

CIVCAP, Emerging Powers and the Global South: Evidence for a New Phase of Engagement

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Summary

In 2012 an international research network was formed to examine the Civilian Capacity (CIVCAP) agenda from the perspectives of key countries, including Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Norway, Russia, South Africa and Turkey. The partnership aims to produce national analyses of CIVCAP issues, to inform and influence domestic dialogue on CIVCAP, and to impact positively on the CIVCAP agenda globally.

This policy brief provides a synopsis of findings from the first collaborative research undertaken by this research network, which might help to inform ongoing CIVCAP deliberations at the United Nations. The network's research has shown that some of the so-called 'Emerging Powers', and the Global South in general, are already significant providers of civilian capacity through bilateral as well as multilateral mechanisms. The research also showed that there is a real opportunity for further vesting these stakeholders through a new phase of engagement on CIVCAP. To date, the larger middle-income countries have primarily used bilateral modalities based on South-South cooperation principles, while the smaller countries have been more engaged through multilateral channels and trilateral partnerships.

While supportive of CIVCAP overall, the national systems that would support CIVCAP are unlikely to be able to engage further with the CIVCAP agenda until the focus shifts to a more practical level, with concrete requests for assistance. In particular, there is need for an active piloting of some of the mechanisms proposed under CIVCAP, such as the use of the government-provided personnel (GPP) modality, and more proactive efforts to promote and broker CAPMATCH partnerships.

For policy-makers at the UN, this will require a clear signal of support for the CIVCAP agenda so as to enable the pilot testing of pragmatic tools, which could in practice significantly improve the participation of Emerging Powers and Global South actors in the CIVCAP agenda through multilateral and bilateral channels.

Baseline Study on Civilian Capacity

In November 2012, the recently established CIVCAP Network issued its first joint research product, a *Baseline Study on Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Armed Conflict*, comprised of six national case studies and a synthesis report.¹ The research focused on understanding capital-city appreciation of, and interest in CIVCAP to complement the ongoing focused discussions at the UN in New York. The research was presented at the inaugural CIVCAP Network Annual Seminar in Brasilia, 28–29 November 2012, where researchers and officials came together to discuss the findings.²

The baseline research offers analyses of select national perspectives on the international CIVCAP agenda. It contains information on the network partner countries' current CIVCAP-like contributions, as well as their national approaches, policies and institutional machinery for providing civilian assistance, including in post-conflict and crisis settings. The synthesis report provides a cross-cutting assessment of their experiences, and can serve as a basis for assessing whether the national positions and approaches of these key Emerging Powers and Global South players are well aligned with the assumptions that underpin the international CIVCAP effort and policy debates on the topic in New York.

On the surface, the CIVCAP agenda would appear to take up a range of issues often raised by countries of the Global South: concerns about culturally inappropriate approaches, lack of national ownership,

1 P. Keating and S. Wiharta, 2012. *Synthesis Report of the Baseline Study on Civilian Capacity*. Oslo: NUPI. Available at: <http://www.nupi.no/Publications/Books-and-reports/2012/Synthesis-Report-of-the-Baseline-Study-on-Civilian-Capacity>.

2 C.H. de Coning and P. Keating, 2012. *Seminar Report, CivCap Network Annual Seminar 2012*. Brasilia: Civilian Capacity Network. Available at: http://www.nupi.no/content/download/385326/1305729/version/3/file/Report_CivCap_%2824jan%29_web.pdf

over-emphasis on Western liberal democratic models, limited focus on national capacity development, and insufficient emphasis on South–South cooperation. Yet, some in the Global South have voiced concerns about other motives that may lie behind the CIVCAP agenda – for example, that it might be a cost-cutting or burden-shifting effort by some countries, or an attempt by the UN Secretariat to take on greater executive authority. Others, proponents of CIVCAP from both the West and the Global South, have rejected such criticisms, and see CIVCAP as an important, albeit gradual, process for reshaping the provision of civilian assistance in post-conflict and crisis settings. The CIVCAP debate among UN member states in New York has oscillated between these various positions of principle and politics over the past two years.

The baseline research sought to examine more specifically the positions and interests of several key countries engaged in the CIVCAP agenda. The network’s research has revealed solid interest and support for the CIVCAP initiative at the level of national capitals. There also appears to be considerable interest among these key countries in further expanding their civilian assistance to post-conflict and crisis settings. However, the research has also shown that overall national knowledge and understanding of CIVCAP is limited to a few central actors, and that there are definitional and practical concerns that need to be addressed for the agenda to move forward. Most of the countries studied have a strong preference for bilateral modalities, although several are interested in greater participation in multilateral deployments as well.

Global South Participation

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The study examined current levels of CIVCAP engagement in the partner countries of the research network. An underlying assumption of the CIVCAP agenda has been that the Global South is not yet sufficiently engaged in providing civilian capacity in post-conflict and crisis settings through the UN or other modalities. It is also frequently held that the major emerging actors, the larger middle-income countries in particular, could become major providers of CIVCAP expertise in the future. Our research indicates that the Global South is already a significant provider of civilian capacity, but that the nature of such participation varies significantly among these countries, as do their preferences for

using bilateral or multilateral channels. Approximately 60% of international civilian staff in UN peacekeeping and special political missions come from the Global South – however, generally not from the Emerging Powers.³ If we examine certain niche areas, such as the justice sector, then the proportion is even higher: of the civilian staff in UN missions who are deployed as government-provided personnel (GPP) in the justice and corrections sectors, approx. 87.5% come from the Global South (see Chart 2).⁴

Chart 1 shows that the research network partner countries provide a significant level of uniformed personnel in UN field missions; however, the participation of civilian staff from these countries is generally quite low. Of the six partner countries, only India and Russia rank in the top twenty nationalities of civilian staff in UN field missions, as number 4 and number 20, respectively.

Chart 1.

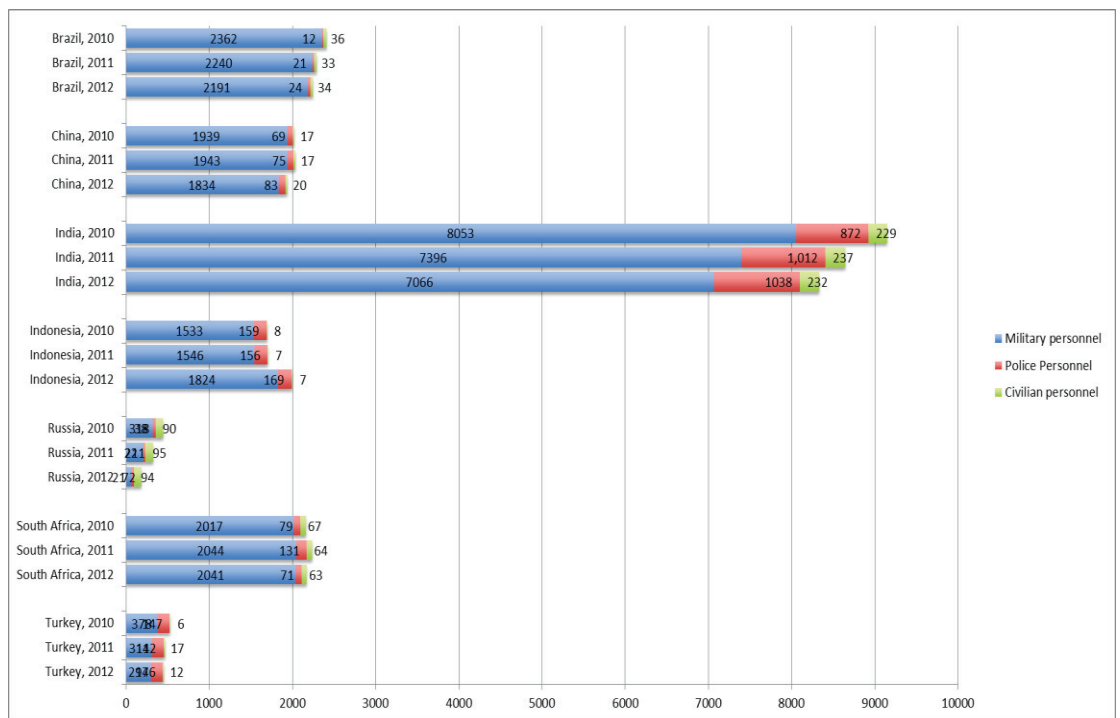
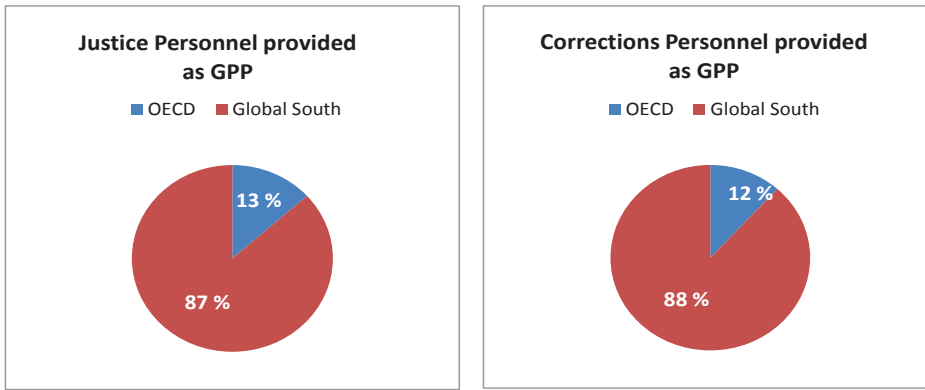


Chart 2 shows high levels of overall Global South participation in the Government-Provided Personnel (GPP) category of personnel in UN missions. None of the six studied countries currently provide staff through this modality, however.

3 C. de Coning, 2011. ‘Civilian Peacekeeping Capacity: Mobilizing Partners to Match Supply and Demand’, *International Peacekeeping*, 18(5).
 4 Keating & Wiharta 2012:27.

Chart 2.



The baseline study found that the partner countries of the research network have not focused on multilateral provision of civilian capacity, but have preferred bilateral deployments drawing upon their own resources and relationships. Some, like Brazil and Indonesia, have taken steps towards starting to provide personnel via multilateral channels, but others have seen higher transaction costs and lower reputational benefits than can accrue from bilateral deployments. These countries expect stronger returns from direct relationships with recipient governments and seek to respond to their requests across a broad spectrum of development activities, rather than in just a handful of discrete niche areas in post-conflict settings.

In contrast, smaller countries from the Global South appear to utilize multilateral modalities more readily, potentially because they are less able to bear the direct costs of bilateral deployment. Smaller countries, particularly the less developed countries, appear more interested in drawing on multilateral funding sources and trilateral partnership arrangements to deploy personnel. The smaller countries see reputational benefits from multilateral deployments and are more likely to seek niche areas of expertise than the larger, better resourced countries.⁵

The UN CIVCAP approach to onboarding personnel through the UN system (for example through the GPP approach) is potentially better suited to engaging smaller countries than the middle-income, larger actors of the CIVCAP Network. Complementary efforts that target both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms for deploying CIVCAP may have more relevance for the countries of our research network. The CAPMATCH tool, for example, which seeks to match demand with all forms of supply, might prove more useful to bilaterally focused countries if it could be better resourced.

National CIVCAP approaches

Some common themes emerged across the case studies. At the level of national capitals, each of the countries has approached the CIVCAP agenda through the lens of their existing civilian assistance programmes. These are delivered primarily under South–South Cooperation principles and through established technical cooperation programmes and policies. Few are likely to develop dedicated structures

to engage with CIVCAP but would rather draw upon existing cooperation mechanisms. Future efforts to engage these countries will require CIVCAP advocates to draw upon existing South–South Cooperation and technical cooperation language and principles in their discussions.

In each of the countries, significant strengthening of their technical cooperation programmes is underway in recognition of the greater demand for their assistance, and the

increased value placed on these tools in South–South relationship-building. Many of these countries are also starting to see the benefits of using these forms of cooperation as a means of soft-power projection. In India and South Africa, new institutions have recently been formed for managing their growing cooperation programmes. In Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey reviews are underway to enhance their cooperation approaches and modalities. In Russia, key policy decisions remain on the table regarding the future management arrangements for their overseas cooperation programmes.

All the countries studied appear keen to deploy more civilian technical expertise in crisis and post-conflict settings. To date, only India, Turkey and South Africa have seen significant levels of civilian deployment deployed for long durations in such higher-risk settings. However, others are starting to examine the challenges entailed in mobilizing, deploying and sustaining personnel in these settings. Even for those more experienced countries, there is still much that can be incorporated in terms of lessons for managing a larger scale of deployment in riskier settings. Issues of risk and duty of care will become increasingly prominent as each of these countries further extends its technical cooperation approaches into CIVCAP settings. There is significant scope for a productive exchange of experiences and good practices among the partners as they move forward.

National Perspectives on International CIVCAP agenda

The research examined the Network countries' perspectives of the wider international CIVCAP agenda being spearheaded by the United Nations. In general terms, views on CIVCAP were positive, although it is also clear that the awareness of CIVCAP does not go beyond a handful of key actors in national capitals. Most countries applauded the consultative effort undertaken by the UN, but recognized that more must be done (and indeed is being done) at the national level to explain the concept to wider domestic stakeholder groups.

Several countries felt that the UN's CIVCAP approach focused too heavily on deploying niche civilian capacities, failing to cover the full range of civilian assistance provided by many countries.⁶ Most felt that abstract discussions

5 E.Tremblay-Champagne, 2012. *Baseline Study on Civilian Capacity: The Case of Burkina Faso*. Montréal: Peace Operations Network. Available at: http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/7582~v~Baseline_Study_on_Civilian_Capacities_The_Case_of_Burkina_Faso.pdf

6 They felt the focus on deployable capacity missed support provided through workshops, short-term missions, trainings etc. It was also felt that the UN agenda focused too narrowly on peacebuilding, and should cover a wider range of social and economic dimensions of support to post-conflict and crisis settings.

around civilian capacities should now give way to concrete requests for CIVCAP support from the United Nations and recipient countries through CIVCAP tools. The concepts and tools of CIVCAP (such as CAPMATCH) need to be tested through actual test cases rather than discussions in principle. The countries studied felt that they have a broad range of capacities; they would prefer to respond case-by-case to requests for assistance rather than identifying a small number of niche areas where they would then have to invest in preparing offers for assistance that might, or might not, result in actual deployments.

The research and seminar discussions revealed support for the CIVCAP initiatives being introduced by the United Nations such as the CAPMATCH tool and the proposal to make greater use of the GPP approach. As to mobilizing civilian experts for field missions through the GPP, some of the partners emphasized the need for a transparent, organized model, perhaps similar to the UN's force generation system for police and military personnel. For CAPMATCH, there was a strong sense that a 'hands-off' approach to the tool would not suffice. The countries studied felt that without some brokerage or support provided by the United Nations, the underlying 'deals' needed to make CAPMATCH a success would probably not be made.⁷

Conclusion

In late 2012, parallel to the research and CIVCAP Network discussions in Brasilia, UN member states considered the recent report of the Secretary-General⁸ on CIVCAP in the context of the General Assembly's annual budget discussions. For some of the countries studied, there is an apparent disconnect between positions articulated in the research and CIVCAP Network discussions from the official stance taken at the UN. This apparent disconnect is a matter in need of further analysis.

Underlying the CIVCAP debate, there has been a narrative implying the need for greater participation from the

⁷ The UN has consistently noted that it is not resourced to serve that function, and that further resourcing for CAPMATCH is subject to member-state decisions on resourcing for CIVCAP.

⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict, 15 August 2012 (A/67/312-S/2012/645)

Global South in CIVCAP. However, research on bilateral and multilateral contribution reveals that this narrative may need to pivot. The Global South is already a significant provider of civilian capacity in crisis and post-conflict settings, with significant contributions through UN field missions (as staff competitively recruited by the UN, and as Government-Provided Personnel) as well as through bilateral South-South cooperation modalities, particularly from the middle-income countries who appear increasingly interested in deploying support to CIVCAP settings.

The generally positive disposition of the countries studied toward CIVCAP will need to be sustained through a new phase of engagement. That engagement must focus on a few pilot cases, to test the emerging CIVCAP systems and to build familiarity and confidence in them, and to work through the practical challenges that will inevitably emerge.

Once the CIVCAP system is operating, even on a small scale, supplier countries will be better able to calibrate their systems. However, further discussion of in-principle demand will not generate the necessary political or other interest to drive changes in support of CIVCAP. National actors now need to see and understand the level of demand, and experience some of the practical challenges of CIVCAP deployments, so that they can undertake the necessary adjustments to existing programmes. The United Nations should begin to use the CAPMATCH and GPP tools proactively to support its field missions and the needs of host countries.

At the level of UN Headquarters, the UN Secretariat has been constrained by the lack of clear direction from member states. If political support is provided for the modest and practical proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report, the UN CIVCAP team will be in a position to better engage with partners on the practicalities of implementation. There is a real opportunity to engage Emerging Powers and Global South players more proactively in the CIVCAP agenda, at both bilateral (through CAPMATCH) and multilateral levels (through the GPP modality). However, weak signals of support from member states will undermine the momentum that is now needed to take engagement with the Emerging Powers and Global South to a new level.

The research was made possible through a grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Training for Peace in Africa Programme (TfP).



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