

UNIONS IN BRAZIL: WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE NEAR FUTURE?**André Gambier Campos¹**

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Nowadays, there is a growing debate about the role of collective bargaining in Brazilian labour regulation. Nonetheless, is it possible to discuss such a role without debating the collective actors engaged in that bargaining? The answer is probably no, at least with respect to labour actors (unions), which face several problems. There are thousands of unions in Brazil, spread by every economic sector, professional branch and region of the country. At a first glance, this would seem very promising in order to foster a 'contractual' (or 'negotiated') labour regulation, which could partially substitute a 'legislative' one. However, on average, those unions present a fragile constituency, with few workers in their social base, as well as a small affiliation among them. As a result of this frail constituency, unions gather little resources (including financial ones) to negotiate new forms of labour regulation. To overcome those problems, some structural (and historical) changes seem necessary, in order to get more representative and effective unions in Brazil. Among those changes, it is possible to mention those derived of the ratification and/or the regulation of International Labour Organization conventions – for example, Conventions nº 87, 98, 135, 141 and 151.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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