



ALLIES IN THE GAME, AGAIN: GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE CONFIGURATION OF RE-ELECTED MAYORS ELECTORAL COUNCILS (2016)

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Abstract: This paper aims to present general aspects of the electoral coalitions of re-elected mayors in the 2016 evaluations. The data referring to party migration, size of the coalition and size of the city was observed in order to identify how the re-elected behaved in relation to their members. allies. The data were extracted from the TSE website and treated with quantitative research techniques. The results demonstrate that there was a greater adherence of candidates to the practice of coalitions to guarantee their permanence in the game, in addition to an increase in the size of the coalition of these reelected mayors.

Keywords: Municipal elections; Municipal executive; Coalitions; Re-election.

1 Introduction

The practice of re-election for the positions of the Executive Branch was not provided for in the Federal Constitution of 1988. It emerged during the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in 1997, through the Constitutional Amendment nº 16, which came into force with the following wording: “[the] President of Brazil, the Governors of States and the Federal District, the Mayors, and those who have succeeded, or replaced them in the course of the mandates can be re-elected for a single, subsequent period” (BRASIL, 1997). After its enactment, all the Presidents of the country have been re-elected, to date.

The re-election has already entered the agenda in several discussions of Brazilian Political Reform, including the approval in 2015 of Constitutional Amendment Proposal - PEC 182/07, which proposes the end of re-election to executive positions (BRASIL, 2015). However, the measure was not put into practice since it did not advance in the Senate. Recently, the discussion returned to the agenda in Congress, when deputy Alessandro Molon, leader of PSB, presented a PEC to prohibit the re-election of Presidents, Governors, and Mayors (BRASIL, 2020), but, so far, has not entered into a vote.

Alessandro Molon's proposal was put on the agenda after Fernando Henrique Cardoso

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made “*mea culpa*” and saying that “historically [the re-election], it was a mistake” (CARDOSO, 2020). The former President states that, at the time of the enactment of Constitutional Amendment nº 16 of 1997, he had in mind the re-election as it occurs in the United States, and mentions that, today, Presidents are capable of anything to re-elect themselves. Fernando Henrique Cardoso hopes that the changes will move to end the re-election institute and establish a form of district voting. The reason for the resumption of this discussion by Alessandro Molon is “to honor the will of the constituent assembly of 1988 and restore the original wording of article 14 of the Federal Constitution” (BRASIL, in 2020). According to him, the institute of re-election brings adverse effects to the representative democracy, given that the ruler in power takes advantage of the visibility of his/her office and damages policy renewal and increases the deficit related to the efficiency of the ideal of a republican Brazil.

Much is also discussed outside Congress and among researchers regarding the practice of re-election at its various levels. Some authors seek the variables that influence the election of a candidate, such as in the quality of education (ARAUJO; NETO; LIMA, 2020; CINQUINI, 2017; GONDINHO, 2019; LIMA, 2018), the relationship of the candidate with the state and national governments (PEREIRA; RENNO, 2007; MENDES; ROCHA, 2004; MENEGUIN; BUGARIN; CARVALHO, 2005; QUEIROZ DO Ó, 2019), government spending (CAPUTO, 2019; CAVALCANTE, 2015; DIAS; NOSSA; MONTE-MOR, 2018; SILVA; BRAGA, 2013), among others. The arguments range from the good use of social media (BRAGA, 2013) to the evaluation of the government and the image of the candidates (VEIGA; SANTOS; NEVES, 2011). But little is discussed about the electoral alliances formed by the candidates who succeeded in seeking re-election.

Similar to the re-election institute, the debate on electoral coalitions has also been in the public arena in recent years, becoming a fundamental guideline in the proposals for political reform in Brazil. Some arguments point to coalitions as an evil that corrupts the Brazilian party system. Coalitions make it easier for small parties to elect their candidates for all levels of the government, which increases the cost of the decision-making process since governments now have to negotiate political support in an extremely fragmented political system. From the citizens' perspective, electoral coalitions hinder vertical accountability, given that the system of vote transfers between the related parties significantly decreases the chances of the voter rewarding or punishing a candidate or a political party. The impact of coalitions on vertical accountability gains greater relevance in small-municipality contexts since the differences between party organizations are less clear and the formation of large coalitions are more common.

Thus, as part of the discussion on Brazilian Political Reform, the end of electoral coalitions was proposed under the justification that “voters may have greater decision power regarding the political project they want to support with their vote. [...] [By choosing a

candidate, voters], will have clarity as to which political party benefits from their vote” (TSE, 2020). Thus, Constitutional Amendment n° 97 of 2017 was approved, amending the Federal Constitution and putting an end to party coalitions in proportional elections (councilors and deputies), in addition to establishing new rules on the access of political parties to the resources of the party fund, free advertising time on radio and television, and provided for transition rules (BRASIL, 2017). These measures were only implemented from the 2020 elections. It is worth noting that the practice of holding electoral alliances is still allowed by the legislation in the case of candidates for the position of mayor.

Therefore, the present work seeks to perform a descriptive and exploratory analysis of the general aspects of the electoral coalitions of mayors re-elected in the 2016 elections. Using quantitative research techniques, we observed the data extracted from the TSE regarding party migration, coalition size, and municipality size of the 1,211 mayors re-elected in Brazil. We sought to identify how the re-elected behaved regarding their allies to offer an overview of this situation in the 2016 election.

2 The institute of re-election and electoral coalitions in Brazil

The debate on the re-election institute in Brazilian literature mobilizes authors from the most diverse areas of knowledge who discuss the phenomenon at its various levels. Regarding the studies on presidential re-election, Machado (2009) observes how the Free Electoral Advertising Time (FEAT) offers narrative frameworks that assist the electorate in decision-making. The author analyzed the production of the speeches of the FEAT on TV of the candidates for re-election, Fernando Henrique (PSDB) in 1998 and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (PT) in 2006. Machado (2009) states that the rhetoric of re-election favors privileged positions in the presidential race, emphasizing the speeches that bring the favor of the continuity of administrative management, the place of authority of the presidential candidate, and the emphasis on programmatic discourse of an economic nature.

Martins, Mansano, Parré, and Plasa (2016) used spatial econometrics methods to analyze the primary factors of the re-election of President Dilma Rousseff in the 2014 presidential elections. The authors demonstrate that the candidate received the majority of votes in smaller and less developed municipalities. However, another fact to highlight in this study is that the authors demonstrated a beneficial relationship of the presence of the governor in the same coalition as the presidential candidate. Their results showed that the presence of mayors from the same party or coalition did not benefit the candidate. On the other hand, “[...] in States where the elected governor shared the same coalition as the re-elected president presented a positive issue in the candidate's votes” (MARTINS; MANSANO; PARRÉ; PLASA, 2016, p.166, our translation).

Pereira and Rennó (2007) analyzed the determinants of electoral success for the

Chamber of Deputies in the 1998 and 2002 elections. The authors used statistical models with maximum likelihood techniques that indicated that, in 1998, the proximity of the candidates for re-election to the Chamber of Deputies with the President of Brazil had a strong impact on their electoral success. However, this variable did not present any statistically significant value for the 2002 elections. The authors demonstrate that "those who spent more, obtained more votes in the previous election, concentrated fewer votes, and changed parties less, have a greater chance of being re-elected (PEREIRA; RENNÓ, 2007, p. 679, our translation). However, the authors draw attention to the importance of the impact of the President on the relationship between Deputy and President. This impact would be conditional on the characteristics of the presidential election. In other words, it undergoes changes from one election to another, depending on the position of the president in the electoral process. According to the authors, this means that "[...] this variable only has its effect mitigated in electoral moments where the president is absent from the electoral process [...]" (PEREIRA; RENNÓ, 2007, p. 680, our translation).

Also in the analysis of re-elected deputies, when examining the candidates for state and federal deputies in Minas Gerais in the 2010 elections, Eduardo (2015) came to the conclusion that the candidates for re-election are electorally stronger than the others and that the novice candidates have a poor performance. However, the degree of competitiveness of the analyzed elections is low due to most of the votes concentrated on candidates for re-election. In Barreto's studies (2012) on federal deputies in the 2006 elections, there is no specific formula for success due to the current configuration of the electoral system. This occurs because, according to the author, obtaining more votes and/or improving the positioning on the list are not determining factors for maintaining the mandate. Morais and Koprik (2018) concluded after analyzing the re-election of federal deputies in Brazil in the 2014 election in the light of Game Theory that the performance of a parliamentarian in his/her first mandate is higher than a performance of a re-elected parliamentarian. Because of this, authors consider that re-election is not entirely beneficial to society.

There are several contributions of Brazilian literature on the subject of the institute of re-election in the municipal executive. Initially, Araújo, Neto, and Lima (2020) analyzed the influence of the quality of education, measured by Basic Education Development Index (Ideb in Portuguese), in the re-election of Mayors in Ceará in 2012. Their statistical regression analysis tests showed that this variable did not affect the probability of re-election of mayors in the case studied. The influence in this situation came from the expenses *per capita* in the educational area. Regarding the influence of fiscal data on re-election, Meneguim, Bugarin, and Carvalho (2005) contributed to the debate when they analyzed these variables in the 2000 municipal executive elections in Brazil. The statistical tests of the authors point to results that suggest that prefecture expenses will be more controlled with higher chances of re-election of these mayors.

When public spending *per capita* increases, according to the authors, this behavior becomes even stronger. These results are consistent with those found by Silva and Braga (2015) when they examined the chances of re-election of the mayors of Bahia in the elections of 2000, 2004, and 2008. The authors concluded that voters punish mayors who increase their spending in the election year, thus hindering their re-election.

Veiga, Santos, and Neves (2011) analyzed the vote in the re-election of mayors of eight Brazilian capitals in the 2008 election, observing explanatory mechanisms for the decision-making of internal (voter choice) and external voters (alternatives presented by the parties). In short, the results of regression tests applied by the authors showed that the positive evaluation of the municipal administration increases the chances of voting for the candidate for re-election.

The variable of partisan alignment of the mayor with the positions of Governor and President was also significant in the studies conducted by Coelho (2020) and De Silva and Braga (2015). In both cases, this variable showed higher chances of re-election for mayors. On the other hand, Coelho (2020) highlighted that the coalition variable had no significant statistical relevance in the tests. The author indicates that the result can be explained by the highly volatile relations of coalitions at municipal levels.

In fact, the literature highlights the fragility of party organizations in municipalities that “yield little vote” as a consequence of immersion in contexts strongly marked by dependency relations and strongly hierarchized. In addition to being left adrift by national and state summits in municipalities that have minor or no strategic potential (RIBEIRO, 2013).

However, the literature has shown that coalitions are an important artifice for formulating electoral strategies in the Brazilian party system (KERBAUY; DIAS, 2017; MACHADO, 2012; PEIXOTO, 2010; CARREIRÃO, 2014). Considering coalitions at the municipal level, Miguel and Machado (2007) point to a positive correlation between the establishment of coalitions and the performance of the parties that use them. The authors observed the coalitions for mayor in Brazil between the elections of 2000 to 2008 and showed that PT had a better electoral performance when it became more flexible when holding coalitions with a larger number of parties.

Peixoto (2010) states that an important variable to study coalitions is the size of the municipality. Analyzing data on municipal elections (majority and proportional) during the electoral processes that occurred in 2000 to 2008 in Brazil, the author considered that the smaller a municipality, in terms of population size, the greater the chances of establishing ideologically inconsistent coalitions. The findings suggest a specific dynamics of politics in small municipalities, which partly reflects Ribeiro's (2013) arguments about the lack of interest of the national summits of the major parties in these municipalities. Thus, coalitions begin to respond to the strategic needs of the parties at the national level but are also marked by local political dynamics.

Dantas (2007) tried to explain the behavior of alliances for municipal disputes of approximately 5,500 Brazilian municipalities. The conclusion indicates that the pattern of coalition behavior carried out by the parties is obscured by individual characteristics of the municipalities. The author further observed a connection between the state level and the municipal level, the second being a reflection of the first.

When examining the municipal elections of Rio de Janeiro that took place in 1992 and 2000, Jorge (2004) observed the increase in the number of parties inserted in a coalition and the decrease in the ideological factor as its structure, which is consistent with the study conducted by Carreirão (2006). Melo and Soares (2016) argue that there is a significant variation in the size of coalition composition when observing the data regarding proportional municipal elections in Brazil in 2004 and 2008, which leads us to consider that the parties choose the largest possible number of allies, but that most applications are launched by a small number of parties, being composed, in general, of two or three allies.

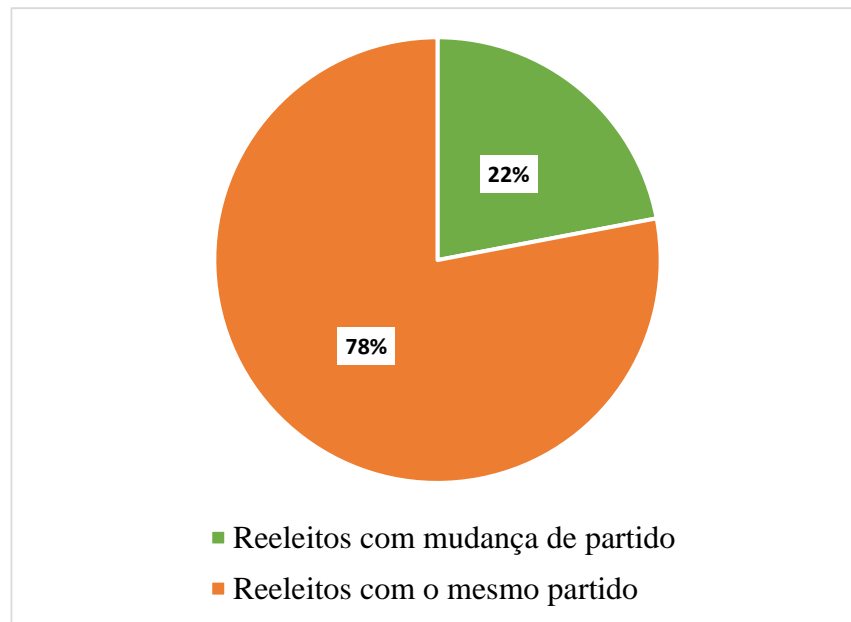
This debate extends into several other variables. However, as mentioned earlier, there are few studies that observed the issues of coalitions carried out by re-elected mayors in Brazil. This work proposes a general overview of the topic from a descriptive and exploratory analysis to contribute to this debate, and to analyze how the electoral coalitions of the mayors re-elected in the 2016 elections in Brazil were configured. The indicators used were party migration, coalition size, and municipality size, which are recurrent in the literature. The following section presents the analyzes of the selected indicators.

3 Results

In general, the analyses on coalitions in Brazil use a quantitative methodology and seek to observe rules and behavioral trends in the electoral dispute. The data used in this work were extracted from the TSE website, treated using quantitative analysis techniques, and organized in graphs and tables in comparative perspective. The universe studied represents 1,211 mayors re-elected in Brazil in 2016, representing 25% of the candidates who took the seat of the municipal executive in this electoral contest.

The first aspect observed was the issue of party migration. As shown in Graph 1, 22% of mayors re-elected in 2016 changed parties to serve the next mandate. The party that lost the most candidates was PT. Between 2012 and 2016, most of the mayors who migrated from party to re-elect were from PT. The mayors who decided to re-elect for another party other than PT were distributed in 14 new parties. PSD received the most of these mayors.

Graph 1 – Percentage of Party Migration of Re-Elected Mayors in Brazil (2016)



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on TSE data, 2016.

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Reelected with change in party |
| Reelected with the same party |

Subsequently, the data concerning the candidates who changed their strategy in relation to their allies for re-election were observed. These were separated into three groups of mayors: a) those who were elected in 2012 without coalition and were re-elected in 2016 with coalition, b) those who were elected in 2012 with coalition and were re-elected in 2016 without coalition, and c) those who did not change their strategy for re-election, that is, those who were elected in 2012 with or without coalition, and elected in 2012 with or without coalition, respectively, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Strategies used by re-elected Mayors in Brazil (2016)

| STRATEGIES | % |
|---|------------|
| a) Mayors re-elected with coalition | 1.82 |
| b) mayors re-elected without coalition | 0.5 |
| c) mayors re-elected without change of strategy | 97.7 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on TSE data.

Regarding the size of the coalition, the average number of parties included in the coalitions of mayors re-elected in 2016 was seven. More than half of the mayors re-elected in 2016 increased the size of their coalitions, as shown in Table 2. Additionally, it is noteworthy that 26% of re-elected mayors were involved in coalitions with ten or more parties.

Table 2 – Size of the coalitions of re-elected Mayors in Brazil (2016)

| SIZE OF THE COALITIONS | % |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Increased | 56.48 |
| Decreased | 27.83 |
| Maintained | 15.69 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on TSE data.

Finally, the number of inhabitants was considered according to IBGE (2010), with data ordered by population bands to demonstrate the relationship of re-elected mayors with the size of the municipalities. According to Table 3, 89.76% of Mayors re-elected in 2016 are in municipalities with up to 50,000 inhabitants. Only 0.58% of re-elected mayors are in municipalities with 500,001 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, and another 0.58% are in municipalities with 1,000,001 or more inhabitants.

Table 3 – Size of the municipalities vs. re-elected Mayors in Brazil (2016)

| BANDS | INHABITANTS | % |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|
| A | 0 to 50,000 | 89.76 |
| B | 50,001 to 100,000 | 4.87 |
| C | 100,001 to 200,000 | 2.31 |
| D | 200,001 to 500,000 | 1.90 |
| E | 500,001 to 1,000,000 | 0.58 |
| F | 1,000,001 or more | 0.58 |
| TOTAL | | 100 |

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on IBGE data.

It is noteworthy that 26% of mayors re-elected in 2016 held large coalitions, with more than ten parties. The largest coalition found in this universe had 23 parties and was the one that re-elected the mayor of Campinas-SP, of PSB. An interesting fact to highlight, because in 2012, the mayor of Campinas-SP was elected with a coalition composed of eight parties. In other words, in 2016, the PSB candidate bet on a coalition practically three times larger than the coalition that previously elected.

However, this fact was not recurrent. The large coalitions mostly took place in municipalities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (72.78%). Municipalities with 1,000,001 or more inhabitants represent only 2.22% of those that counted on the re-election of Mayors inserted in coalitions with more than ten parties.

On the other hand, 13 municipalities re-elected mayors without a coalition in 2016. These were the municipalities with the lowest numbers of inhabitants, ranging from 1,974 to 11,210 inhabitants. Of these, PP and PMDB achieved exactly the same number of seats of the

municipal executive, each guaranteed the re-election of its candidates in five municipalities.

4 Final considerations

The objective of this work was to present general aspects of the electoral coalitions of mayors re-elected in the 2016 elections, in the so-called party migration, coalition size, and municipality size.

The party that most re-elected mayors that year was PMDB, responsible for 18% of all re-elected mayors in Brazil, leaving PSDB in second place, with 16% of re-elected mayors. PT performed poorly that year, responsible for only 7% of the mayors re-elected. This result aligns with the issue already mentioned regarding party migration since most of the mayors who changed parties to be re-elected in 2016 were from the PT.

Regarding the size of the coalition, the data suggest that mayors who were successful in re-election not only adhered more significantly to the practice of holding coalitions but also sought to maximize their number of allies. As expected and already mentioned in the literature, large coalitions mostly take place in the smallest municipalities of the country.

Finally, it should be noted that this is a descriptive and exploratory work. The objective was to present general aspects of the electoral coalitions of mayors re-elected in the 2016 elections. It is not time to relate the influence of coalitions with the success of mayor re-elections. We only sought to raise initial data on this issue, little explored in the literature. We suggest more dense statistical analyses with the variables presented to advance the discussion and develop the theme in future studies.

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