

Review of the book *New studies on civil-military relations and defense policy in Brazil*

Resenha do livro New studies on civil-military relations and defense policy in Brazil

AMORIM NETO, O. **New studies on civil-military relations and defense policy in Brazil**. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2022.

Abstract: The book offers an analysis of civil-military interaction and defense policies. It presents a variety of methods and a wide range of themes. It stands out for the depth of the analysis and the diversity of the perspectives presented. Each chapter is written by experts and provides a detailed overview.

Keywords: Civil-Military Relations; Defense Policies; Military Sciences.

Resumo: O livro oferece uma análise sobre a interação entre civis e militares e as políticas de defesa. Apresenta métodos variados e uma ampla gama de temas. Destaca-se pela profundidade das análises e pela diversidade das perspectivas apresentadas. Cada capítulo é escrito por especialistas e proporciona uma visão detalhada.

Palavras-chave: Relações Cívico-Militares; Políticas de Defesa; Ciências Militares.

Carolina Raffagnato 

Exército Brasileiro. Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército.

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil.

carolina.raffagnato@gmail.com

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The book *New Studies on Civil-Military Relations and Defense Policy in Brazil*, as its name suggests, analyzes civil-military dynamics in the contemporary Brazilian context. The book is organized by Octavio Amorim Neto and examines various political and social contexts in which military and civilians collaborate, as well as the relations of the Armed Forces with the country's government. The book was published in 2022, when Brazil was facing significant challenges regarding democratic stability and governance.

Octavio Amorim Neto is a respected Brazilian political scientist with notable contribution to the study of political institutions, comparative politics, and civil-military relations in Latin American countries—and more specifically, Brazil. He is currently a professor and researcher at the Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration (EBAPE) of the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, Amorim Neto holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego, and has published several studies on presidential system, form of government, coalition politics, and defenses. His work is a reference in academic and public circles on the discussion of politics and governance in Latin America.

This book is aimed at academics and researchers in the fields of political science, international relations, military sciences, and security and defense studies, as well as lawmakers, analysts, and decision-makers.

The authors' plurality and themes offer the reader diverse perspectives on civil-military relations and defense policies. The analyses range from the contexts of peacekeeping operations to the study of their relations transparency, also offering heterogeneous qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The book is divided into nine chapters, of which the first is written by the organizer, Octavio Amorim Neto, on the role of civilian scholars in understanding relations in an unstable democracy ("Civilian Scholars and the Study of Civil-Military Relations and Defense Policy in Brazil's Unstable Democracy"). Gabriel Alves Pimenta addresses the gradual evolution of civilian control over the Brazilian Ministry of Defense in the second chapter ("Inching Forward: The Evolution of Civilian Control in Contemporary Brazil's Ministry of Defense"). The author used two methods of data collection: a review of official sources in addition to interviews with civil officers of the Brazilian Ministry of Defense. The author concludes by suggesting that there are inconsistencies between official documents and interviews. While documents reveal very advanced civilian control of the military in Brazil, the interviewees report that, although the autonomy of the military has decreased, it has not yet reached the ideal.

In the third chapter, André Anselmo examines the missed opportunities in the Brazilian strategy of peacekeeping missions in the early 21st century ("Peacekeeping and Brazilian strategy in the early 21st century: missed opportunities"). The author investigates the Brazilian case using the Sotomayor's (2013) model regarding the participation in peacekeeping missions. Finally, Anselmo concludes by saying that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has brought benefits—albeit few—to Brazil.

In the fourth chapter, Camila Scheidegger Farias offers a historical perspective on the civil-military policy regarding Indigenous affairs in Brazil from 1967 to 2021 ("The civil-military politics of indigenous affairs in Brazil (1967–2021)"). The author uses the method of comparative historical analysis to explore three hypotheses: (a) international and national social mobilization

contributed to the appointment of specialists to the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (Funai); (b) military influence over presidents did not contribute to the appointment of specialists to Funai; and (c) non-right-wing presidents in office appointed specialists to Funai. Farias concludes that her first hypothesis has little influence, while the last two influenced the appointment of specialists to Funai.

Next, Igor Acácio investigates threats, civil-military relations, and inequality, explaining the content of economic development in the declaratory defense policies of democracies from 1998 to 2012 (“Threats, civil-military relations, and inequality: explaining economic development content in declaratory defense policies of democracies (1998–2012)”). As a method, the author created a database and applied machine-learning with four guiding hypotheses, namely: (a) the lower the level of external threats, the greater the development content in declaratory defense policies; (b) control over the military is positively associated with a high development content in declaratory defense policies; (c) the higher the level of inequality, the greater the development content in declaratory defense policies; and (d) civilian control over the military amplifies the impact of the level of inequality on the association between development and defense in defense policy. Acácio concludes by saying that the next steps should expand the dataset on declaratory defense policies to include new sources and perform a more detailed content analysis.

In the sixth chapter, Karina Furtado Rodrigues evaluates transparency and civilian access to military records in Brazil and Mexico from 1981 to 2012 (“Transparency and Civil-Military Relations: assessing civilian access to military records in Brazil and Mexico (1981–2012)”). The author used the process-tracing of causal inference as a method, with Bayesian logic. For Rodrigues, in a context of isolated military bureaucracies under broad objective control and loose subjective control, the greater the integration between civilians and the military, the lower the transparency in defense. These expectations shaped case selection, with Mexico representing a more integrated (and co-opted) model of military behavior, and Brazil representing a more separate model. The cases comparison confirmed the proposition and the initial expectations.

In the seventh chapter, Pedro Accorsi analyzes the motivations of countries such as Brazil and Colombia to join military coalitions, using the Korean War as a case study (“Brazil, Colombia, and the Korean War: small powers’ reasons for joining military coalitions, and what do they gain?”). The author used process-tracing to analyze the cases, as well as historical comparison as the method to compare them. The objective of the chapter was to study the causes and consequences of minor powers participating in important conflicts, allied to great powers.

Finally, the book ends with the organizer’s reflection on the future of defense studies in Brazil beyond the context of the Bolsonaro government (“Conclusion: Bolsonaro and Beyond: The Future of Defense Studies in Brazil”). The work also has a last chapter with the authors’ information.

The book *New Studies on Civil-Military Relations and Defense Policy in Brazil* was published in 2022, during a period of great tension and political polarization in Brazil. The world was beginning to emerge from the most critical time of the COVID-19 pandemic, which paralyzed society, causing economic and political crises worldwide, including in Brazil (Souza; Fontanelli, 2021).

This book was published at a time when the importance of civilian oversight of the armed forces was widely discussed, reflecting global concerns about the role of the military in democratic and authoritarian governments.

The work presents a great selection of topics and a wide variety of methods, making it an excellent panorama over civil-military relations and defense policies. The presence of an introduction presenting the covered topics and their interconnections could have provided a more integrated and comprehensive view of the theme. In addition, inserting subjects such as interagency operation would have further enriched the text. Each section is written by authors who use various research methods and theoretical background, granting diversity of perspectives and insights that enrich the subject understanding. The book's highlight lies in its ability to blend historical and contemporary analyses, addressing a wide range of topics within a common thread. The combination of different quantitative and qualitative methods enables a comprehensive and robust analysis of defense policies and civil-military relations. The work stands out for its ability to connect theory and practice, presenting empirical evidence that supports arguments and contributes to a broader and more grounded understanding of the dynamics in question. The inclusion of case studies and the critical evaluation of the available data offer the reader a practical and well-informed view.

To conclude, the book is of great importance for Military Sciences. Studying civil-military relations is vital to understanding how military institutions relate to civilian power in order to maintain democratic stability and ensure respect for constitutional provisions. These analyses help detect possible excesses of power by the Armed Forces and create an environment of transparency and accountability in the conditions under which the Armed Forces are used. In addition, the study of civil-military relations allows for the formulation of effective defense policies in line with democratic principles, as well as refining civilian public policies and official documents of the Armed Forces regarding interagency operations, such as some of the subsidiary missions.

For the Military Sciences, the study of civil-military relations allows for a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities, influences, and limitations of military power in a democratic society. It is essential to establish a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the military, so that their actions are aligned with national strategic objectives and with the ideas of democracy. It is essential for the study of Military Sciences, like science itself today, to comprehend a multidisciplinary perspective, such as the one proposed in the book (Moreira, 2010; Proença Júnior; Duarte, 2007). Military science can be explored by others than soldiers in uniform.

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