

Title: Where there's a will, there isn't always a way: the case of the Brazilian Women's Caucus

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A women's caucus in a legislative chamber has the potential to increase women's participation within that chamber by aggregating female representatives across party lines and providing them with collective tools with which to formulate policies. However, that potential depends on several factors other than the existence of the caucus, including its institutional design, the number of female representatives in the house and that effectively participate in the caucus, ideological leanings of caucus leaders, respect from other parliament members towards the caucus, and the pressure exerted from parties on caucus members. The Brazilian women's caucus, known as *Bancada Feminina*, is generally perceived by the international literature as a success case, but the literature has only considered its institutional design in making that assertion. The small number of women in the Chamber of Deputies, their willingness to organise around certain issues but not others, the general lack of respect towards female representatives and their caucus, the growing strength of the Cattle, Bullet, and Bible Caucus, and the importance of party politics and the government-opposition polarisation means that the *Bancada Feminina* is not as effective as expected. The article relies on quantitative and qualitative data collected from the Chamber of Deputies website from the years of 2014 and 2015 in order to verify the impact of these other factors on the actions on female deputies and their caucus.