Self-determination between the Challenges of Diversity and Liberal Peace Dictates

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ABSTRACT
Self-determination is a crucial concept in establishing the legitimacy of political communities in the international system, and thereby in constructing social identities and political loyalties. At the most general level, self-determination refers to an idea of a right to freedom. In international politics, it also refers to a norm on ways of bounding political communities. At the same time, what self-determination precisely means is contested and contingent. I argue that self-determination evolves today amidst a tension between the challenges of diversity and liberal peace dictates. While diversity has to do with varieties of cultural expression, socioeconomic organization and political status, liberal peace dictates concern global governance practices that tend to impose previous liberal models of democracy, development and human rights. The essay first

Introduction

In the context of modernity, self-determination has been a crucial concept in establishing the legitimacy of political communities, and thereby in constructing social identities and political loyalties. At the most general level, self-determination refers to an *idea* of a right to freedom. In international politics, it also refers to a *norm* on ways of bounding, constituting and governing political communities. At the same time, what self-determination precisely means is contested and contingent, and the concept has been the site of deep tensions and contradictions (e.g. Koskenniemi, 1994; Cassese, 1995; Falk, 2002; Weller, 2005; Hurrell, 2007). In this article I argue that self-determination evolves today amidst a tension between the challenges of diversity and liberal peace dictates. While diversity has to do varieties of cultural expression, socioeconomic organization and political status, liberal peace dictates concern global governance practices that tend to impose previous liberal models of democracy, development and human rights. The tension between diversity and liberal peace mainly reveals itself in the post-colonial world, where many deadly conflicts impinge on relations, institutions and practices of governance, and where western powers, IO and NGO most strive to build liberal states and markets.

In the first section of this article I present the evolution of the meaning of self-determination in world politics. In the second section I address critical approaches on liberal peace. In the third section I will address theoretical discussions on self-determination that join critical theories of a state-centered world order which try to devise other ways of building political communities and relations. In the fourth section I will address development paradigms for the post-colonial world, and also note the emergence of more transnational and global ways to conceive self-determination.

Self-determination in international politics

Because it is a dynamic and often ambivalent concept, it is not easy to set an objective, fixed and neutral definition of self-determination. I will begin by presenting the evolution of its meaning in international politics, assuming it to be a normative and symbolic asset that represents different things according to context and actors – whether the international system (which, in this respect, mainly reflects the point of view of states), international law and normative political theory, international relations and conflict resolution, the self-determination movements

themselves, or each of the conflicts and cases showing self-determination in all its uniqueness and complexity. I will end this section defining *effective* self-determination.

The French and the American Revolutions are generally seen as the origin of the modern idea that a people should rule itself, an idea that has grounded the concept of internal self-determination in terms of popular sovereignty. Yet the French Revolution also sowed the seeds for the concept of external self-determination, when self-determination was proposed in the Draft Constitution as a criterion for the transfer of territory (Cassese, 1995: 11-12). Both concepts imbued nineteenth-century German and Italian nationalism with considerable impact throughout Western Europe first and later on in Central and Eastern Europe (Cobban, 1969: 39ff; Ronen, 1979: 26ff). Yet the rise of self-determination to a political principle meant to ordering the world is usually situated in the context of World War I, by way of the political analysis by Vladimir Lenin on imperialism, and especially the political statements by Woodrow Wilson.

While Lenin connected nationalist movements with class struggle, Wilson connected them with the principle of popular sovereignty. Wilson's intention was to establish self-determination as a guide for restructuring central European states according to nationalities, but he also meant to offer the world a democratic alternative to soviet ideology, and thereby framed his proposals in universal terms. Because of that, though, the idea of the national self-determination of peoples turned itself into a political ideal that superseded Wilson's purpose and promptly inflamed the political imaginary and action of many groups that felt oppressed and exploited by power groups perceived as strangers, especially non-occidental peoples colonized by Europeans.

Despite the limited institutional application of this principle in the aftermath of the war (Cobban, 1969: chs. 4 and 5; Cassese, 1995: 23ff), and especially outside Europe (Manela, 2001), it took thereafter its own path and evolved in the post-World War II era into a cluster of norms and concepts with both ideological and legal ramifications. It became a symbolic and legitimizing asset for, sometimes violent, claims for political independence, as well as a norm of international law associated with decolonization and the admission of post-colonial states into the international society. In this context, the nation-state – self-determined and sovereign – became the universal template of political community (cf. Carr, 1945; Cobban, 1969; Ronen, 1979; Mayall, 1999).

presents the evolution of the meaning of self-determination in international politics. Then it addresses critical approaches upon contemporary liberal peace. The remaining sections analyze how contemporary self-determination movements present claims highly suggestive to rethink forms of political community, of state-community relation, and of participation in global governance structures.

At that time, self-determination had a highly progressive political meaning and a wide consensus on its application to colonies was apparent. From the end of the Cold War until the present, however, states and international organizations worry about ethnic and nationalist intolerance and conflict associated with claims to self-determination, and also about the presumed chaos that forbearance with ethnic secessionism could engender.

Perhaps as a reaction to these 'pandemonium' fears (Etzioni, 1992; Moynihan, 1993; Knop, 2002: 91-105), there is an attempt in the contemporary international system to demise and to downgrade self-determination as a norm in international politics. On the one hand, there is a retreat of the concept of self-determination in major international documents. The 1994 turn in the UN General Assembly Resolutions on terrorism is quite illustrative in this respect. Between 1972 and 1989 the GA passed nine resolutions on preventing international terrorism that included a qualifying statement reaffirming the right to self-determination of peoples, but the 1994 resolution on the elimination of international terrorism for the first time made no mention of that right (Venugopal, 2006b: 240).

On the other hand, there is a tendency to address claims to external self-determination with responses that can be acknowledged as internal self-determination – in the sense that they do not jeopardize internationally recognized borders –, and to increasingly cast this internal self-determination in terms of democracy, human rights and minority rights (e.g. Franck, 1992; Hannum, 2006).

Yet this is only the contemporary version of a more enduring feature in the way the international system deals with self-determination, at least since the decolonization period, which is a staunch defense of the priority of the territorial integrity and political unity of existing states upon the self-determination of peoples. Even in the legal and normative political literature on self-determination, the opposition between those principles is still one of the major issues discussed. This is a sensitive point because it confronts real interests of existing states and awareness of that has led most authors of political theory to devise a variety of power-sharing and devolution arrangements to resolve self-determination conflicts (e.g. Danspeckgruber, 2000: 17-20; Weller, 2008). A conditional right to secession is generally admitted only when and where there are gross and systematic human rights violations by a given state (Buchanan, 2006).

In the legal literature, Antonio Cassese notes that self-determination powerfully expresses a deep tension and contradiction between a statist worldview and a

communitarian one (1995: 1). Thus two general tendencies are identified: the perspective that the legal right to self-determination is in practice expanding its scope towards privileging the rights of peoples, and the perspective that opposes such expansion, precisely reiterating self-determination's subordination to the territorial integrity of states (Falk, 2002: 48-50). The confrontation between these views was made plain at the adoption of the 1960 UN Declaration Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (GA Res. 1514 [XV], 14 December) and was, almost half a century later, the most enduring issue of the long process that took up to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 (GA **Res. 61/295, 13 September)**.

The 1960 Declaration recognized a right to self-determination of colonial peoples but a conflict arose on how to determine who held such a right. At the end, colonialism was framed in terms of geographical separation and ethnical difference from the administering country (Cassese, 1995: ch. 4; Lâm, 2000: 117ff), and the right was granted to the whole population that inhabited a territory colonized by some western empire but denied to ethnic or cultural groups within states. Later normative developments within the UN and the Organization of African Unity further helped to reproduce and rigidify colonial borders as well as to constitute self-determination as entitlement to a western-styled statehood.

This normative framework has more recently been challenged again, this time by the indigenous movement. Actual political independence is not, for the most part, indigenous peoples' aim. Yet they still aimed to obtain a legal right to external self-determination that would leverage their position in the negotiation of the terms of their relations with states. States generally opposed such a right, and the final result in the UN was a compromise. It recognized indigenous peoples a right to self-determination but it qualified it as a right "to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs" (Article 4).

That the concept of self-determination has a highly legitimizing value is attested to by the fact that it has been a prominent banner in the struggle for rights and against oppression of many marginalized groups within states and in the international system, as well as an opportunistic covering for less nobly-motivated fights. The self-determination movements themselves envision an interpretation of the concept of self-determination that mirrors their own struggles, experiences and histories and whose reference to international law and its official interpretations is mainly instrumental. In any case, and especially when there are claims to national political independence, the way in which the international system functions constrains many of these movements

to a scenario of political violence, in what some authors have been calling the 'self-determination trap' (Weller, 2005; Perduca, 2006; Weller, 2008). In fact, evidence has been collected that shows that 'wars of national self-determination are both bloodier and more protracted than other internal wars' (Jenne, 2006: 7).

Despite that fact, and because for the most part it is motivated by international security and humanitarian concerns, literature tends instead to stress ethnic barbarism, economic greed, resource scarcity, criminal activity and terrorism in portraying 'new wars,' as well as to identify poverty, underdevelopment and state collapse as the main structural underlying causes (cf. Kaldor, 1999; Duffield, 2001: ch. 5; Richards, 2005: 6-11). Consequently, it downgrades political approaches to conflicts and, at the same time, sidelines post-colonial and socialist interpretations that might relate both underdevelopment and conflict to the legacy of colonialism and to an inequitable international trading system (Duffield, 2001: 22-30, 108-135; see also Ng, 2006). That internalization of the causes of violent conflict has been articulated with an externalization of the solutions (Pureza et al., 2007), that is, while the causes of conflict are located in domestic society and politics, 'international community' appears as the source of peace, mainly through conflict resolution, diplomacy, humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping operations aimed at post-conflict preventative reconstruction of societies and states.

The rather uncritical imposition in these contexts of liberal institutions – generally through procedures of international institutional recognition and in particular through state-building, as well as certain development paradigms, through the powerful influence of the international financial institutions, donor countries and multinational corporations, but also through the more humanitarian motivated intervention of most NGOs –, often amounts to, paraphrasing Ronen (1997: 127), trying to fit human beings into previous political and economic frameworks rather than forging frameworks to fit human beings. Liberal peace impairs people's effective self-determination.

Effective or empirical self-determination can be understood as a community's own self-organization and government. Whether internationally recognized or not, effective self-determination would present political authorities and processes that are based on consent, that preserve order and provide welfare, that project a collective identity and that regulate the external relations of the community. The point of this concept, though, is that effective self-determination results from the participation of the people concerned in creating the constitutive principles of political community and organization (cf. Venugopal, 2006a: 99).

Liberal peace dictates and effective self-determination

The idea of a liberal peace worldwide is at the origin a European idea with an extensive theoretical genealogy that has in **Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (2000 [1795]) its classical reference. Nowadays liberal peace is too general a label in which we can identify several strands:** the idea of a 'peace through law,' that even before the Great War inspired the creation of international institutions of arbitration, and afterwards the League of Nations and the United Nations; the 'democratic peace,' with the thesis that democratic countries are more peaceful, at least among themselves; and the 'capitalist peace' that emphasizes economic development and interdependence as the main factors of peace. These three strands assume that international peace is a peace among states and were prominent until the end of the Cold War. In the post-Cold War, the concept of a liberal peace was further articulated in relation to a set of international responses to the so-called 'new wars' and the 'fragile' or 'failing' states, considered among the main threats to international and human security. The empirical horizon of this 'peacebuilding' is not so much interstate relations as it is the reconstruction of states and societies with a combination of peace, democracy and development (cf. Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

In this vein, the liberal peace dictates in the title of this essay refer to the dissemination of previous liberal models of democracy, development and human rights, performed by international organizations, Great Powers and NGO, in contexts of post-conflict societies and states in crisis, and through a variety of frameworks such as peacekeeping missions, humanitarian and development aid and, increasingly, governance assistance and transitional administrations. Liberal peace implies external interventions and constraints on ways of organizing the socioeconomic and political life of a society, and because of that a critical assessment from the perspective of self-determination it is relevant.

Some authors critically discuss the ideological assumptions of liberal peace in order to ameliorate its efficacy, yet do so in ways that virtually enhance its intrusive character. Paris and Krasner are exemplar references here. Paris (1997) notes that liberal internationalism, as the underlying paradigm of peacebuilding, tends to deepen social tensions and sharpen conflicts. This is so because the logic of competition that economic and political liberalization implies cannot be adequately managed by war-shattered states and divided societies. Yet he also argues that the international normative environment, or 'global culture,' limits the range of strategies and policies that can realistically be adopted by peacebuilding,

disqualifying in terms of legitimacy some proposals that could be more effective, as would for example be the case of a new international trusteeship system 'for states that are incapable of governing themselves peacefully' (2003: 443).

Krasner makes the case for another such proposal: shared sovereignty. Acknowledging that – and contrary to what happened when major states in Europe, North America and Asia formed themselves – '[s]tatebuilding is now more externally than internally driven' (2005: 74), he contends that shared sovereignty, which 'involves the creation of institutions for governing specific issue areas within a state' (2005: 76), is a policy option particularly promising as a way to compensate for the shortcomings of democracy promotion in much of the post-colonial world. This would be the case for instance in natural-resource exploitation and in monetary policy.

In calling for a downgrade of 'national' sovereignty in certain conflict-prone territories and states in crisis, and for the transference of that sovereignty to international institutions, this kind of proposals thus means compromising the most basic right to self-determination of the populations in these territories. Indeed, the underlying assumption is that it is not for the people, but at most for their rulers, to legitimize those arrangements. In stressing that shared sovereignty arrangements must be based on consent, Krasner states that '[o]nly national political authorities can legitimize shared-sovereignty institutions. National decision makers use their international legal sovereignty to give up some of their Westphalian-cum-Vattelian sovereignty' (2005: 76). Both Krasner and Paris reveal an assumption of sovereignty as a kind of a fungible asset granted by international society to the state, and not as something that belongs to the people.

Other critical approaches more radically evaluate the benignity of liberal peace, whether from a realist point of view that does not question the foundation of power and its distribution in the world system (e.g. Luttwak, 1999), or from post-structuralist arguments that do precisely that, trying to reveal the mechanisms of hegemony and domination that underlie liberal peace practices and discourses, and pointing to its imposing character, occluded intentions and perverse consequences (Fetherstone, 2000; Duffield, 2001; Chandler, 2006; Ng, 2006; Zanotti, 2006; Bickerton, 2007; Duffield, 2007; Pureza et al., 2007; Richmond, 2007; Pugh, 2008).

From the perspective of this approach, things such as development and emergency aid, humanitarian interventions and various kinds of peace operations are meant to function as international regimes of security, discipline and normalization, a 'peace-as-governance' (2008: 441). According to this perspective, the structures

of iniquitous economic and political international relations are not questioned and transformed; rather, a biopower is internationally exercised that attempts to change people's behavior within states with the aim of preserving international political and economic order.

From the point of view of self-determination, an important issue highlighted by this critical literature is the political void at local level that results from the first of all functional and technical character of external interventions, which leads to a lack of internal legitimacy, a degradation of sovereignty and a reinforcement of external dependency, in both moral and material terms. Richmond calls this a 'virtual peace,' that is, a peace 'based on international consensus, but often on a much weaker local consensus' (2008: 458). Sovereignty is here perceived as something belonging to state institutions and governing elites and not to society and the people itself. Duffield further notes that, when violent conflict is present, 'the general approach of liberal governance …either directly or indirectly problematises, delegitimises or criminalises indigenous leadership' (2001: 128-129), no matter if what is at stake is the practice of war crimes or self-defense against oppression, exploitation and exclusion, for example.

Overall this approach stresses the ways in which liberal peace tends to overpass the subjects of their own political history and turn them into passive objects of ameliorative external intervention. As a consequence of overriding effective self-determination, peacebuilding and other mechanisms of global liberal governance in those post-colonial societies are often perceived as colonial or hegemonic (Richmond, 2008: 459).

Self-determination and the exclusivity of the state

The previous section pointed to the conclusion that the dissemination, through state-building, of the modern state, with its assumptions of a certain template of procedural democracy and liberal economy, tries to resolve in an externally and a priori manner what supposedly should be the output of collective decision and achievement: socio-political organization.

Liberal peace interventions, as well as existing international norms on self-determination, still rest upon the presumption that the state itself is the only legitimate form of political organization. But one should wonder whether sometimes this presumption does not amount to reproducing that very same model of state power, of state-society relation, and of international legitimacy that shaped so many

violent conflicts in the first place, in the sense that these are conflicts *about* the state. Therefore, one should also wonder whether the resolution of the deeper problems and injustices that underlie many conflicts might precisely require other kinds of political arrangements, eventually more based on local socio-political self-organization and values. When, however, this assumption of state sovereignty exclusivity is questioned from the standpoint of improving peacebuilding, as is the case with Krasner and Paris, the solutions proposed do not consider the transference of internationally recognized authority to the people concerned, under other kinds of political arrangement, but outward to international and regional organizations, which are beyond those people's legitimation.

In this section, I will address theoretical discussions on self-determination that join critical theories of a state-centered world order and that try to devise other ways of building political communities and relations.

Some authors tightly link self-determination with human rights and democracy, yet adopt a critical stance towards current international state-system frameworks. From this cosmopolitan perspective states are urged to take a non-nationalist frame, and the international community is challenged to found a world institutional order that would be competent to address claims to self-determination (e.g. Cassese, 1995; Archibugi, 2003).

While these cosmopolitan authors still present a top-down perspective to address self-determination claims, other authors much more deeply and specifically draw on the concept of self-determination to advance a critique of the hegemony and exclusivity of the state at the same time proposing a bottom-up perspective on building political communities (e.g. Ronen, 1979: 18ff; Lâm, 2000: 85ff).

Although this approach looks back to the decolonization process that imposed worldwide, through UN supervision, the western-style nation-state, it is not limited to the much acknowledge issue of the reproduction in decolonization of the arbitrary borders design by European imperial powers, which supposedly both dismembered communities and forcibly joined culturally distinct populations. Though this unequivocally seems to be the case for instance in the manifold and scattered Pacific islands (Wesley-Smith, 2007), its relevance to what concerns Africa is being challenged. Mbembe (2002) shows that African borders are not wholly arbitrary, as they actually reflect a long-term social process involving commercial relations, and religious and military realities. Instead, Mbembe draws attention to what he considers the much more decisive colonial legacy of internal administra-

tive borders linked to the structuring of economic spaces that were reproduced and sometimes even radicalized by post-colonial governments.

The main point of this approach is the alien and forceful character of centralized state power in many territories and communities in the post-colonial world, where it replaced older political communities and discarded more deep-rooted patterns of interethnic relationships and collective decision-making. In what concerns South and Southeast Asia, for example, Lâm reviews some of these older patterns and shows that they were based on negotiated and shared jurisdictions between states and more or less autonomous communities in a much more balanced, flexible and dynamic relationship (2000: 101). With regard to Africa, to take another example, Deng (2003) points to the marginalization of essentially democratic indigenous traditions and experiences, mainly based on consensual decision-making.

Another point is the disruption of ways of life and destruction of cultures performed by this hegemonic and centralized state, or by multinational firms, mainly through resource extraction activities. One should note that many contemporary conflicts involving indigenous peoples or other kinds of local communities arise because of states' newfound capacity and will to intrude in territories and people's lives. From the perspective of many of these groups, the modern state performs today that very same kind of intrusion and domination that European empires, with the justifying doctrine of *terra nullius* (Keal, 2003: 50-53), used to perform in the past, namely expropriating or spoiling their lands and resources.

Even when it is private corporations that trigger communities' strife, the state is still the core issue because it is the only internationally recognized holder of institutional external sovereignty. Indeed, sovereignty here is the asset that provides for recognized contractual legal authority that legitimates agreements for the exploitation of natural resources: for governments, it is an instrument that allows them to participate in international markets and attract external resources; to firms, it offers guarantees that minimize investment risks, such as access to insurance and international arbitration (Ferguson, 2006: ch. 8; Campos, 2008).

Although there are international norms that grant indigenous peoples some rights and protection over their territories and natural resources, these norms do not apply to groups that are not recognized as indigenous peoples. Nevertheless it is presumed that governments legally represent them and will act on their behalf. In any case, whether governments do that or not, politically it is usually considered an internal affair, and normatively, a matter of individual human rights.

The issues of self-determination and the control over territory and resources were the most contested issues in the long process running up to the adoption of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In fact, the major challenge from self-determination movements to the state-of-the-art of the state and sovereignty comes today from the indigenous movement. This is quite significant considering the extreme marginalization in, and even exclusion from, international society to which indigenous peoples have been subjected (see Epp, 2001; Shaw, 2002; Keal, 2003; Franke, 2007). Although for the most part their aim is not political independence in a statehood framework, they still try to disguise new forms of community-state relations that imply a change in the nature of the state itself. In that UN process, they draw on the concept of self-determination to fight for the ongoing right to negotiate their political relationships with the states that encompass them in each and every singular case, signaling a shift 'from an end-state approach to a relational approach to self-determination' (Kingsbury, 2001: 219).

It is interesting to compare this perspective with that of the ameliorative liberal peace critics such as Paris and Krasner. On the one hand, whereas Paris and Krasner's critique on liberal peace proposes a usurpation of self-determination from a power position, the indigenous movement, by contrast, intends to realize self-determination in more encompassing, diversified and empowering ways. On the other hand, however, they converge in questioning the fundamental assumption of the international system since the end of World War II that the state is the only legitimate form of jurisdiction over territories, resources and populations.

Indeed, what indigenous peoples envision is more than conventional templates of autonomy, self-government, or minority rights, which dominate in the literature on self-determination today but that convey important shortcomings, from the indigenous perspective. Lâm argues that those templates are no more than domestic arrangements, concessions from the state that delegates some power to a subordinate entity (2000: 140). In practice this means that local communities' right to land and natural resources is not safeguarded as a collective right (Muehlebach, 2003: 253), nor is there any sort of external norm or mechanism that could ensure states' compliance with agreed autonomous or self-governing arrangements.

Conversely, indigenous peoples' aim is to be recognized as legitimate international actors, which makes all the difference. Their contention is that only a right to external self-determination can give them the proper power to negotiate with states

and meet their own needs for physical and cultural survival. The legal personality that external self-determination confers on indigenous peoples means not only a formally equal status with states, but also the possibility to appeal to, and participate in, the international community in several instances. It is interesting to note that, whether most non-indigenous struggles for self-determination tend to contest and fight given states, but not statehood itself, that is, either seek to form a new state or to share the power of an already existing state, indigenous struggles for self-determination seek to build political communities 'away from the state' (Lâm, 2000: xxii). These are political communities that do not aspire to be states but still mean to retain some political power vis-à-vis the states in which they are located, thereby defying states' exclusivity in terms of legitimate ultimate control over resources, territories and populations.

A crucial point here is that indigenous peoples managed to impose the recognition at the UN of an understanding of culture as a material and territorialized practice that reconnects a right to culture with the right to self-determination, and reassert an understanding of the right to self-determination in terms of a right to territory and resources, albeit not in an exclusivist fashion (Muehlebach, 2003). Consequently, physical territory is subsumed in processes of collective identity formation and institution building, and not the other way around (Shadian, 2010). This definitely distinguishes an understanding of indigenous self-determination either from minority rights and independent statehood.

In a less conceptually challenging yet still relevant approach (and in some points convergent with indigenous aspirations), other authors argue for a constitutionalisation of self-determination. Weller (2005) points to the fact that international law and international organizations are beginning to take into consideration features of domestic constitutional law that concern the legal personality of some part or parts of the overall state, which can mainly be seen in some internationalized peace settlements.

Weller's observation explicitly links self-determination with conflict resolution yet after conflict happened and got violent, that is, constitutional self-determination emerges as a conflict settlement solution. Also with a conflict resolution perspective but in a much more preventative focus, Deng argues for a 'creative exercise of self-determination' (2008: 59) that, as concerns African countries, should assume diversity to be a source of strength and legitimacy. Constitutionalizing self-determination, he contends, should take into account two interrelated dimensions:

> the management of diversities through various *forms and degrees of self-determination* (including those that ensure equal participation in the government of one's country, as well as self-administration, autonomy, and federalism) and *cultural contextualization* through the application of relevant indigenous norms within a framework that recognizes both peculiarities and commonalities. (2008: 5, author's emphasis)

Self-determination, development and global governance

The focus on socioeconomic development is less considered by the contemporary literature on self-determination, except perhaps in some empirical case studies on indigenous peoples' self-determination. For the most part literature indeed reduces self-determination to a question of formal political status. Yet this was not so until the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. By then the socialist bloc and most of the post-colonial countries strove through the UN to keep the linkage between the norm of self-determination and socioeconomic development. Indeed development is still a right defined in the most important international documents on self-determination, where it is stated that by virtue of the right to self-determination all peoples (or specifically indigenous peoples) 'freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.'

In the theoretical realm, the work of Ronen (1979) is illustrative of this perspective. In the genesis and evolution of the modern idea of self-determination, he includes not only the idea of liberty engendered by the French and the American civil wars, but also the ideas of socioeconomic reform that appeared as a reaction to the huge social problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. Both sorts of ideas related to perceptions of oppression by, and political fight against, the political system, albeit activating different identities and different ideologies. From the perspective taken in this paper, development further presents the analytical relevance that it has been, together with state-building, a major tool of intervention for liberal peace and more general liberal global governance.

The immediate post-colonial period was one of enthusiastic modernization and development led by nationalist states. Most of those post-colonial states were weak states, but they enjoyed at the time considerable power in international negotiation for economic and military aid, as they were supported by one or the other of the superpowers for strategic reasons. In this context of bipolar competition, development was the lowest common value uniting international society. It

was conceived within an evolutionist perspective that assumed a movement of socio-economic convergence from post-colonial countries – afterwards willfully named 'developing countries' – towards the patterns of development of the most industrialized ones, that is, development was just a question of time, investment, work and patience (Ferguson, 2006: ch. 7).

In this context, modernization was the discourse justifying the joint projects of development and nation-state building, and self-determination was the discourse that had legitimized previous nationalist struggles against imperialism and justified the withdrawal of colonialist powers from overseas territories. Self-determination was viewed as a precondition for development, not the other way around, as stated in the 1960 Declaration Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: 'Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence' (GA Res. 1514 [XV], paragraph 3).

With the end of the Cold War, however, those countries for the most part lost much of their international bargaining power and were subjected to structural adjustment programs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank that consisted in the deregulation of economic activities and the downsizing of the state, and that led to an understatement of social welfare within national politics. At the same time, whereas in the previous period development aid was processed through direct transfers from donors to recipient governments, in the 1990s international donors and organizations became more engaged in policy implementation in the developing world, whether directly or indirectly, that is, whether imposing conditions on aid and designing government policies themselves, even placing officials in government departments, or through NGO interventions which increasingly bypassed the states that nominally had the jurisdiction over the territories and populations concerned (Guilhot, 2005; Duffield, 2007).

Assumptions about the proper development paradigm for the Third World changed as well, shifting from modernization seen as a convergent movement towards the way of life of the developed world – to be measured by economic and social performance indicators and to be experienced in consumption patterns, welfare and insurance – to an idea of improving self-reliance at the household and small community level, by helping people to organize themselves to meet their own basic needs. It is important to stress that this paradigm no longer seeks a progressivist convergence with the developed world, but instead assumes an irreducible and static difference of status between these two worlds (Ferguson, 2006: ch. 7). In

fact, as Duffield (2007) points out, the aim is no longer to build the same kind of welfare safety net, whether by means of social or private insurance, that we encounter in the developed world, but territorially to contain a surplus population for which humanitarian assistance would be, and in fact increasingly is, the only protection in crisis situations.

Once again we meet a situation in which a certain paradigm on how to organize life is externally imposed on people. The analyses of Lumumba-Kasongo (2006) and of Ferguson (2006) about Africans' aspirations to modern development and welfare illustrate counter-stances to this and are extremely suggestive in terms of rethinking self-determination in what concerns development.

Lumumba-Kasongo (2006) notes that African peoples' aspirations to welfare are in fact frustrated by transitional democracies in the continent, which in their turn are largely constrained by the dictates of transnational corporations and international organizations. He proposes a reinvention of the African state, citing welfare as the effective answer to the poverty problem, but a welfare that rather has to be embodied in Africans' own projects, experiences, culture and history, and that has to be conquered by Africans themselves.

Although Lumumba-Kasongo still puts the state at the core of the equation, from a more anthropological approach Ferguson (2006) focuses on the subnational and on the transnational levels in analyzing Africans' aspirations, yet still stressing welfare as their main motive. He notes that most Africans do distance themselves from the state, whether because they see it as evil and predatory or because they are conscious of its ingrained incapacity to meet people's aspirations. The most interesting of Ferguson's observations, from the point of view of this paper, has to do with the transnational level, where he finds a quite revealing aspiration to modernity, development and welfare conceived not in terms of political autonomy or independence but as a 'a right to be connected, noticed, and attended to that is claimed' (2006: 173) by an 'imagined world community' (2006: 166), this aspiration constituting 'a challenging claim: that a meaningful solution to the African crisis requires a recognition of a kind of global, supranational belonging' (2006: 174).

This insight seems to invite us to think about self-determination also in terms other than of bounding and governing communities at local or national levels, in terms other than of autonomy, federalism or independence, and even in terms other than of state-community relations. The kind of solidarity it supposes, notwithstanding the rather unarticulated and romantic character of the claim,

suggests us to envision self-determination in terms of a right to participate in global governance structures.

Yet this is not as much of a fiction as it seems. Some experiences of this kind are already under way, albeit in more northern latitudes, and once again with indigenous peoples at the head. The institutional experience of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC, a multinational NGO representing Inuit communities from Canada, Greenland, Russia and the USA), for example, instantiates an understanding of self-determination as the right to participate in the processes of development that affect communities, whereby this implies having a voice on issues of transnational and even global politics, especially on environmental issues (Shadian, 2010: 501).

In short, a perspective on self-determination in the contemporary world that would only address the question of formal political status of peoples and territorial entities would miss half the picture in terms of the political dynamics that really impact on people's and peoples' lives. Reintroducing development in this picture and reconsidering it in terms of the relation between 'North' and 'South', or developed and 'developing' world, that is, in terms of the structures of international economic and political inequities, raises the question of the political participation in the networks of power that increasingly control the resources and actions that can impact on development and welfare.

Conclusion

In this article I attempted to analyze self-determination in relation to the dictates of liberal peace as a global dynamic that from a power position tries to impose certain models of organizing political and socioeconomic life on less empowered peoples. I also attempted to disguise how self-determination movements and perspectives themselves are conceiving alternative ways to meet people's, and peoples' own needs and aspirations.

The analysis led to the questioning of the exclusivity of the state as the only internationally recognized form of legitimate political organization and jurisdiction over territories and resources, as well as of the external imposition of a development paradigm in much of the post-colonial world based on a concept of self-reliance that understates social welfare within national politics. It noted that liberal peace tends to downgrade local autonomy, self-organization and participation.

Actual self-determination movements and perspectives, on the other hand, claim an effective autonomy at local and national levels that enables forms of self-organization rooted in cultures and societies. They point also to an enlargement of the formal right to self-determination as a means that leverages communities' position in their relations with the states that encompass them. Finally, the essay also caught a glimpse of a broader aspiration to be able to participate in the global governance structures that really have the normative and material means to make things happen and improve life. On the whole, these perspectives on self-determination pressure the international system to be more flexible and open in terms of the recognition of types of actors, forms of political community and ways of participating in regional and global governance.

Although engagement with these claims can ultimately compromise some liberal pillars of the global liberal peace project under way, it is my contention that it can also spur a more positive peace, especially by balancing inclusion, justice and diversity in a project so far excessively concerned with security, stability and normalization.

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