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BRAZIL ELECTIONS AND SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES IN BRAZIL ELECTION CAMPAIGN 2014 *

The article describes Brazil as a country with clearly divided social gap. North and North-East regions of the country are poorer. South and South-West of the country are richer. This social division revealed itself in the presidential election of 2014. Dilma Rousseff had her supporters mainly in poorer parts of the country and Aécio Neves – in the richer ones. Social problems, living conditions, education, social programs, corruption were the key issues of the aggressive and rather negative campaign.

Keywords: Brazil; presidential election; social issues; campaign.

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ВИБОРИ В БРАЗИЛІЇ І СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНІ ПИТАННЯ В ХОДІ ПЕРЕДВИБОРЧОЇ КАМПАНІЇ 2014 РОКУ

У статті показано, що Бразилія є соціально розділеною країною. Північ і північний схід являють собою бідніші регіони, а південь і південний захід – багатші. Цей соціальний розподіл відобразився й був підтверджений в ході президентських виборів 2014 року. Ділма Русеф отримала підтримку переважно в бідніших регіонах, а Аесіо Невес – в багатших. Головними темами негативної та досить агресивної кампанії стали соціальні проблеми, умови життя, питання освіти, соціальні програми і корупція.

*Ключові слова: Бразилія; президентські вибори; соціальні питання; передвиборча кампанія.
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ВЫБОРЫ В БРАЗИЛИИ И СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ ВОПРОСЫ В ХОДЕ ИЗБИРАТЕЛЬНОЙ КАМПАНИИ 2014 ГОДА

В статье показано, что Бразилия является социально разделенной страной. Север и северо-восток представляют собой бедные регионы, а юг и юго-запад – богатые. Это социальное деление отразилось и было подтверждено в ходе президентских выборов 2014 года. Дилма Русеф получила поддержку, главным образом, в беднейших регионах, а Аесіо Невес – в тех, которые богаче. Основными темами негативной и агрессивной президентской кампаний были социальные проблемы, условия жизни, вопросы образования, социальные программы и коррупция.

Ключевые слова: Бразилия; президентские выборы; социальные вопросы; избирательная кампания.

Introduction. Brazil became an independent country in 1822. After the 1993 referendum voters finally decided that it would be a republic with the presidential form of government (Chuguryan and Kucharcik, 2014; Smith 2012) (the alternatives were monarchy and parliamentary form of government). Now Brazil is the 7th biggest economy in the world and with about 200 mln inhabitants it is also the 5th largest country in the world and the largest country of the region. As other countries in Latin America it is struggling with typical regional problems – poverty, corruption, income gaps, living standards, political instability.

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Under the multiparty system with 28 political parties in parliament and 8 parties in current government the president (which can serve two consecutive mandates – then after one term not in the office he/she can be elected again) has to discuss all important political issues with coalition partners and has to find a compromise – what a difference from the president of the US – as other example of presidential form of government (Smith, 2012). Before the election in 2014 social issues were identified as key problems for Brazilians – healthcare, crime and educational problems could be mentioned as the three most important ones (Figure 1).

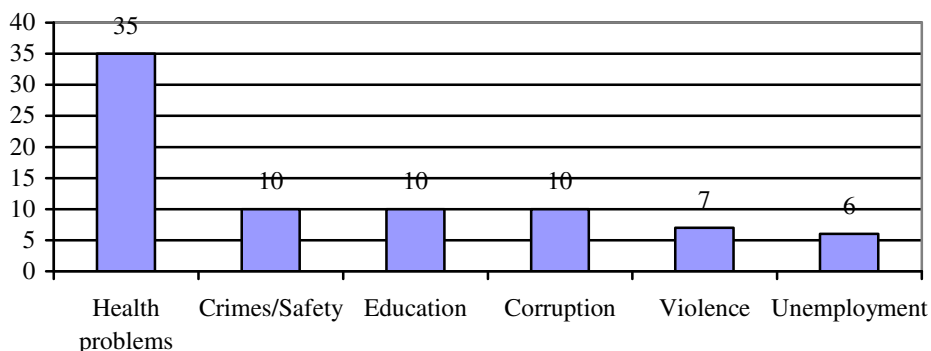


Figure 1. **Key problems identification by Brazilians, %** (Latinobarometro, 2013)

Literature review. Since the basis of the article is the electoral process in Brazil 2014, the authors of the paper used the sources describing the atmosphere of the country in the time of election: Latinobarometro 2013, The Economist, World Bank Data Report, official Brazil websites dealing with results (Eleicoes), election analysis (Tvevdad, 2012; Christensen and Kolling, 2014; Winter, 2014; Velasco 2014). General views on Latin America are found i.e. in (Smith, 2012; Chuguryan and Kucharcik, 2013).

The main purpose of study. The main objective of the paper is to identify the crucial problems of today's Brazil society in the context of presidential elections in the country in 2014. The purpose is also to point out main points of electoral programs of relevant candidates and to present the elections results and future challenges waiting for its winner – leftist and incumbent president Dilma Rousseff.

Main results. Brazil is one of the countries in Latin America where the support for democracy is the lowest in the region.

In 1995 democracy was preferable for 41% of population, in 2001 it was only 30% (the country was affected by the Asian crisis), in 2009 with good economic results it was 55% and in 2013 it dropped to 49% (Latinobarometro, 2013). It is evident that liberal democracy as a model in the country with no tradition of liberal democracy as such is directly connected with economic figures. Improving living conditions in the country where about 20% of the total population were saying that they can't afford buying food, the same share of population actually prefers authoritarianism and only about 26% of population prefers the current form of democracy is a crucial challenge for any government (Latonobarometro, 2013).

Comparing GDP growth of the country in the last 10 years it is evident that the country's economy is not in good condition – after the growth of about 7.5% in 2010

(the year when Dilma Rousseff became the president) it was only 1% in 2012 and 2.5% in 2013 (Figure 2) – only Venezuela had worse results in the Americas in 2013 (The World Bank).

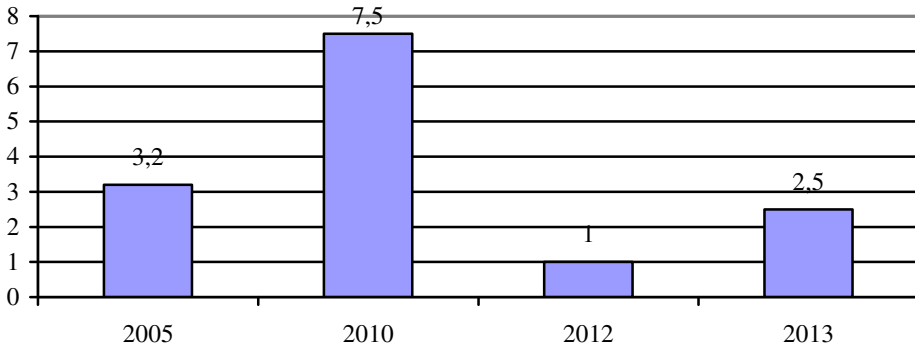


Figure 2. GDP Growth of Brazil, % (The World Bank)

Prediction for 2014 was 0.3% growth (Walter, 2014). According to some experts, 5 factors were responsible for these results: lack of trade agreements, high taxes, import tariffs, poor infrastructure, excessive bureaucracy (Walter, 2014). Unemployment rate was 5.9% (official) and GINI index was 54.7% – both comparable with other countries in Latin America (The World Bank). But if government debt to GDP in 2013 is taken into account – the figures are not in favor for Brazil with its 56.8%. Chosen countries of the region are doing better – Argentina with 45.6% and much better are doing Peru with 19.6 % and Chile with 12.8% (Figure 3).

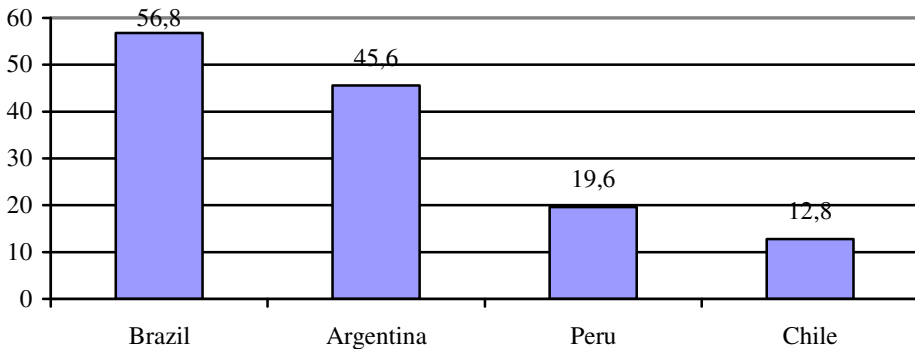


Figure 3. Government debt to GDP in 2013, % (The World Bank)

Social issues were mentioned as the most important ones to be solved by a new government elected in 2014. Those were health problems, crime/public safety, educational problems, corruption, violence/gangs and unemployment (Figure 1). All candidates had to deal with these in their electoral programs and platforms. The necessity for that was pointed out by the fact that (Latinobarometro, 2013) about 62% of the population identifies itself as low class (28% for middle class and only about 8% – as high class).

The strongest candidates of 2014 Brazil election were as follows. The leftist Dilma Rousseff (already president since 2010) – the candidate of the Workers party

fighting against military junta in the past. The second was the rightist candidate of Brazilian social democrats, the member of the Senate and former governor of Minas Gerais region Aécio Neves (his grandfather Tancredo was elected as the first civil president after the fall of military junta government in 1985 – he died before taking the office). The third one was the environmentalist, former member of the Senate, former Minister of Environment and the candidate of Socialist Party Marina Silva. Looking at their political platforms similar topics are seen – economy, inflation, poverty, corruption, future of social programs (Bolsa Familia, Mais Medicos), health service, low standards of public services, education, cutting of governmental expenses. Campaign in general were aggressive and negative.

Dilma Rousseff supported the strong role of the state in solving problems of the country – she presents herself as an advocate of mixed economy, pointing out the success of Bolsa Familia and Mais Medicos programs. Aécio Neves was the supporter of market economy, taxes cuts and reduction of the role of the state (Tvevdad, 2014; Christensen and Kolling, 2014).

The ecologist Marina Silva was also the sympathizer of liberal views – she saw liberal market reforms as a condition for restarting the economy. She also said she is prepared to reform the political system of the country. Both Marina Silva and Aécio Neves promised to preserved Bolsa Familia program (Winter, 2014; Tvevdad, 2014; Christensen and Kolling, 2014).

There was also something common in political platforms of all three – the voice for change as a title of the electoral program. Dilma Rousseff called for "more changes and more future", Aécio Neves wanted to "Change Brazil" and Marina Silva stated "courage to change" (Tvevdad, 2014). Analyzing their slogans it is evident that they saw atmosphere in the society as critical.

Significant differences were observed on foreign policy issues Dilma Rousseff preferred closer regional cooperation and cooperation with the countries of the Global South. Aécio Neves and Marina Silva advocated closer ties with the United States and the European Union (Tvevdad, 2014).

The first round of the election took place on October 6, 2014 (Figure 4).

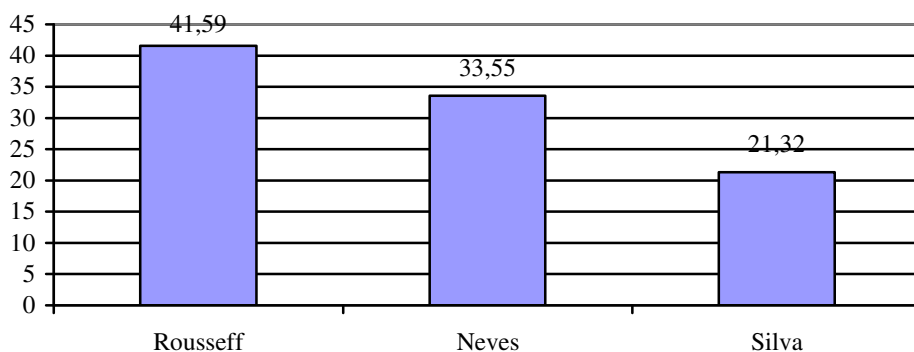


Figure 4. Results of the first round of the presidential elections in Brazil in 2014, % (Eleicoes, 2014)

Marina Silva with slightly more than 20% and with the third place did not confirm good positions from the polls before the election already (Glickhouse, 2014).

Aecio Neves and Dilma Rousseff met in the second round 3 weeks later on October 27, 2014 (Figure 5).

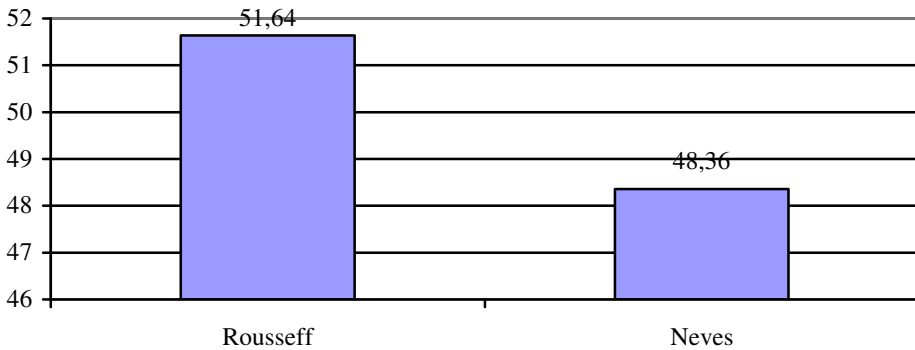


Figure 5. The second round of presidential elections in Brazil in 2014, % (Eleicoes, 2014)

Although Dilma Rousseff won – her results (51.64%) were the highest in the history of Brazil. Besides she lost more than 4 mln voters comparing with the year 2010 (Figure 6). As it was expected, she was more successful in poorer regions of the North and North-East of the country (including Rio de Janeiro). Aecio Neves was better in richer regions of the South and South-West (including Sao Paulo and Distrito Federal but not Rio de Janeiro). Maybe surprisingly, he lost "his" state of Brazil federation, Minas Gerais (Dilma Rousseff was also born here though) (Brazil’s presidential election, 2014).

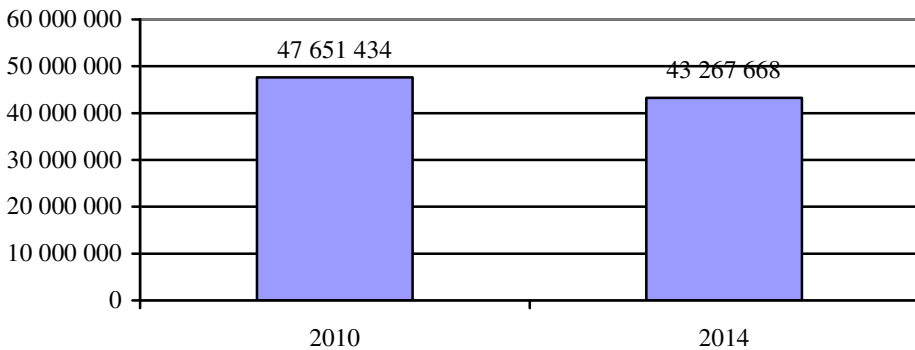


Figure 6. Dilma Rousseff results in the presidential elections of 2010 and 2014, the total numbers of votes (Eleicoes Presidenciais, 2010; Eleicoes, 2014)

Conclusion. Dilma Rousseff (re-took the office on January 1, 2015), the winner of the elections, has important tasks to solve. She leads the divided nation – immediately after elections she called for dialogue, consensus and unity (Brazil’s presidential election, 2014). She has to take probably unpopular measures as prices were frozen in 2014 due to election, she has to rebuild investors confidences (stock market preferred Aecio Neves), Brazilians confidence (Petrobras corruption scandal lead to significant decline of her support at the beginning of 2015) and of course she has to find the way how to restart slow economy of the country.

Brazil economist Edmar Bacha called the country Belindia (combination of prosperous BELgium and poor INDIA) 40 years ago (1974). Some economists still think this name as appropriate – as the social division of the country – richer South vs. poorer North – still persists and is visible in the results of the last election in particular (Velasco, 2014).

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