CASE STUDIES & TEACHING CASES

Colonialism within Latin America? A south-south postcolonial perspective in human relations of a Brazilian company in Bolivia

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INTRODUCTION

It was a rather hot day of December 2014, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in the Bolivian Brazilian Energy Company headquarters. José, the Brazilian manager responsible for local HR, was on his first day at work in this new role. Everything was fresh to him, the country, the office, the colleagues, the boss, but José was excited to meet his new challenges.

His first impressions had been remarkable. For a moment he thought that everything could be easier, as the company had been in the country for over 15 years. Everyone received him with great sympathy, and his staff seemed accommodating and receptive. However, at lunchtime, he had a meeting with his boss, Carlos, the company president in the country. Carlos was an engineer, quite pragmatical, rigid, direct, and objective. He had worked in the company since always and dedicated his life to it. Carlos, in his style, presented his point: *"do not kid yourself with a warm welcome. They are only helpful until page 2. It is necessary to be hard when with employees here; otherwise, nothing works. Last year we made a diagnosis of communication and culture that I already sent to your email. It's interesting, but I think it does not do much good. Either way, it would be good for you to investigate it before preparing your action plan. Look, José, I have high expectations for your work, and we need to increase the workforce engagement. It's like I told you, they're always smiling, agreeing with everything, but they do not meet the demands by the time you need them. Please work on this point as hard as you can."*

On the same day, in the afternoon, José read the whole report sent by Carlos. While in his new room having coffee and looking out the window, José thought about the situation and the challenges that lay ahead after assuming the new position and moving with his family to this new country. José was 45 years old, and even with all his personal and professional experience, he could feel that he would have serious problems ahead. What the report showed was an attitude of camouflaged resistance by the local labor force.

The methodology used in the research used both interviews, drawings, and observation. The results were precise: Bolivians felt subalternized, inferior, dependent, and far from decision-making. Consequently, it may be natural to present veiled resistance mechanisms in their attitudes to balance their asymmetry. José, as a Brazilian, knew this story well. After all, even working in a state company, he also felt culturally in the colonized place when dealing with other international players in the industry. However, at that moment, José's uneasiness was to find himself in the position of the other, of the domineering foreigner, representative of a burden of cultural and economic imperialism he so loathed. then, even after 15 years of operation in the country, the deeply rooted social and historical situations appeared with vigor. After all, things might not be that easy.

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Besides this, he had to recall his boss's behavior. Carlos's reasoning is quite conservative, inflexible, and insensitive to the consultancy report's results regarding the great cultural distance and the need to diminish power asymmetries in the local structure.

In his way, José saw the challenge he would have to face. José grew up in Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, in a family of intellectuals. His father was a history professor, and his mother was a social scientist researcher. José studied administration in college but was always interested in social issues regarding work and power relations in organizations. Perhaps that's why his professional choice was to work at the country's largest state-owned oil and gas company instead of investing in a trajectory in private or foreign companies.

Brazilian Energy Company

Brazil Energy Company was created, in the middle of the 20th century, by Brazilian government at a time marked by nationalist and industrializing discourse. For many Brazilians, as well as for José, the creation of this company had a special meaning that, in short, meant a resistance movement against the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon and significant countries that dominated (and still dominate) the capitalist world and the petroleum industry.

The company had begun processing oil in 1953 and developed a technology for extracting oil from oil shale and started using it in an industrial-size exploration in the 1990s. In 1994, Brazilian Energy put the world's largest oil platform, into service. It sank after an explosion in 2001 and was a complete loss. Several other oil platforms remained operational, but there were huge losses. In 1997, the government approved Law nº 9,478 (Lei nº 9.478, de 6 de agosto de 1997), which broke Brazilian Energy's monopoly, allowed competition in Brazil's oilfields, and created a national petroleum agency (National Petroleum Agency – ANP), the regulation and supervision of the petroleum industry. In 1999, ANP signed agreements with other companies, ending the company's monopoly.

In 2006, the company informed that their industrial plant could process 260 tonnes/hour of oil shale. In 2000, Brazilian Energy Company set a world record for oil exploration in deep waters, reaching a depth of 1,877 meters (6,158 ft) below sea level. In 2002, It still acquired the Argentine company Perez Companc Energía (PECOM Energía S.A.) from the Perez Companc Family Group[es] and its family foundation for $1.18 billion. In this period, Brazilian Energy acquisition included assets in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, 1.1 billion barrels of crude oil reserves, and 181 thousand barrels of oil equivalent (1,110,000 GJ) per day.

In 2005, Brazilian Energy Company announced a joint venture with Nippon Alcohol Hanbai to sell Brazilian ethanol to Japan, called Brazil-Japan Ethanol. On April 21st, 2006, the company started production on the P-50 oil platform in the Albacora East field at Campos Basin, making Brazil self-sufficient in oil production. By November 2015, the company had accumulated $128 billion in debt, 84% of it denominated in foreign currencies.

Today, Brazilian Energy Company is still a semi-public multinational corporation in the petroleum industry, operating in the distribution, exploitation, and refining of fuels and the gas sector. It is the largest Brazilian company, with over 100.00 employees, and operating in seventeen countries. The reserves held outside of Brazil accounted for 8.4% of production in 2017, most of them in South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, and Uruguay). The Brazilian MNC energy company is operating in Bolivia since 1996 but has developed international activities in other countries since the 1970s.

The consulting report

José's career has gone very well at Brazilian Energy Company since he was 25 years old. He has always worked in human resources management, which appeared as a natural consequence of his personal and ideological interests. His latest challenge was promoting an international position in Bolivia when he assumed the General Manager of Human Resources role. Under his responsibility would be approximately 3,000 employees, primarily Bolivians, divided into four cities and active in several parts of the oil and gas industry.

After lunch with his boss and reading the report of the consulting firm, José was quite bewildered. He decided to print the document to have it in hand to consult it frequently. The research consisted of a cultural diagnosis based on interviews with employees. It aimed to understand how they felt working for the Brazilian company, relationship difficulties, and the main differences in future action plans.

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José appreciated his job, but he was very disturbed by some details at the report. In the methodology applied by the consultancy, the employees had the option to make drawings or collages that could represent their feelings regarding the company and their relations with the Brazilians (usually managers and directors). The graphical representations had the purpose of giving the interviewees freedom to expose their unconscious positions since answering the questions may simulate the desirable answers, not necessarily real ones. What José saw in some drawings made him very worried. However, there was a specific one that he could not take his eyes off.
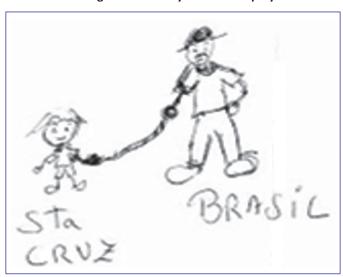
Figure 1
Drawing elaborated by Bolivian employee

This drawing seemed to represent very well, and more forcefully, something that would be hovering in most of the representations made. It was a drawing made by a Bolivian male engineer, a production supervisor at the Santa Cruz Plant.

As the drawing made clear, the consulting analysis pointed out that the figure shows that the author comingled his own identity with the subsidiary and the city of Santa Cruz and Brazil's MNC representation. Furthermore, a chain represents the link between the Bolivian city and Brazil, reflecting the feeling of domination and - possibly - Brazilian sub-imperialist aspirations in South America.

The report results indicate that the child's figure could represent this man's identifying himself as a subaltern in this situation. The male adult figure would represent power regarding the resources that HQ holds over the subsidiary. Moreover, these depictions emphasize the issues of asymmetrical power between these actors.

In this way, José thought of how to deal with this question. It was difficult for him to assimilate that the local employees saw him and the other Brazilians as the authoritative, hard man who figuratively enslaved the local workers trapped in chains. He could never imagine until that moment that he, as an employee of a Brazilian company, could represent the hegemonic power to those local people. José focused on an excerpt from the report that further explained the South-South postcolonial relationship between Brazil and Bolivia. He thought it would be essential to take this plunge into the history of the relationship between the two countries to understand what was happening in his company today.

José's concerns

After spending so much time in an MNC in a highly competitive industry, José knew that the "world in the northern hemisphere" perceived the so-called emerging countries' managerial practices distinctly. The air of superiority and distrust on generating superior results marked the relationship between the two poles. However, in this context, the insertion of Brazil in the new economic order - more competitive and connected - could not be undone, and it would be necessary to learn how to cope with the pressures to the adoption of imported managerial practices from the North and to establish new South-South relations.

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José not even argued more about the misunderstanding he perceived in the uncritical adoption of established models in European and North American companies. He was tired of arguing about the possibility of these practices' failure to the extent that they disregarded the culture and knowledge built locally, over time, and applied in peripheral countries, which is also Brazil's case. Additionally, these emerging countries' companies operate in a complex cauldron, such as unstable economic system, organizations in consolidation, confusing legislation, or constant change generating uncertainties, not to speak in the cultural particularities.

The challenge was not straightforward, as unsuspecting foreigners could find themselves in trouble for not understanding the environment and customs. Moreover, José was feeling precisely in that position and hostage some questions about this scenario's possible change. What could he do in his work to change this situation? He knew productivity and results could be severely compromised. The Bolivians used to appear docile and tiny inclined to discuss guidelines. However, as his Brazilian boss had warned him, this was a behavioral trait translated into "not contesting" and doing what they thought was the most correct without explaining to the foreign manager.

Soon he would have a meeting with the company's board to present a first action plan, registering an idea of how he would organize his work from thereon. He thought of basing his steps on the consulting report. Still, the main problem was confronting his boss, the company's president in the country, known as a headstrong and inflexible engineer who seemed to fit well in the role of the adult's drawing.

Before leaving Brazil, he received specific guidance from his superiors about the expected style to manage HR: strong attitude, focus on results, and performance improvement. Despite being aware of the consultant's report, his boss would not give in easily. The local direction was not sensitized, and José already knew his new boss since they worked together in Brazil. He was precise about the difficulty that would lie ahead to create a plan that would link the actions to the diagnosis found.

José's dilemma

José was still bothered by this pattern of domination repeating himself in the 21st century, especially between countries in the South, neighbors, formerly colonized by European countries (Portugal and Spain), and indelible marks traumatic historical process. José looked at that drawing and felt deep regret for the social traps of the contemporary world.

He believed that addressing this issue would openly be vital to improving the relationship of all involved. José had read some studies before his trip to Bolívia and felt he needed to address this issue. However, some doubts persist:

> *Would that be a possible path considering the profile of its new director? How could he show that the current standard needed to be broken to achieve more organizational well-fare?*

> *What can he do address the human aspect of this international operation? Could any extra measure represent a danger, like imposing an artificial identities' approximation that could be even more harmful to employees?*

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TEACHING NOTES

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Abstract

The case addresses the situation experienced by José, an executive, HR manager of a Brazilian oil and gas company in Bolivia. José sustains his work from a unique humanistic standpoint. However, when starting his job, he gets scared of a cultural diagnosis that occurred the previous year. The employees revealed a negative view of Brazil and the company, related to a history of domination. Looking at a Bolivian engineer's drawing during the interviews, José could see this representation. One participant sketched a Bolivian employee as a boy imprisoned by chains to a ruthless adult representing the Brazilian managers. How can one react to a drawing with such a clear expression? For the first time, José saw himself in the oppressor's shoes. As a Brazilian, he was used to feeling what it is to be in a subordinate role. Now, he is challenged to create an action plan to deal with the situation, even facing a headstrong boss like the adult's depiction. He wondered what solution could make a difference for everyone involved and reduce this asymmetry. Thus, the case allows students to have a critical view of the subalternity involved in cultural differences in the international operations of multinational corporations. Furthermore, students can propose solutions for relational issues in the international field between the organization and employees within the South-South axis.

Keywords: Internationalization. Human Resources. Coloniality. Brazil. Bolivia.

Colonialismo na América Latina? Uma perspectiva pós-colonial sul-sul nas relações humanas de uma empresa brasileira na Bolívia

Resumo

O caso aborda a situação vivida por José, executivo, gerente de RH de uma empresa brasileira de óleo e gás na Bolívia. José sustenta seu trabalho de um ponto de vista humanístico único. No entanto, ao iniciar seu trabalho, ele se assusta com um diagnóstico cultural do ano anterior. Os colaboradores revelaram uma visão negativa do Brasil e da empresa, relacionada a uma história de dominação. Olhando para o desenho de um engenheiro boliviano durante as entrevistas, José pôde ver essa representação. Um participante desenhou um funcionário boliviano quando menino, preso por correntes a um adulto implacável que representava os gestores brasileiros. Como reagir a um desenho com uma expressão tão clara? Pela primeira vez, José se viu no lugar do opressor. Como brasileiro, ele estava acostumado a sentir o que é estar no papel de subordinado. Definitivamente, ele é desafiado a criar um plano de ação para lidar com a situação, mesmo enfrentando um chefe obstinado como a representação do adulto. Desta maneira, resta a indagação de qual seria uma solução que fizesse a diferença para todos os envolvidos e reduzisse essa assimetria. Assim, o caso permite aos alunos ter uma visão crítica da subalternidade envolvida nas questões de diferenças culturais nas operações internacionais de corporações multinacionais. Além disso, permitem elaborar soluções para questões relacionais no campo internacional, entre organização e colaboradores dentro do eixo Sul-Sul.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização. Recursos Humanos. Colonialidade. Brasil. Bolívia.

¿Colonialismo dentro de América Latina? Una perspectiva poscolonial Sur-Sur sobre las relaciones humanas de una empresa brasileña en Bolivia

Resumen

El caso aborda la situación vivida por José, un ejecutivo, gerente de Recursos Humanos de una empresa brasileña de petróleo y gas en Bolivia. José sustenta su trabajo desde un punto de vista humanista único. Sin embargo, al comenzar su trabajo, se asusta con un diagnóstico cultural del año anterior. Los empleados revelaron una visión negativa de Brasil y la empresa, relacionada con una historia de dominación. Al mirar el dibujo de un ingeniero boliviano durante las entrevistas, José pudo ver esa representación. Un participante dibujó a un empleado boliviano como un niño encadenado a un adulto implacable que representaba a los gerentes brasileños. ¿Cómo reaccionar ante un dibujo con una expresión tan clara? Por primera vez, José se vio en el lugar del opresor. Como brasileño, estaba acostumbrado a sentir lo que es estar en el rol de subordinado. Definitivamente, tiene el desafío de crear un plan de acción para lidiar con la situación, incluso enfrentando a un jefe testarudo como la representación del adulto. Por lo tanto, resta indagar cuál sería una solución que marcaría la diferencia para todos los involucrados y reduciría esta asimetría. Así, este caso permite a los estudiantes tener una visión crítica de la subalternidad involucrada en las cuestiones de diferencias culturales en las operaciones internacionales de las empresas multinacionales. Además, permite la elaboración de soluciones a problemas relacionales en el ámbito internacional, entre la organización y los empleados dentro del eje Sur-Sur.

Palabras clave: Internacionalización. Recursos humanos. Colonialidad. Brasil. Bolivia.

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Learning objectives

After finishing this case discussion analysis in the class, the students must have a critical view on cultural differences and subalternity in MNC foreign operations and be open to thinking about the impact of the employee's relationship with international power implications South-South scenario. Furthermore, by raising the cultural issue involved in labor relations between countries, it is expected that students will incorporate critical reflection on their positions in situations like this.

Suggested courses

International Business Administration; Strategy in Emerging Countries; Human Resources Management.

This case works with different student groups, like business undergraduate students, MBAs, or other executive global programs.

CASE SOURCES

In this case, the inspiration and the drawing presented was from a consulting research project data carried out by one of the presented authors in this company during the years 2005-2014 to obtain information on internal communication and cultural diagnostics. In this study, more than 200 Bolivian employees were interviewed and observed in various business units, not only in headquarters and offices in Santa Cruz but also in multiple locations. During the interviews, the consultants stimulated the respondents to make drawings or collages with previously available materials (glue, paper, magazines, and colored pens) to express their perception of their relationship with Brazilian leaders and Brazil's headquarter.

LESSON PLANING

We suggested to use the case in a section in which the professor introduces the concept of international strategic management and cultural differences in operations abroad. If necessary, the teacher will be able to use multimedia resources before applying the case for an adequate exposition of the central concepts of their course.

It is considered necessary to have a section lasting at least two blocks of 45 to 50 minutes to allow: a brief exposition of the concepts, the individual reading of the case, the organization of the class into groups of four to five members, the formulation of the answers group and holding a debate in plenary. Finally, the teacher should promote the approximation between the central concepts and the main aspects addressed in the plenary debate. In this way, the activity can rely on the time distribution suggested in Box 1.

Box 1
Suggested Lesson Plan

Activity	Duration (minutes)
Professor explains how class sessions may be structured	5
Brief exposition/synthesis of concepts	10
Class organization into groups of 3 to 4 students	5
Reading of the case & Moderate group discussions	30
Plenary discussion	30
Professor consolidates the debate relating it to the learning objectives	10 to 20
Total	90 to 100

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

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The students can represent the individual perspective for each character, like José, his boss, or the employee that made the drawing. Students can also perform a roleplay with situations related to their experience or search for internet materials that may present different sociohistorical and cultural aspects from both countries.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

In addition to the concerns presented at the end of the case, students should be encouraged to reflect on the following questions to structure the problem better and produce a more analytical than descriptive answer.

1. Do MNC neglect the human aspect in internationalization? In your opinion, why and how international companies incur this behavior? Why should this scenario change?

2. To what extent do you believe the pattern of domination and subalternization noted in the drawing may affect the employees' welfare? How and why?

3. If you were to analyze the illustration presented, would you say that the relationship of domination only exists in the studied MNE? How would you express your concern with illustration from the discourse of global business identities?

4. From the company's perspective, what can it do to minimize these effects? Discuss whether these actions could represent an extra danger like imposing an artificial identities' approximation that could be even more harmful to employees.

5. Think of some multinational companies that operate in your country. What are your nationalities? In what other countries do they act? In most cases, have you thought of companies from major countries? Anglo-Saxons, Asian, Europeans? Would there be estrangement or detachment in cultural relations between local employees and foreign managers?

We suggested to encourage students to put themselves in the position of José and, at the same time, use local examples and situations in which they identify the need for critical and purposeful action as future managers on international operations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Postcolonial Relations between Brazil and Bolivia?

Except for the occupation of the province of Acre by Brazilian rubber adventurers in the early 20th century, Brazil has never colonized Bolivia (Smith, 1971). Are postcolonial relations possible between two nations that do not share a colonial past? Brazil and Bolivia's relationship change to resemble a "colonizer-colonized" one when Bolivia granted Brazil the exploration rights due to its first nationalization. This movement took place in 1936, in the aftermath of a border dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay that became known as the "Chaco War": Bolivia nationalized the assets of the US company Standard Oil and signed several agreements with Brazilian authorities. According to one of these agreements signed in 1938, Brazil built a railroad that would give landlocked Bolivia access to the Atlantic Ocean and guarantee distribution for its products. In return, Brazil was to have exclusive rights to oil drilling in Santa Cruz's region (Smith, 1971; Vilarino, 2006). In other words, after the expulsion of the US colonizer, Brazil was granted full exploration rights. Is there any difference in changing from US Standard Oil to a colonizing neighbor?

However, it wasn't until 1955 that Brazil built the railroad finally, and immediately afterward, the two countries signed a new agreement to ratify the original one (Smith, 1971; Vilarino, 2006). This latest round of negotiations became known as the "Roboré Agreement" that became highly controversial in both countries. Lately, both sides decided to dismiss this new

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arrangement to open the way for private companies to explore oil in Bolivia, including the possibility of operating in association with foreign companies (Smith, 1971; Vilarino, 2006). Since then, one cannot mention Brazil-Bolivia relations without taking "Roboré" into consideration, which has become a synonym for an attempt of postcolonial intervention.

After missing out on its privileged position for over twenty years, the Roboré Agreements' imbroglio led to Brazil losing its drilling rights in Bolivia. It would only be in the late 1990s that Brazilian MNCs would finally begin investing in oil and gas exploration in Bolivia. As a result of the Washington Consensus diffusion across Latin America, governments took several initiatives to open industries for competition and led other MNCs, mainly from Europe with none from the US, to establish a presence in Bolivia to exploit its oil and gas reserves. However, they were all equally affected by the Morales nationalization decree of May 2006. At that time, Brazilian energy MNCs alone were responsible for around 22% of the country's gross national product (Copara, 2014).

Culture and identity

An MNC may directly impact the formation of its international identity by disregarding several cultural aspects that arise from foreign and local employees' interaction and their identification with its culture.

According to Nkomo and Cox (2006), the fact that individuals have multiple identities and not one contributes to the complexity of the organization's identity formation. Individuals are not just African, European, Korean, whites, blacks, women, men, marketing managers, or production managers. The identities intersect to create an amalgamated identity, and how identities interact is essential to an organizational context. So, the study of identity necessarily involves attention to its interaction with other identities.

Adler (1997) presented the "projection of similarity" as an essential point regarding the perception of distances and asymmetries in the organizational environment within the concept of diversity and internationalization. According to this theory, people believe that "the others" are always more like them than they are. To forecast similarities reflects a frequent and natural process. American teachers requested managers from fourteen countries to describe company colleagues' goals and work routines in other countries. In all cases, the managers described these activities as much likely their own, then, in fact, they were. That seems to show that forecast similarities involve assuming, imagining, and realizing similarities when there are differences. It is usual to hear, in the organizational environment, comments like: "I understand him perfectly, but he cannot understand me." This example demonstrates the kind of distortion that the communication process may suffer. It is pertinent to point out that teams from different cultural backgrounds generally disagree with many meanings, as the cause of events, the determination of admissible evidence, the relevance of specific information, and possible conclusions that can be drawn. In some cases, disagreements remain implicit or camouflaged because members assume that their interpretations are similar when, in fact, what happens is the opposite.

According to Adler (1997), the process of implementing a global and synergistic identity must be careful. Before the organization members understand the changing needs based on that assumption, they must develop cultural self-awareness and knowledge of other cultures. Without the understanding of some of these dynamics, many proposals for change and interaction may seem absurd. With the deepening of cultural knowledge, the organization can solve problems and implement changes that will lead the company to accomplish its objectives more efficiently, respecting, and valuing differences and its human capital's mental health.

Many scholars consider an assumed cultural homogeneity within a country or specific location (Fletcher & Bohn, 1998; Kogut & Singh, 1988). However, this assumption may not be correct since many countries are made up of different ethnic groups or developed different values and cultural traditions regionally (Jack, Calás, Nkomo, & Peltonen, 2008; Jack & Westwood, 2009). Besides, globalization itself undertakes to take the diversity in a very fragmented level into the organizations, favoring an individual analysis of the phenomenon only, with critical considerations on external and collective influence.

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In search of a south-south postcolonial IB perspective

The speech made by Morales (2006) was filled with an array of anti-colonialist remarks and reclaimed the rights of the local people to natural resources held by exploiting foreigners. His declaration against the colonizers – Brazilian MNCs included – was perfectly aligned with postcolonial affirmations giving voice to the subaltern (Spivak, 1988).

It is widely recognized that "it was mainly through the publication of Said's (1978) masterpiece *Orientalism* that postcolonial theory began to gain recognition within Western scholarly circles as a major new perspective of radical critique" (Banerjee & Prasad, 2008, p. 92). The postcolonial theory presents radical critiques to colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism, the latter being an extension of colonialism beyond the mere occupation of territory using different political, economic, and cultural control (Jack & Westwood, 2009). "Postcolonial theory stakes a position firmly committed to critiquing Eurocentrism... (and) may be viewed as a much more comprehensive critique and deconstruction of the constitutive practices and discourses of (neo-) colonialism" (Banerjee & Prasad, 2008, p. 92).

The term postcolonial seeks to denounce the colonial discourse that depicts the colonizer as developed and illuminated, having the colonized as ignorant and marginal. However, if under colonialism, the state was responsible for imposing domination upon another nation, in neo-colonialism MNCs have become an essential vehicle for the same purpose (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Jack & Westwood, 2009; Wanderley & Celano, 2018). As MNCs expand, a new kind of colonial expansion takes place. This contemporary colonial framework is based on corporate relationships and not solely on national governments. The global expansion of MNCs from developed countries has become a legitimate vehicle of intervention for the imposition of the development discourse propelled by Western institutions that "were a thinly disguised substitute for earlier, more overt colonial interventions" (Jack & Westwood, 2009, p. 370).

Jack et al. (2008) have suggested that mainstream literature with MNCs as its prime focus tends to be firmly rooted in the positivist-functionalist tradition and does not reflect the epistemological consequences. They have suggested that power and ideology issues must be brought to center stage to overcome what they see as "the uneasy relationship" between mainstream literature and critique (Jack et al., 2008). One should add that the same rings true for the relationship between mainstream IB and MNCs.

Furthermore, we must be aware that postcolonial IB investigations have been encouraged mainly to investigate North-South relations and that scholars from the North have promoted them (e.g., Jack & Westwood, 2009; Wanderley & Celano, 2018). Hence, we must be cautious when using the postcolonial canon to investigate cases South-South and South-North relations led by MNCs.

Decades marked by the firm belief that MNCs are a solely Euro-American institution have resulted in a significant mobilization of Euro-American theories, frameworks, and concepts to explain the path to internationalization taken by MNCs (e.g., Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000; Dunning, Kim, & Park, 2008; Rugman, 2009). For instance, Bartlett and Ghoshal (2000) branded EMNCs as late movers and suggested that for them to catch up with the MNCs would require that their HQs foster a more global mindset guided by relentless leaders. However, these suggestions are still within the same realm that Bartlett and Ghoshal (2000) propose for MNCs from developed countries in which they "rarely explicitly mention the role of power relationships in balancing the global and the local" (Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014, p. 230). In the same vein, the rise of the MNCs has been reduced to "old wine in a new bottle," thus dismissing the need to change the prevailing analytical framework (Dunning et al., 2008, p. 158). The same has been suggested by Rugman (2009, p. 50), who considers that MNCs are "mainly home-region based," just like the MNCs he studied.

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