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The election and impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Brazil's first woman president

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“The Election and Impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Brazil’s First Woman President”

Pedro A. G. dos Santos, Political Science Department
Outline

• Rousseff’s political trajectory
• Women’s representation and women’s empowerment
• Women’s empowerment under Rousseff
  • Appointment
  • Policymaking
  • Symbolizing
Background: Dilma and 2010 Elections

• Involved in student and guerilla movements during dictatorship (1970s)
• Worked in state government (RS) as a PDT member (1990s-2000s)
  • Joined the PT in 2000
• Hand picked by Lula to be his successor (2010)
  • Mother of Brazil
Dilma Rousseff’s Inaugural Speech

“I know that this tenure must include the most generous translation of this bold popular vote, after electing to the presidency a man of the people, a worker, **now decide to call a woman to direct the destiny of the country**. I come to open the doors so a multitude of other women can, in the future, be presidents; and so—today—**all Brazilian women feel proud of being a woman**. I am not here to laud my own biography; but to glorify the life of every Brazilian woman. **My supreme commitment—and I reiterate—is to honor the women, protect the frail, and govern for all!** I come, above all, to give continuity to the biggest affirmation process this country lived in the recent years. I come to consolidate the transformative work of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, I come to consolidate the transformative work of President Lula, with whom I had the most vigorous political experience of my life and the privilege to serve this country, by his side, these past years” (Rousseff 2011).
2011-2016: Election, Re-Election, and Impeachment

• 2011-2013: Relatively calm period (high approval ratings)
• 2013: June protests
  • Bus fare, World Cup, corruption, rejection of government
• 2014: Contested re-election
• 2016: Impeachment
• 2018: Senate candidate
Presidentas, Women’s Representation and Women’s Empowerment

Theory of Representation (Hanna Pitkin)
- Formalistic (rules of the game)
- Symbolic (emotional response among constituents)
- Descriptive (composition of legislature—what representative looks like)
- Substantive (acting for constituents)

Executive Empowerment Framework: goes beyond “representation theory” (Pitkin) and links effects specific to national executives and interconnections between different institutions:
- Appointment
- Policy Making
- Symbolizing
Empowerment through Appointment

• Tracking quantities and types of executive appointments and comparing women presidents’ appointments of women to cabinet positions to their male predecessors and successors
• Assesses respondent views about reasoning behind appointments
• Complications-partisan and coalition context; influence of male predecessors, pipeline of women
*All women appointed by Lula and Dilma were from the PT’s “quota” for cabinet positions (no other party proposed a woman in a ministry)

Source: Biblioteca da Presidencia
(http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes)
### Gender-composition of Cabinets, by Cabinet Prestige (Rousseff, I-II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Ministers</th>
<th>Low Status</th>
<th>Medium Status</th>
<th>High Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011-2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>15 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (36%)</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>68 (82%)</td>
<td>9 (64%)</td>
<td>32 (89%)</td>
<td>11 (92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83 (100%)</td>
<td>14 (17%)</td>
<td>36 (43%)</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015-2016</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7 (11%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>55 (89%)</td>
<td>7 (78%)</td>
<td>22 (92%)</td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62 (100%)</td>
<td>9 (14%)</td>
<td>24 (39%)</td>
<td>10 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowerment Through Policy Making

• Engages president’s policy priorities and public statements including speeches to their presidential decrees, policy initiatives, offering support to legislation from Congress, executive funding of projects
• Incorporates respondent views about the extent to which presidents supported policies that empowered women
• Complications-partisanship/ideological similarities to the previous administrations in which some shaped policy; partisan/coalition/legislative dynamics; strength of parties; role of women’s movements
Checkered Status

• Most policies an extension of Lula’s policies:
  • Gendering Bolsa Familia and Minha Casa Minha Vida
  • Brasil Carinhoso

• A Few (controversial) “Dilma Policies”:
  • Rede Cegonha (Controversial Name)
  • Casa da Mulher Brasileira (Controversial Policy)

• Move backwards on abortion
  • “Dilma gave away the abortion issue during the 2010 campaign.”
Empowerment through Symbolizing

• Examines data from representative surveys before and after women took office
• Perceptions about the treatment of women, whether the public views politics as a domain for women, and if they think women make good political leaders
• Assesses respondent views about symbolic representation effects of presidents
Context from Interviews

- Dilma’s presidency an important symbolic event for women in Brazil.
  - Positive (almost unanimous feeling): “She showed that a woman can be president.”
  - Negative: It showed the level of misogyny in Brazilian politics (possibly deterring women from running for office)
  - True verdict still a question mark: Gender quota law enforcement (fundo partidario) and a Dilma/Marielle effect may be at play in 2018- wait and see.

- Woman as a political symbol a complex issue
  - Presidente/Presidenta
  - Political violence against women
  - Conservative Congress and population
FRANCO

Presente!

Somos filhas das bruxas que vocês não conseguiram queimar

Racismo institucional

MULHERES NEGAS DECIDEM

+ Mulher negra no poder

MULHERES NEGAS DECIDEM MUDAR A FORTALEZA DO PAÍS

Somos maioria