

## Reflections on the Brazilian Effect:

A seminar on Brazil's potential to deploy civilian experts to fragile settings – Brasilia, 28 February 2012

Mariana Kalil with Eduarda Haman. Edited by Robert Muggah. Translation by Ana Paula Pellegrino.



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### Abstract

The Igarapé Institute coordinated the first ever seminar on Brazilian civilian capacities for peace support operations in February 2012. The seminar brought together key stakeholders to review national interests, latent capabilities, practical challenges and genuine opportunities for promoting a Brazilian face on future multilateral and trilateral missions. The seminar assembled selected representatives of the federal government from the United Nations (UN) and academia. The seminar found that Brazil has a real opportunity to expand its civilian presence, including in on-going UN missions. Indeed, participants agreed that Brazil had considerable strategic advantages and should proactively expand its position in line with its expanding geopolitical profile.



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#### Introduction

There is growing appetite and commitment to deploying civilian experts to fragile and conflict-affected settings. This expansion is in line with the parallel explosion of political and peace support operations mandated by the UN Security Council. The Igarape Institute and other organizations have undertaken considerable research on these trends in countries throughout North America and Western Europe. Yet comparatively less is known about how emerging powers such as Brazil are engaging with these debates.

The UN and member states have taken considerable strides in developing international and national capacities to deploy civilian specialists. Indeed, at least 15 countries have assembled “civilian rosters” to this end. Alongside Brazil, countries such as India and South Africa are also emerging as new nodes of expertise. Many see opportunities for promoting South-South cooperation and extending their influence. And yet, the effectiveness and efficiency of these and other related efforts is still not well known.

The seminar – **the Brazilian Effect: Brazilian Civilian Experts in Fragile and Post-Conflict Settings** – was intended to revisit debates and experiences in this regard. A key goal was to establish a forum to review and discuss opportunities and constraints. Taking place in Brasilia on 28 February 2012, the event was hosted by Igarapé, with support from the UN and the University of Brasilia (UnB). It also represented the first time that such a wide range of ministries, departments, agencies and research institutes were gathered together to discuss the role and place of civilians in peace operations and post-conflict situations. An expectation of the seminar was to create a network for further exchange.

#### Focus and participants

A number of critical issues were tabled at the Brazilian Effect seminar. Specifically, three sessions were held to assess:

1. the opportunities available for Brazil to expand civilian capacities in UN operations and activities;
2. the dynamics of international demand for Brazilian expertise; and
3. the lessons emerging from Brazil as a result of participation in multilateral missions as well as recent deployments of military and police personnel.



## Brazilian Civilian Capacity

Igarapé, the UN and UnB held the first national meeting on the capacities, challenges and opportunities for Brazil in the deployment of civilian experts in unstable contexts.

A related transversal theme was connected to the evolving influence and “supply” of Brazil’s technical cooperation portfolio in post-conflict and fragile settings.

The seminar drew a wide selection of participants from across Brazilian government and civil society. Indeed, more than 45 experts attended, including representatives of:

- **Federal government:** including participants from 13 agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Special Secretariat of the Presidency for Human Rights (SDH); Institute of Research on Applied Economics (IPEA); Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS); Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA); Supreme Court of Justice (STF); Superior Electoral Court (TSE); Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN); Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA); National School of Public Administration (ENAP); Brazilian Army; and the House of Representatives;
- **International organizations:** heralding from international organizations and civil society including the Brazilian Red Cross and more than 10 Brazilian representatives to the United Nations – the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP); the Department of Field Support (DFS); the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS); the World Food Program (WFP); the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR); and the UN Voluntary Program (UNV);
- **Federal District:** the Military Police of the Federal District (PMDF) and the Fire Department of the Federal District;
- **Academia:** including the University of Brasilia (UnB), Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV); the Catholic University of Brasilia (UCB) and the University of the Federal District (UDF).



## Opening session

The event was opened with a review of Brazil's evolving global role in the security and development sectors. The opening session traced out the country's legacy of multilateral and bilateral cooperation, including in post-conflict and fragile settings. Indeed, Brazilians have long been involved in peace operations including to Guinea Bissau, Haiti and Timor-Leste. What is more, Brazil supports technical cooperation in at least a third of all so-called fragile countries and practitioners are alert to the ways in which security and development are interconnected.

The opening sessions drew attention to the ways in which Brazilian foreign policy is now engaging with fundamental issues of security and development. Brazilian diplomats have long advocated an interdependent relationship between security and development in UN and other multilateral forums. But this position is not necessarily agreed by all countries in the UN. Even so, Brazil sees security and development activities as central to ensuring "sustainable peace". What is more, a growing cadre of policy makers recognize how the deployment of civilian experts in peace operations could contribute to this end. Indeed, there are already Brazilians in the field, albeit a limited number. Just 33 Brazilians out of 8,000 international civilians work in UN mission on the field as of 2012, or some 0.4 per cent of the total. All participants agreed that this ratio could be dramatically improved.

The opening session also considered the outcomes of Brazil's efforts in fragile and post-conflict settings. Indeed, many participants were new to the subject and were eager to learn more about the practice and outcomes of Brazil's experiences. For example, what were the impacts of engagement in conflict-affected and fragile settings on the physical and mental health of Brazilians on the ground? How can strategies be constructed so that they anticipate unstable contexts and what are the implications of success and failure on Brazil's international reputation? What type of training do Brazilians receive before departing on missions? What kind of relationship currently exists between Brazilian institutions in the field?



### Inter-agency event

The event attracted more than 45 professionals from the Federal Government, Federal District, international organizations and academia.





## Session 1: A role for Brazil in UN operations?

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The first substantive session focused on the prospective role of Brazilians in international organizations and peace and security activities more generally. A key concern registered by participants related to enhancing the Brazilian presence in peace operations along with agencies, programs and financial mechanisms focused on conflict-affected and fragile settings. Participants noted that when compared to other countries of a similar size and capacity, Brazilian representation was extremely low.

The seminar considered the international division of labour in relation to civilian deployments. Participants detected a disproportionate representation of candidates from upper-income settings. Indeed, this is due to the greater reservoirs of expertise, greater access to information and considerable leverage brought to bear by specific governments. At the same time, these same candidates may have limitations, particularly in relation to social and cultural values with host country populations. All seminar attendees agreed that greater participation from developing country experts is desirable. This could both soothe the democratic deficit while also increasing the prospect for more sustainable solutions.

The character and structure of UN missions in conflict-affected and fragile circumstances is complex. There are challenging issues of coordination between those in New York that oversee missions and their counterparts on the ground who are subordinate. Likewise, in-country, there are a multitude of agencies, non-governmental organizations, government actors and media representatives that must constantly engage and communicate. In the midst of this are civilian experts that share a basic profile. Indeed, according to the UN, the typical expert is in their mid-40s, are male, have two years or less of experience in a field mission. Most are African and just 4 per cent hail from South America, suggesting a major resource to be tapped.

The UN manages a massive and intricate program to match international supply with demand. For example, it oversees a database of 16,000 candidates of varying quality. Indeed, the UN has recognized the limitations of its response. Indeed, the UN has recently undertaken a major review of its civilian capacity and in the process, identified a range of sector-specific areas where it lacks expertise – including safety and security, justice, public administration and economic recovery. The UN anticipates improving the speed and specificity of its deployments in the coming years. At the same time, missions can also recruit civilians through the UN Volunteer (UNV) program. Candidates must pass a safety course and medical clearance and will receive a modest stipend and benefits. Few Brazilians appear to be deployed as UNVs.

The UN's regular recruitment process is more than six decades old. Not only is it struggling to cope with its basic case-load, UN Security Council resolutions routinely mandate activities that beyond what the organization is able to manage. In order to resolve these and other issues, the UN Secretary General created a working group to identify and respond to inefficiencies in peace missions. Recent suggestions include the creation of a new mechanism for identifying qualified civilian experts ("CAPMATCH"). This tool is now under construction and will be launched in late 2012. The working group also recommended that support be provided to member states that wish to systematize their own registries of qualified professionals.

Of course, participants noted that the UN was not the only entity responsible for recruiting, contracting and deploying civilians. Indeed, many governments regularly identify public servants and personnel to support UN missions. In Brazil, the General Coordination of International Action to Fight Against Hunger – or CGFome, in Portuguese – offers one innova-



tive strategy to help bridge capacity gaps. Specifically, CGFome permits the payment of stipends to Brazilian volunteers in UNV activities, as is the currently the case in El Salvador. This is an important precedent. What is more, participants highlighted the possibility of recruiting retired professionals from relevant ministries for a roster. Moreover, there is an UNDP's internal mechanism called "Surge", which can be used by the Brazilian government. Reference was also made to the creation, on behalf of the Brazilian government, of a National Registry of Volunteers, anticipating the demand for volunteers of future mega-events, such as the World Cup (2014) and Olympics (2016), and efforts to combat dengue.



## Few Brazilian civilians in UN missions

There are only 33 Brazilians amongst the 8 thousand international civilian experts that work in UN missions in the field, which makes up 0.4% of the total.

The seminar also identified a number of serious challenges to expanding Brazil's role in multilateral peace operations. Indeed, current Brazilian legislation does not easily allow the dispatch of public servants for missions lasting 90 or more days. And yet UN missions typically last for 12 month or more. What is more, some participants highlighted the importance of developing a more coherent and centralized structure for deploying Brazilian citizens, one that is evolved to contemporary realities. Additional challenges related to the institutional culture within the Brazilian government. Indeed, there are few career incentives for deploying civilians and limited examples of civil servants with the will or interest to assume responsibilities abroad.

## Session 2: Brazilian professionals abroad

During the second session Brazilian professionals who have worked in multilateral missions shared their experiences with other participants. The group consisted primarily of election observers, military personnel and military police. At the time of the seminar, the experiences of other civilian experts participating in multilateral missions has not been systematized or analysed.



The demand for Brazilian election monitors has been elevated for some time. In the case of Brazil, deployment is typically organized via the Superior Electoral Court (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, in Portuguese), who names monitors following a request from foreign governments or international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP, in Portuguese). Since the 1990's, Brazil has sent election monitors to countries as wide ranging as Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, South Africa and others.

Experienced participants reported a number of challenges when preparing for or conducting missions. For example, some felt there was a lack of objective criteria for conducting and concluding investigations on electoral processes. The lack of language skills in some countries was singled out as another challenge. Furthermore, they noted no specific institutional procedures that prepare and brief observers about the situation before they are deployed. Rather, this kind of support is provided by Brazilian embassies or international organizations only after their arrival in country. A compilation of experiences might be useful for future deployed personnel.

By way of comparison, the legal and institutional mechanisms for deployment of military personnel are generally more consolidated. This is mainly because there have a long tradition of sending professionals to UN missions since the 1940s. Military personnel are sent individually as observers or advisors and collectively as formed units. What is more, compensation is legally guaranteed and there is a specific budget for preparing professionals for international deployment. Deployment of troops typically occurs twice a year, particularly in the wake of the UN mission in Haiti since 2004. There is also an obvious concern regarding the insurance of quality in preparing and completing mandates. The Armed Forces guarantee a high level of quality by matching and in some cases exceeding budgets that surpass UN reimbursements. As with other civil servants, deployed military report language challenges.

With respect to the military police, the statute that regulates their activity includes legal provisions for their deployment abroad. As in the case of the Armed Forces, financing is also anticipated. Even so, commanders rarely release professionals because there are not enough qualified personnel to fill in the gaps for 12 months (typical duration of UN missions for individual police officers). And even when professionals do get permission to work abroad, there are few provisions for specific training and related psychological and family support before their deployment. Therefore, there are strong incentives not to deploy since there are no guarantees of returning to the same post upon termination of one's duties in the mission. Furthermore, there is no supervision of police activity in the field, nor is there communication between the observer and command or a standard uniform. Each police officer uses the uniform from his/her own state, which does not help to create a visual identity for the Brazilian police force working internationally.

### **Session 3: Brazilian technical cooperation**

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The third session explored the prospects for harnessing Brazilian technical cooperation in a more concerted manner for conflict-affected and fragile settings. Indeed, professionals from diverse institutions were challenged to think about how the diverse levers of Brazilian capacity could be leveraged to this end. Initiatives in tropical health, security and justice, vocational training and human rights were all noted. And while the urgency and importance of harnessing Brazilian capacities was agreed, participants agreed that there still is no clear national policy on how to most appropriately deploy



civilians. Most deployments are facilitated instead by ad hoc instruments created by Brazilian institutions to respond to the demands and difficulties in the field. Many of these can actually serve as inspiration for a consolidated Brazilian model for recruiting, training, and deploying civilian capacity.

Most participants agreed that national professionals are by and large benevolent and motivated. But it was also agreed that these characteristics, while necessary, are insufficient to bridge a candidate's lack of preparation. Moreover, the lack of institutional or legal mechanisms to facilitate deployment and incentivize participation also generates inertia. This is not to say that the news is all bad. Indeed, Brazil's engagement before and after the Haitian earthquake shows how when faced with a major calamity, Brazil can surmount bureaucratic obstacles. Indeed, more than 9,000 health professionals rapidly made themselves available for deployment and massive supplies were mobilized in the weeks after the earthquake.

Brazil is in fact maturing as a supplier of personnel and services, albeit slowly. But more critical reflection is needed. Today, many Brazilians claim that decisions around technical cooperation are motivated less by vested interests than by a sense of solidarity and moral consciousness. This "positive" messaging is designed to increase the acceptance of Brazilian aid, particularly in complex and hostile settings. Some participants noted that this kind of simplistic interpretation may need further reflection since it implies a "heroic phase" where altruism serves as the motto for international missions. Participants noted that such a perspective should be complemented by a pragmatic perspective, including one that expands Brazil's influence in international institutions such as the UN Security Council. Brazil has accumulated



## Brazilian Election monitors throughout the world

Since the 1990's Brazil has sent election monitors to countries such as Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, South Africa and others.





## Centralizing the organization of civilian capacity in Brazil

The identification and creation of a mechanism that centralizes the organization of civilian capacity was suggested during the debate. The UN could also support this initiative

experience and capacities that can extend and project its power. The standardization of procedures for identification, selection, training and deployment, and further cooperation with the UN could extend it further still.

In the final session participants explored opportunities to consolidate Brazil as an active player in international organizations. A major area of focus was on ensuring training and language skills for would-be recruits. Even more important, was the balancing of Brazil's "altruistic" foreign policy with practical strategic considerations. Some of the persistent subsidiary challenges for expanding Brazil's participation in peace operations include developing a common approach to recruitment and deployment and reforming institutions and legislation in order to create a culture that favours civilian participation in missions in post-conflict and fragile contexts. To achieve this goal, some participants called for the creation of a centralized mechanism. Such a mechanism would need to speak across ministries and represent the Brazilian government in international forums. It would also need to be endowed with the legitimacy to help organize and coordinate Brazilian support abroad.



## Increasing international cooperation

Brazil is a developing country that accumulates both the condition of recipient and donor of increasingly significant amounts of aid.



## Closing reflections

Brazil has the opportunity to elevate its role in the international arena. This seminar, led by Igarape, UN and UnB, demonstrated that despite persistent challenges abroad and on the domestic front, the country has a real capacity to raise its game. While the number of Brazilian civilians in UN missions might be limited, Brazil is already involved in a number of activities in fragile and conflict-affected settings from which it is learning lessons. There is also evidence that Brazil brings a new comparative advantage to the table, one that is increasingly being recognized.

### The need to improve training

More than having the technical expertise to go into the field, the Brazilian civilian must dominate the local language and receive basic safety and security instructions, along with information on Brazil's foreign policy towards the country of deployment.



Seminar participants proposed the creation of a governmental inter-agency group to think through Brazil's evolving civilian role in support operations. Such a group would bring considerable expertise to the table and allow for practical consideration of ways to proceed in a holistic manner. The formation of such a group can be done without institutional, legal or budgetary implications. Such a group, coordinated by Itamaraty, would ideally be constituted of representatives of diverse ministries and other institutions, including those from civil society and the private sector already involved in international cooperation.

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