a technoscience logics, which works alongside neoliberalism. The Hunger Safety Net Programme, acting upon half a million of chronically poor in northern Kenya, and providing them with around 40



cents per day through cash-transfer, is a good example of that. The Programme uses biometric registration technology based on fingerprinting of recipients of aid, which is monitored by local shopkeepers that are hired to work in precarious conditions as banking agents. International humanitarian agents work remotely. This digital security surveillance, promising welfare and peace, in fact do not solve structural problems, but lean on what they believe to be “resilient subjects” that should overcome precariousness by themselves with 40 cents a day. By connecting resilient subjects to the financial logics of capital, rather than fomenting progress and development, this programme ends up fabricating abandonment and legitimizing a logic of survivalism sustained by constant adaptation. Duffield calls it “resilience of abandonment” or “the resilience of the ruins”, which “betokens people that have no alternative but radical self-reliance” (DUFFIELD, 2016, p. 154).

The resilient subject, which manifests more explicitly in populations that are recipient of humanitarian practices, no longer sees resistance as an action of transformation of the external, the structural. Now, resilience – understood as a form of resistance – lies in the field of acceptability, of absorbing, overcoming and keep moving forward<sup>12</sup>. The subject sees a structure that is placed, without possibilities for questioning it, unless the questioning regards how to overcome its present effects (REID 2012). By words of Evans & Reid:

Resilience is premised upon the ability of the vulnerable subject to continually re-emerge from the conditions of its ongoing emergency. Life quite literally becomes a series of dangerous events. Its biography becomes a story of non-linear reactions to dangers that continually defy any attempt on its behalf to impress time with purpose and meaning. As the resilient subject navigates its ways across the complex, unknowable and forever dangerous landscapes that define the topos of contemporary politics, so the dangerousness of life becomes its condition of possibility rather than its threat (EVANS & REID, 2013, p. 87).

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<sup>12</sup> In order to further understand the theoretical basis that allowed the advent of resilience strategies in the field of emergency planning and response, we strongly suggest the reading of the articles: “The Nature of Resilience” (ZEBROWSKI, 2013), “Resilience as embedded neoliberalism” (JOSEPH, 2013) and Beyond Neoliberalism: resilience and the art of governing complexity” (CHANDLER, 2014).



Consequently, this is an adaptive subject that, for having the responsibility of its failure or glory in its own hands, and for being in an environment of constant dangers but that can offer it gradual emancipation and prosperity, sees itself in charge of making use of its “freedom” so to reinvent itself every second. The (re)inventing of the neoliberal, resilient and adaptive *homo oeconomicus* that is found on precarious situations, such as post-conflict or post-disaster localities, is always in relation to momentary dangers, never questioning, in reality, the political practices or discourses that reproduce global poverty or social inequality, for example.

Furthermore, this subject not only is responsible for its future prosperity – like the only thing stopping it is itself – but also must accept humanitarian interventions that can offer it an environment with new possibilities to exercise its freedoms, for instance through peacebuilding operations. As analyzed by Alt, “*homo oeconomicus* is the subject that accepts his reality and adjusts to changes in his environment. Poverty, therefore, implies new responsibilities for the poor to subject itself to certain types of conducts, such as modifying his agricultural practices or investing in activities that better connects it to the global market” (ALT, 2011, p. 9). The field of possibilities of “freedom” that is opened, in a way for the *homo oeconomicus* to seek for emancipation, limits itself in the field of neoliberal humanitarian peace practices. This subject will try his best to become the “self-sufficient consumer citizen”, with the freedom to decide over which products and services to consume, which transportation or economic opportunities (ODYSSEOUS, 2010). Once again quoting the example of Duffield (2016), the resilient subject that is targeted by the Hunger Safety Net Programme and receives 40 cents a day enters in the dynamics of *homo oeconomicus*, in so far as it has to adapt against the risky environment and exercise its freedom through market-oriented options.

To cite another example, it is worth mentioning the case study conducted by Tom Scott-Smith regarding the Plumpy’nut humanitarian product, a peanut paste for therapeutic feeding that has the objective of tackling malnutrition. This type of humanitarian intervention focuses only on “micro-worlds” and rely on individuals to adapt and strive by themselves after the Plumpy’nut is consumed and momentary starvation is halted. Borrowing the words from Scott-Smith, Plumpy’nut “suppresses structural



change, distort local markets” and “medicalizes hunger (...) at the expense of structural injustice”, for instance by replacing feeding clinics (SCOTT-SMITH, 2017, p. 14). Once again, this type of humanitarian technology ends up legitimizing a logics of survivalism sustained by constant adaptation, where starvation is tackled, but in return Plumpy’nut transfers all the responsibility to thrive, grow and develop to these individuals regardless of the other threats to be faced by them, “never attempting to address the underlying situation that made people hungry” (p. 15).

This process of subjectivation is crossed constantly by pastoral power, where sets of knowledge and humanitarian political practices have the function to introject in the fragile flocks the emancipatory and freedom spirit of the *homo oeconomicus*. At the same time security discourses existent in the humanitarian domain of peace bring forward political categories claiming for non-violence and minimum risk (or management of threats), there is also political discourses that claim for the acceptability of risks, of resisting (as a resilient subject), of adaptability, anticipation, absorption, empowerment, gradual emancipation and exercise of freedom. This political idiom that is shaped intertwines with humanitarian dispositives of power and with humanitarian subjects such as *homo oeconomicus*. It is this pastor-flock, superior-inferior, strong-fragile relationship that sustains the fabrication of neoliberal subjectivity.

We notice, however, that this *homo oeconomicus* is not present in all peace operations or in all target-populations of humanitarian interventions. In reality, it is a historical persona that can or not vivify itself in moments or specific contexts. Independently if this subjectivity is accepted, resisted, activated or simply denounced, what matter is that now it is part of the humanitarian domain of peace.

### ***Homo Juridicus or rights holder subject, still waiting***

By analyzing the sets of knowledge that orbit the humanitarian domain of peace (specially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), it is clear how human rights start to be considered as “moral rights” inherent to “all and each individual on the planet”, independently of the political or legal strategy of the sovereignty power of each State. A double dialogue in relation to sovereignty emerges. On the one hand, the political



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discourses claim from the State the recognition (in positive law) of an agenda based on democratic values, on social justice and on universal human rights. On the other hand, however, these same discourses oppose to the inalienable sovereign power, since this humanitarian agenda comprises issues of individual/universal matter – such as human freedom, planetary conservation or inherent human right to each and all – which must not be limited, constrained, moderated, relativized or questioned by the sovereign power. Important to notice in this political idiom that “human rights exist (as moral/natural rights), even when they do not exist (as legal rights)” (ODYSSEOUS, 2010, p. 758), and it is the crusade to guarantee these legal and political rights the basis for the process of subjectivation to occur, forming the *homo juridicus* rights holder subject, still waiting.

Sets of knowledge and power introject in the subjects the conviction that they must recognize themselves as individuals with inherent moral values and, subsequently, individuals that deserve to hold human rights. *Homo juridicus* perceives itself as a rights holder and is constantly claiming for them in the legal and political realms. *Homo juridicus* is, as well, self-governed, with eager to emancipate and sees itself as agent of social transformation. As pointed out by Selmeczi, “subjects of government are fabricated through ‘technologies of citizenship’, such as the ethos of active citizenship or the notion of empowerment” (SELMECZI, 2015, p. 1078). The type of transformation *homo juridicus* exerts, however, is oriented by humanitarian discourses, which means that the leverage to act is limited to matters of “cultural self-determination”, “individual freedom” or “development as freedom”, whereas its possibility to engage in more radical actions of social transformation is suppressed – like redistribution of wealth and land or agricultural reform. Its fight, or possibility of resistance, is limited to claim for [more] rights, on the condition that they fit on the liberal democratic legal framework, that is, humanitarian sets of knowledge. Odysseos (2010, p. 763) offers us an example of the Mexicans indigenous ‘peasants’ that previously used to identify themselves as agricultural workers engaged in the “material revolution”, and now are limited to claim for their recognition as “indigenous rights holder”, fighting for “cultural self-determination rights”.



As can be verified in the *homo oeconomicus*, *homo juridicus* must accept to be governed – managed – at least until it can guarantee the minimum possibilities to empower itself and to exert its own freedom. When “empowered”, *homo juridicus* becomes a rights holder (not only morally, but also legally and politically) and, at the same time, it continues to seek out for more rights. Hence, just as *homo oeconomicus* is captured and constrained by the subjectivity of resilience, hampering its will to take radical transformative actions, this also happens to *homo juridicus*, which resists only in the realm of humanitarian framework, restricting itself to the action of claiming for more democratic rights.

Subjects immersed in these processes are led to an “*aesthetics of existence*”, where the main focus on the day-to-day practices are to enhance autonomy and reduce government (SOKHI-BULLEY, 2013). What is promoted is a link between the subject and humanitarian practices of power fomenting sentiments of free choice, self-government and resilience against vulnerability. Not only the definition of a “rights holder subject, still waiting” concomitantly compels the “vulnerable in need for freedom” to act individually, it also creates an environment with reduced State participation on the social amelioration and fewer costly programmes focused on structural change (SELMECZI, 2015)<sup>13</sup>.

Humanitarian practices and the knowledge linked to it have the eager to produce this subjectivity as *homo juridicus* in these target populations. In humanitarian action, it is expected from the subjects to recognize themselves as “rights holder subjects, still waiting”, since, even though they are morally equal among others in the globe, they did not receive the possibility to exert their freedoms and nor were they empowered with the rights they deserve since birth. To quote Odysseos:

Where rhetorical, epistemic and performative practices have sought to engender *homo juridicus*, but the management of the conditions has failed to create and regulate ‘freedom’, the subject of human rights is not

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<sup>13</sup> As mentioned before, we do not deny the possibilities of counter conduct as resistance (ethical reconfigurations of power). For an example on how the South-african shack-dwellers movement Abahlali baseMjondolo resists this rationality of “governing through freedom” or “governing through rights”, see Anna Selmeczi (2015).



‘empowered’ (in Foucault’s sense of being ‘free to be free’). Rather, this subject becomes manifested as a ‘helpless victim’ ‘subjected to inhuman repression and inhuman conditions of existence’; here human rights ‘become the rights of those who have no rights... they become humanitarian rights, the rights of those who cannot enact them, the victims of the absolute denial of right’ (ODYSSEOS, 2010, p. 765).

Odysseos helps us to confront the understanding that to solve the problems of rightlessness subjects<sup>14</sup>, it must be invoked discourses and practices of human rights with its will to tackle oppression, suffering, injustice and abandonment. On the contrary, human (itarian) rights can be understood as

processes through which the law, the social order, state power and modern governmental rationalities entrench rightlessness as disposability. Rather than assuring a transitional part away from rightlessness, rights as an optics of rightlessness illuminate, and potentially disrupt, the practices of state, society and capital that treat humans as potential waste after use, transforming their availability into disposability (ODYSSEOS, 2015, p. 1053).

Production of subjectivity of the rights holder, still waiting, therefore, is indispensable for humanitarian interventions to be codified, legitimized and operationalized. With that in mind, vulnerable populations across the globe must accept interventions that can create new spaces of freedom – guaranteeing a “human security” – and that offers more human rights for these subjects to become “free to be free”. However, at the same time, the rights holder subject, still waiting, must perceive itself as a being willing to be empowered, to self-govern, to exert his energy on freedom and resistance –within what the humanitarian domain of peace allows, concedes and recognizes as resistance, that is, a resistance shaped on democratic legalism.

Hence, we have outlined two subjectivities intertwined that emerge in the humanitarian domain of peace: the neoliberal, resilient and adaptive subject and the

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<sup>14</sup> According to Louiza Odysseos, rightlessness subjects are those embedded in a process of abandonment and disposability, meaning that “rather than assuring a transitional path away from rightlessness, rights as an optics of rightlessness illuminate, and potentially disrupt, the practices of state, society and capital that treat humans as potential waste after use, transforming their availability into disposability” (ODYSSEOS 2015, 1053).



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rights holder subject, still waiting. Both subjects relate to the political discourses that recognize themselves as individuals with freedom and agency (one) and constituent part of humanity (whole).

Discursive human security as a “global responsibility” also becomes part of the fabrication of subjects, since it is the duty of the ones involved in the implementation of humanitarian interventions as much as it is the duty of those vulnerable subjects that must incorporate to themselves the eager to resilience, adaptation, freedom and achievement of human rights. The discursive link between security and development is key for these subjects to accept abiding to neoliberal power dispositives, which offer opportunities for consumption of goods and services and global market insertion, with the argument that development does not occur without human freedom – as thought by Amartya Sen.

## **CONCLUSION**

Humanitarian domain of peace is strictly linked to the discursive shift that took place in the realm of international politics of peace. If, previously, peace was thought as an extension of the Westphalian political architecture, what can be perceived now is a detachment from this notion of peace. Peace begins to acquire its own political idiom and its own political practices. In this new narrative of peace, the central preoccupation becomes the “fabrication of positive peace”, and not anymore the reaching for an “international non-violent environment through a balance of power”.

Notwithstanding the political, epistemological and ontological differences, the humanitarian domain of peace still dialogues/competes with the Westphalian domain of peace. The humanitarian agenda (human rights, human security, global responsibility, humanitarian intervention), for instance, at the same time that keeps a dialogue with the notions of “sovereignty” and “political unity”, claiming “Nation-States” for the recognition of these democratic values, also plays a conflictive role, with the argument that Westphalian practices must not manage omnipotently matters regarding individuals and



their respective “freedoms” and “conditions to individual emancipation”. Therefore, even though humanitarian peace becomes an autonomous realm, it is still linked to the sets of power relations existent in the Westphalian domain of peace, through dynamics of co-sustentation, withdrawal, competition or restriction.

It was possible to identify, as well, the several centers of power that corroborate the humanitarian domain of peace keeping it activated, mainly through daily capillary practices exerted by the subjects. Political discourses such as “resilience”, “emancipation”, “development as freedom”, “fabrication of peace”, “positive peace”, “humanity”, “planet”, “cosmopolitan responsibility” *et cetera*, are daily summoned, either by international institutions, NGOs, national and international police forces or by local populations.

It is through the capillarity of the political practices illustrated on the examples (such as cash-transfer, food for tackling malnutrition, *et cetera*) that becomes evident the historical process that fabricates this contemporary domain of peace. These materialized micro powers are responsible for the *politization of humanitarianism*, through a rationality of responsibility of individuals and planetary conservation, with the intent to protect and promote a life of manageable populations and construct pacific and governable spaces.

In a nutshell, it was possible to analyze how the humanitarian domain of peace gained shape since the mid-20th century in regard to peace, humanitarianism, resilience and neoliberal practices. We drew a “humanitarian peace” not in its essence, but according to its effects and subjects that are constituted and constitutes themselves in all this process (such as *homo oeconomicus* and *homo juridicus*). By disentangling from the idea of a “peace *per se*” and, by accepting a peace as a discursive ontology, it was feasible for us to shed light on the complexity of relations among political discourses, micro political practices and subjectivation processes. Through these three axes in constant feedback, the humanitarian domain of peace cannot be seen solely as a “possibility to construct a peaceful and secured planet”, but as well as a domain that produces and reproduces distinct modes of violence, inequality and abandonment.



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