

PROMOTING BRAZIL AT THE UN: DILMA ROUSSEFF'S LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES OF AUTHORITY AND MORALITY

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Abstract:

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, a woman opens the General Debate, the honor falling to President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil on September 21, 2011. Her principal objective is to argue for the inclusion of Brazil as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, proposing enlargement rather than substitution. This article analyzes the legitimation strategies of authority and morality she employs to that purpose. The analysis of specific strategies is made possible through the application of van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies framework, Suchman's (1995) organizational perspective on legitimation and Castelló and Lozano's (2011) categories for analyzing Corporate Social Responsibility rhetoric. A macro-level approach is undertaken using Eriksen and Fossum's (2004) discussion of debates in the European Union prior to its enlargement in 2004. The analyses indicate a complex argumentation structure in which the emerging nations and women share a cognitive frame with Brazil; consequently, arguments from any of the three can be used to advance Brazil's case to the UN.

Keywords:

legitimation, authority, morality, discourse analysis, corporate social responsibility rhetoric

1. Introduction

On September 21, 2011, Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff, opened the general debate of the 66th Session of the United Nations (UN), marking the first time in UN history that a woman had the honor of doing so. Naturally she acknowledged the honor, but her principal aim was to argue for Brazil assuming greater responsibility within the UN, notably serving as permanent member of the UN Security Council. Rousseff legitimizes Brazil's proposal by laying out several areas of responsibility in which Brazil has proven itself worthy of authority status: fiscal affairs, political stability, environmental controls, the harmonious integration of immigrant groups, peaceful relations with its neighbors and domestic economic development. She also advances legitimation strategies of morality, arguing for inclusivity, for instance, which is the "right thing to do" (Suchman, 1995: 579). Moral legitimacy also underlies Rousseff's general argument for Brazil's expanded presence on UN councils in the sense that recognition of Brazil's new status and authority is the morally appropriate action to take. Our central argument is that Rousseff uses legitimation strategies of commendation authority in line with van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies framework and consequential and procedural legitimation strategies of morality as described by Suchman (1995), presenting them within a general strategy that suggests familiarity with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rhetoric (e.g., Castelló and Lozano, 2011). After analyzing the overt strategies used to promote Brazil, we will examine how Rousseff integrates comments about women not only as a congratulatory measure to recognize their national and international contributions, but also to further advance Rousseff's main agenda in promoting Brazil. We will conclude by shifting our focus from discursive approaches to political science, noting that Rousseff's arguments for promoting the expansion of the UN Security Council also parallel those raised in the debate within the European Union (EU) prior to its enlargement in 2004 (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004).

2. Theoretical approaches

Theoretical approaches from the fields of organizational sociology, discourse analysis, management and political science have been selected to assess the

comprehensiveness of Rouseff's legitimation strategies. The sociological and discourse analytical perspectives provide a general sense of elements in play as well as a methodological framework for the analysis. An examination of Corporate Social Responsibility rhetoric allows us to consider in what ways the governance and opportunities for Brazil are played out through a corporate management lens. Finally, the political science perspective provides an analytical framework derived from diplomats' conceptions of the basis for EU legitimacy. To the extent that we can consider similar the underlying vision of legitimacy of the EU and of the UN, we can assess the degree to which Rouseff's legitimation strategies are appropriate for the proponents of each vision.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (van Leeuwen, 2007)

Van Leeuwen (2007) offers a framework for analyzing the ways legitimacy is constructed through discourse, identifying four categories of legitimation: *authorization*, *moral evaluation*, *rationalization* and *mythopoesis*, or legitimation through narratives (van Leeuwen 2007:92). The framework provides a solid starting point for linguistic analysis; in fact, the approaches he advocates for analyzing moral evaluation and rationalization are too finely grained for the Rouseff data. As Rouseff mentions just one or two moments from her personal history, not enough data is available for a *mythopoesis* analysis. Of the four categories, then, the authorization strategies described by van Leeuwen are the most relevant.

In van Leeuwen's framework authorization may result from any of several types of authority. An individual's status or role may confer *personal authority*; expertise gained, whether or not the credentials are explicitly communicated, confers *expert authority*; and authority in the ability to shape other's actions due to status as a role model confers *role model* authority (van Leeuwen, 2007: 94-95). While his examples involve individuals whose accomplishments or behavior leads them to be considered role models, nothing in the formulation of the category would exclude institutions from consideration. These categories contrast with the remaining three: *impersonal authority*, *tradition* and *conformity*. Van Leeuwen refers to laws and regulations as conferring *impersonal authority*, and the weight of customary ways of doing things as *the authority of tradition* (van Leeuwen, 2007: 96). Authority conferred on the basis of *conformity* (van Leeuwen, 2007: 96-97) suggests that the numbers of people engaging in a particular action or having a belief system creates its own weight (i.e.,

“if everyone is doing it, it must be OK”). For van Leeuwen, the difference between *tradition* and *conformity* rests in who the agents are, with the authority of *tradition* being based on “our” actions and that of *conformity* based on the actions of others. We note another difference: *tradition* is built up over time, providing diachronic depth, while *conformity* may be fleeting, reflecting a synchronic view of authority. Obviously, conformity over time leads to tradition.

1.2 Organizational Analysis (Suchman, 1995)

Suchman (1995) presents the state of the field of legitimation for the three decades preceding the publication date. From the point of view of organizational management, the most salient distinction is between *institutional* perspectives, which are “constitutive beliefs,” and *strategic* approaches, in which management is viewed as constructing a belief system through discourse. Suchman then classifies legitimation strategies as *pragmatic* (focused on self-interests), *cognitive* (reflecting common ground) or *moral* (doing what is “right”; Suchman, 1995: 577-583). From a critical discourse perspective we would argue that Rouseff’s speech, the opening salvo for a discussion on the enlargement of the governing bodies of the UN, not only *is* strategic, but that when discourse aims to effect change in the *status quo*, it *must* be strategic to be effective. An analysis of that distinction, in this context, seems superfluous. Likewise, the tripartite distinction between self-interest, values (common ground) and morality may not be entirely useful, as the argument can be made that even the decision to focus on values or morality ultimately reflects the self-interest of the “speaker” (person or institution).

In contrast, Suchman’s nuanced discussion of legitimation strategies of morality is particularly useful for our analysis. For Suchman morality legitimation takes in four parameters: an assessment of a person’s or an organization’s accomplishments (*consequential legitimation*); an evaluation as to whether the person or organization has employed sound practices and done things the “right” way (*procedural legitimation*); a demonstration of one’s “rightness” for the “job” (*structural legitimation*); and the existence of role models, designated *personal legitimation* (Suchman, 1995: 580-581). As we will demonstrate in the analyses below, Rouseff has pointed out the progress Brazil has made in solving its problems in a number of areas; she has enumerated specific practices that Brazil has implemented to meet its goals. As the problems Rouseff mentions are global, achieving success can confer

expertise, or *structural legitimation*. Dilma Rousseff makes scant mention of herself, but does suggest ways Brazil could serve as a role model.

1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility Rhetoric (Castelló and Lozano, 2011)

Palazzo and Sherer (2006) argue that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), while not a new area within management research, needs to be viewed from a discourse (i.e., communicative) perspective, particularly in light of recent environmental and financial crises in the particular, and globalization in general (Palazzo and Sherer, 2006: 71). Two years later Vaara and Tienari (2008) note that the number of discourse-based studies conducted on multinational corporations is still limited (Vaara and Tienari, 2008: 985). While Palazzo and Scherer (2006) argue for a communicative approach to the study of corporate legitimation strategies, their study does not examine specific strategies. Castelló and Lozano (2011), on the other hand, take a discourse analysis approach to the legitimation strategies actually employed. They analyze 93 annual, sustainability and shareholder reports from 31 companies, noting that through qualitative analysis 17 themes have emerged from the data (Castelló and Lozano, 2011: 15-17). Following Suchman’s footsteps, Castelló and Lozano find the distinction between institutional and strategic approaches the most salient in their analysis of corporate texts of various types. As our analysis centers on legitimation strategies of authority and morality, we have classified their themes with that in mind and will examine the 14 themes categorized accordingly. The remaining themes have been placed into a category they refer to as *dialogic*, referring to the overt communication between the company and the stockholders, but they are not discussed substantively in this article.

Table 1. Categorization of Castelló and Lozano’s CSR themes

AUTHORITY	MORALITY	DIALOGIC/ META-DISCURSIVE
Accountability	Citizenship	Focus on the issue
Global Agenda	CSR	Stakeholder dialogue
Global Standards	Inclusivity	Strategic link between CSR & firm
Governance	Partnership	
Innovation	Philanthropy	
Operationalization	Social contributions to humanity	
Reputation		
Sustainability		

For reasons of space, working definitions of these themes are not presented here; rather, they are integrated with the analysis of the data.

1.4 Legitimation strategies through political integration (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004)

Eriksen and Fossum present a political science/public policy perspective on legitimation. Prior to the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004, a series of debates were held under the designation *Convention of the Future of Europe*, which met between February 2002 and June/July 2003. Three different visions of how EU legitimacy might be framed are presented as possible strategies or ways forward: a) the EU as primarily a *problem-solving entity* (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 439); b) the EU as a *value-based community* (2004: 441); and c) the EU as a *rights-based* institution (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 445). Although an analysis of debates (and in that sense, discourse) led them to conceptualize these categories, their aim was not to view how the debate developed discursively. On the other hand, Rousseff's principal aim was not to create a speech that would be an interesting object of discourse analysis, but rather to fulfill specific political goals. The UN and the EU share some similarities (e.g., member states, considerations of enlargement). We aim to demonstrate the degree to which Rousseff has developed an argumentation strategy that could be effective independently of the type of underlying vision that the members of the UN have of this body.

2. Macrostructure of the speech

Both visually and audibly can one discern ten distinct parts of Rousseff's speech, as each is opened with a salutation and most signal a clear change in topic. The first section, on the advancement of women and the values of the UN, opens with the greetings to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the UN, fellow heads of State and the general public. Each of the following seven sections of the speech is introduced by the address form *Mr. President*, as she highlights different types of responsibility that Brazil has successfully assumed, its readiness in participating more fully on the international stage and its economic, environmental, political, social and diplomatic qualifications. In the ninth section, introduced by the

words *Mr. President and my fellow women from around the world*, she talks about ways that women have been involved in Brazil's hardship and successes. In the final section, initiated with the words *Mr. President*, she paints women as victims/survivors and recalls the importance of the values of justice, human rights and freedom at the UN.

If one were to look no further, two assumptions about the inclusion of gender remarks would be in play: either gender is the central focus of the speech, or Dilma Rousseff merely wishes to acknowledge the progress women have made in terms of international recognition. In this article we will develop a third view, that gender is part of an argumentative strategy designed to promote changes in United Nations policies that are ostensibly unrelated to gender, more specifically, that the emerging nations be given a larger, and permanent, role in the major committees of the U.N. Before examining the issue of gender, however, we will examine the evidence which more clearly places Brazil in focus.

3. Legitimation strategies promoting Brazil's expanded role within the UN

3.1 Macrostructure of the speech: Focus on Brazil

As noted above, parts II through IX of the ten-part speech revolve around Brazil having acquired the necessary experience and expertise to assume a more central role in the governance of the UN. In part II Rousseff speaks of the current crisis, noting that the gravity of the crisis is one which demands a larger group to find solutions (lines 23-26¹). Although she sets up a dichotomy between the traditional "have" and "have not" nations, she does so indirectly by allowing for temporal distance between the two groups: she notes that "the leaders of the developed countries have not yet found a solution to the crisis", tying the problem to lack of political ideas rather than financial resources (lines 27-29), but the term "emerging countries" only appears later, when she claims, "It is significant that it is a president from an emerging country who comes to speak" (lines 42-43, the opening of part III). In the intervening time (space) the developed countries are reframed as "old world" and the

¹ All references to line numbers refer to the transcript of Dilma Rousseff's speech, in the original Portuguese, a version of which is appended to this article, with line numbers indicated. All translations are mine. The official versions, in English and Portuguese, are listed in the references, with hyperlinks.

emerging ones as “new world”, as she cites unemployment statistics in the “old” centers of power (the U.S. and Europe).

In part III she notes the fiscal health of the emerging nations and claims that for the international governing bodies to regain the “trust” (specific parties are unspecified), the governing bodies of the major international organizations need to be more representative (lines 53-57). The rest of the section is devoted to the need for financial reform and measures proposed to be taken. Section IV presents some of the actions Brazil has taken to “do its part” (lines 82-90) and presents its framework for action that joins *development, peace* and *security*. Part V applies this framework to a discussion of the popular demonstrations of the Arab Spring and elsewhere, suggesting it is instrumental in helping ensure the success of the efforts of the UN Security Council (lines 188-122), mentioned by name for the first time on line 120. Part VI (lines 124-142) is devoted to a direct appeal for Brazil to be included as a permanent member of this Council.

At first glance part VII appears to be a departure from the rest of the speech, as Rousseff welcomes Southern Sudan to “our family of nations” (line 144) and then laments that Palestine was not granted full membership in the UN and argues for its inclusion, professing the belief that it will be an essential step towards peace in the Middle East (lines 147-155). However, as she then pivots to a statement that in Brazil “descendants of Arabs and Jews are compatriots and live in harmony, as it should be” (lines 156-157), it becomes clear that this is part of Brazil’s legitimation as a diplomatic partner. In part VIII Rousseff pivots again, this time to the environment, citing its credentials in this arena (lines 159-170).

Section IX is a hybrid, as Rousseff notes that women have been instrumental in Brazil’s success in politics, the economy and in social development; it will be discussed along with parts I and X, below, in the section on strategies promoting women’s role in Brazil’s successes.

3.2 *Strategies of authority*

Of the 17 themes identified by Castelló and Lozano, we identify eight as conferring authority, four of which are relatively narrow in focus (*governance, innovation, operationalization and sustainability*); the remaining four are broader in scope (*accountability, global agenda and standards and reputation*).

Scant attention is paid to the first four categories. Rouseff mentions good *governance* and the need for new models (e.g., lines 33-34), *innovation* (e.g., line 88), and ways to *operationalize*, for example, a return to financial equilibrium (lines 68-70). *Sustainability* is not mentioned, except in the context of sustainable peace (line 93), part of a larger framework in which economic and social development, peace and security are viewed as an integrated unit (line 91) and viewed as a means of ensuring the sustainability of all three elements.

But if these four narrow areas receive relatively little attention, the same cannot be said for the areas of *accountability, global agenda and standards and reputation*, which are at the heart of Rouseff's argumentation strategy. She starts with the *global agenda* of the United Nations, which Castelló and Lozano clearly define as comprising issues taken up by international institutions such as the United Nations (Castelló and Lozano, 2011: 19). Rouseff's presents the UN's global agenda as being "committed to being the most representation [institution] in the world" (lines 2-3). She notes the interest in cooperation between the member countries of the United Nations and other international organizations (lines 53-55), the prevention of conflicts (lines 112-113) and the importance of fighting climate change (lines 159-160). She also reminds the Assembly that Brazil will be heading the UN Summit on Sustainable Development and issues an invitation for all to attend (lines 167-168). Near the end of the speech she salutes the creation of UN Woman and the selection of its head (lines 188-189), former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet. Naturally it is not enough to merely mention them; at each moment she states or implies that measures have been taken in Brazil to further these ends, as discussed below.

Rouseff reminds the UN Assembly that debates over the expansion of the UN Security Council have been ongoing for 18 years, according to the president of the preceding General Assembly (lines 125-127). Although Brazil has been a frequent member of the Security Council, it has never secured a permanent position there. That Rouseff attributes this to Brazil's not having enjoyed "developed nation" status is evidenced by the arguments she advances. While the UN does not have

specific criteria for designating particular countries as “developed” or has not generated a list of specific standards (*global standards*) to be met by potential new members (United Nations, 2011), Rouseff is convinced, or at least argues, that political, economic, financial and social stability, along with concern for the environment, cooperation with neighbors and acts of solidarity with the less fortunate, all play an important role in qualifying for new status.

Traditionally power struggles between “have” and “have not” nations presume that the developed countries are in the former group and the emerging countries in the latter. At no point does Rouseff state that Brazil should be considered a developed country—she still frames Brazil as “emerging;” however, she uses legitimation strategies to demonstrate that Brazil has been able to act like a developed nation. Perhaps more interesting is her proposal that there be a paradigm shift in how we define the “have” nations—one that validates the successes of the emerging nations—and suggests it is time to rethink the international cooperation agreements (lines 48-50) along new ways of thinking. She intersperses her legitimation strategies based on expertise and experience with appeals or demands for broader participation in international institutions (the UN and others).

When discussing the current financial crisis, she says that a lack of ideas, rather than money, is at the heart of the issue (lines 27-29) and notes that Brazil and other emerging countries are *ready and willing to help* (lines 46-47). She offers financial advice to the developed countries (stimulate the economy) and again reiterates that “*the emerging countries can help*” (lines 64-67); after urging the reform of the international financial system (lines 71-75), she states even more firmly that the emerging nations “*must, without a shadow of a doubt,*” include more emerging nations in these institutions (lines 76-78). Thus ends part III of Rouseff’s speech, and the last time that the emerging countries are directly mentioned in her speech.

Rouseff now turns her focus to Brazil and after mentioning that “Brazil is doing its part” (line 82), she zeroes in on specific accomplishments:

- Government expenses are under control (lines 82-85)
- Domestic markets are being developed (lines 86-88)
- International humanitarian measures have been taken in Haiti and Guinea-Bissau (lines 94-96)

These arguments set up another readiness argument: that Brazil is in a position to help developing countries around the world with food safety, agricultural technology, clean energy and efforts to combat poverty and hunger (lines 98-100). In other words, once again Brazil proposes actions expected of developed countries.

The next section of the speech intertwines the fight for human rights with issues of security and prepares the first part of the argument regarding the expansion of the UN Security Council. Rousseff mentions the “Arab Spring” (line 103). In this instance the expertise that Brazil offers is not based on experience in the Arab countries (i.e., interventions). Rather, Brazil offers the experience of having created an environment within Brazil in which cultural groups which in other areas of the world have been at war live in peace and harmony in Brazil; however, this evidence comes later (lines 135-136). Instead, after mentioning the Arab Spring she begins the argument that the *legitimate* way of helping societies seeking reform without denying them their civil rights is through a balanced project of development, peace and security, made possible through a UN Security Council that is *legitimized* through a representative composition; this argument is not a single statement but a carefully woven tapestry (lines 106-122).

In section VI Rousseff again presents a series of legitimizing arguments, this time after the direct statement, “Brazil is ready to assume its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Council” (lines 131-132). It is important to note that use of the word “ready” presupposes that Brazil’s inclusion was already contemplated and approved, merely requiring “readiness” on the part of Brazil in order to make permanent its membership on the Council. It also sets up a narrative such that, at least theoretically, the UN would need to address Brazil’s readiness. If Brazil is not considered to be ready, what would constitute “readiness” (i.e., what is needed for acceptance as a permanent member)? Brazil’s readiness “arguments” read more as a shopping list, in that few details are provided:

- Peace with its neighbors for more than 140 years (line 132)
- Constitutionally decreed ban of nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes (lines 133-134)
- Reputation for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond (lines 135-136)

- A move beyond past transgressions in the area of human rights, while still acknowledging its past (lines 137-142)

In the next section Rouseff appears to have moved off the topic of the UN Security Council. She welcomes the newest member of the UN, Southern Sudan, and takes the opportunity to regret that Palestine was not granted full membership, tying lasting peace in the Middle East to the recognition of Palestine (lines 147-155). However, this, too, is an opportunity for presenting Brazil's credentials, as she notes that in Brazil descendants of Arabs and Jews "live in harmony, as it should be" (lines 156-157).

Moving on to climate (section VIII), Rouseff presents Brazil as a country at the forefront of change—not only making proposals (e.g., in Copenhagen), but actually fulfilling its commitments (lines 162-166). Despite ostensibly speaking of climate, she makes a clear statement about responsibility that has more general applications: "[I]t's necessary that countries assume their respective responsibilities" (lines 160-161). With this statement the overall strategy becomes clear:

The UN should be the most representative body in the world (lines 2-3).

All countries have the right to participate in the governing bodies (lines 25-26).

Brazil is doing "its part" in acting responsibly (line 82)

Brazil is ready to participate in the UN Security Council (lines 131-132).

And therefore:

.... Brazil has the right to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Despite having already provided all of the elements necessary to make her argument, Rouseff offers one more legitimization argument while addressing "fellow women from around the world" (line 171): that Brazil found that taking a comprehensive approach to development by attacking social and economic equality was the path to achieving the development goals set for 2015 by 2011 (lines 172-179).

Throughout this discussion we have seen Rouseff present a number of parameters in which Brazil has earned a solid *reputation*, despite her not having used the word even once. The members of the UN know of Brazil's successes; therefore,

the simple enumeration of Brazil's achievements brings to mind the reputation that Brazil now enjoys as one of the BRIC nations. The final concept of Castelló and Lozano that we have placed in this category is *accountability*, again, not explicitly referred to by Rousseff. However, it is not a stretch to affirm that the continual listing of achievements also serves as an invitation for the world to assess Brazil's accountability to its own people and to the international community.

3.3 *Strategies of morality*

Of Castelló and Lozano's themes, six fall into the category of legitimation strategies of morality: *citizenship*, *CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)*, *inclusivity*, *partnership*, *philanthropy* and *social contributions (to humanity)*. They provide no working definition for "citizenship"; however, good citizenship is often associated with responsibility and respect towards others and involves a sense that the good citizen will be sensitive to the needs of others, lending a helping hand when needed. Referring to a corporation as a citizen is a metaphor for social responsibility; in the current context, talk of citizenship may refer to the actions and goals of a nation's citizens, but it can also be used metaphorically to refer to the member nations of the UN, acting as good citizens within that body. Thus, *citizenship* and *CSR* overlap in this context. Castelló and Lozano use the term *inclusivity* to refer to products and services that are made widely available, independent of a party's ability to pay, or actions that promote an inclusive society. At the UN, *inclusivity* refers to representational parity. *Partnership* refers to the collaborative efforts between the company/country and others to work together to accomplish the same goals. *Philanthropy* refers to the giving of donations or other type of aid to an external recipient with no expectation that the money or its value in goods will be returned. For corporations this may come in the form of grants, scholarships, or donations, while in international relations it may be foreign aid from one country to another. The category *social contributions* is used by Castelló and Lozano to refer to "any explicit mention of the importance of the firm contributing to social improvement, benefits to humanity or positive change" (Castelló and Lozano, 2011: 19).

While Rousseff does not speak directly of *citizenship* or *social responsibility*, the picture she presents of Brazil is one of responsibility to its people, its neighbors, to the world community and the planet. This care for socioeconomic equilibrium,

democracy and human rights, the environment and equality of opportunity gives Brazil legitimacy as a citizen-nation of the world. The *social contributions*, actions benefitting humanity, include not only humanitarian aid itself, but can also be seen in the integrated framework (development, security and peace) Rouseff presents for creating the conditions in which all may prosper. She states actions taken, such as the aforementioned ban on nuclear weapons (lines 134-135), but does not explicitly make the claim that Brazil is acting for the benefit of humanity, nor would her audience likely think it appropriate if she did so.

In arguing for the expansion of international governing bodies to include the emerging countries, Rouseff ties *partnership* and *inclusivity* together. When she states that the current financial crisis is too much for a small number of countries to resolve (line 23), she is arguing that the emerging countries be made partners in the solution-finding process. The claim that “all have the right to participate in the solutions,” is an argument based on morality, as is her appeal to the President of the Assembly that after 18 years of debate on whether the UN Security Council should be expanded and how, the decision “cannot be put off longer” (lines 125-127).

Nearly all of these elements come together in a single sentence: “A new type of cooperation between emerging and developed countries is the historic opportunity to redefine, in a solidary and responsible manner, the commitments that govern international relations” (lines 48-50): partnership, inclusivity, responsibility (social and otherwise) and (good) citizenship.

4. Women’s supporting role in the legitimation of Brazil

The legitimation strategies used to support Brazil’s case, as demonstrated above, need no reinforcement in the form of references to gender equality or advancement. Thus, Rouseff’s references to women need not fulfill any function beyond that of acknowledging women’s advancement and general contributions to society. Our contention, however, is that these references do serve a purpose: they set up a cognitive framework that allows Rouseff to make arguments on Brazil’s behalf that would otherwise not be as smooth. The examination of values and the closing gender gap set the stage for a broader discussion of the proposed change in the balance of power.

4.1 Macrostructure of the speech: Women

With one exception, references to women occur either at the beginning (part I, 90 seconds) or at the end (parts IX, 120 seconds; and X, 90 seconds) of the speech, leading to some ambiguity as to the main thrust of the speech. While at least one reporter presumes the main message is about women, others share our contention that the promotion of Brazil is the core message (compare Margolis' "Dilma thumps for women"² in *The Daily Beast*, to Sreeharsha's "Brazil eyes larger role at the UN" in *The Miami Herald* or the BBC News article, "Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff urges reform at UN," all articles written on the speech's delivery date).

4.2 Framing of women's role in Brazil and the world

While the legitimation strategies used to promote Brazil are generally straightforward and comprehensive, the same cannot be said for those relating to women. ; here we examine women's authority as gained from the closing gender gap, the association of values with feminine gender, and authority women possess as a consequence of having been victimized.

Authority and the gender gap. In merely three sentences in part IX of her speech, Rousseff manages to name the importance of women in three of the four parameters tracked in the World Economic Forum reports on the global gender gap (2005, 2011), namely economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and well-being, and political empowerment.

In my country, women have been fundamental in overcoming social inequalities. Mothers play a central role in our income distribution programs. It is they who manage the resources that allow families to invest in the health and education of their children (lines 180-182).

² As a sidenote, Margolis further describes Rousseff as "defiant"; the article includes a video clip in which only the voice of the male English-speaking interpreter can be heard. Given his awkward intonation pattern, he sounds slightly belligerent, whereas Rousseff does not.

In noting the creation of UN Woman the year before and recognizing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's priority given to women in the administration of the UN, the final parameter, political empowerment, is included.

Female gender and positive values. Dilma's first words note hers as the first "feminine voice" to open the UN General Assembly. The word *voice* is feminine in Portuguese, and she goes on to remark on the feminine gender of several other words: *democracy and equality* (line 2); and *life, soul, hope, courage and sincerity* (lines 9-11), although of the words in the second group only *hope* is mentioned after part I of the speech. However, after noting that she will be speaking with *courage* and *sincerity*, she never again mentions these characteristics. Nor is there further mention of *soul*, although she talks about values. *Life* is mentioned as part of the terms *professional life, family life and professional life* in her closing paragraphs as she acknowledges the achievements of women, but these are not woven into the fabric of her speech generally.

The words noted above represent positive qualities or values, as do other words of feminine gender she might have mentioned, but they fell outside part I of her speech; they include *tenacity* (line 7), *cooperation* (line 48), *trust* (line 53), *innovation* (line 88), *peace* and *security* (line 91), *harmony* (line 157). In this first few minutes of her speech she makes perhaps her strongest statements about the power of women, noting that women represent more than half the world's population (line 6) and this will be "the century of women" (line 8).

By drawing attention to the gender of specific words in a way that suggests that one can associate word gender with women's qualities, she seems to be inviting similar comparisons throughout the speech, at least to those in the audience who can discern the gender of Portuguese words, a task that speakers of Romance languages would likely be able to do, if so inclined. For every positive word one can find another whose association is detrimental to "the feminist cause", as she speaks of *crisis* (e.g., line 28); *violence* and *pain* (line 40); *xenophobia, misery, capital punishment, and discrimination* (line 139); *inequality* (line 173); *hunger, illness and poverty* (lines 193-194); and *torture* (line 199).

Women as victims / survivors. After providing unemployment statistics in Europe and the U.S., with comparisons to the healthier emerging countries, Rousseff states

that it is “vital to fight this scourge and keep it from spreading to other regions of the planet” (lines 36-37). The next sentence abruptly shifts to mention of women: “We women know better than anyone that unemployment is not just a statistic. It strikes at families, at our children, and at our husbands. It snatches away hope and leaves behind violence and pain” (lines 38-40). This statement has added impact, in that it is the only time that Rousseff mentions women outside the invisible boundaries of parts I, IX and X of her speech. Thus, more than 15 minutes pass between the end of this statement (time mark 5:42) and the next reference to women, beginning of part IX (line 171, time mark 21:02).

In part IX, directed to “fellow women from around the world”, she notes the role that women have played, as the central figure of the family, in managing the family resources and taking care that the needs of the children are being met (lines 180-183). This is an affirming statement. However, in the final part of the speech she presents herself as a voice for women who have been victimized by hunger, disease, violence, unemployment and discrimination in all sectors of life (lines 191-195). She includes her own suffering of imprisonment and torture (line 199), which gives her the authority to speak on the “importance of the values of democracy, justice human rights and liberty” (lines 199-200). Sandwiched between the two is a presentation of women as survivors, as she salutes

those who have dared to fight, those who have dared to participate in both the political arena and professional life, who have conquered the space of power that grants me the possibility of being here today
(lines 196-198).

Hearing the speech the first time, this author was led to wonder why Rousseff chose to give equal or greater attention to women as victims, or survivors of tragedy, particularly in light of her choice to present Brazil as a survivor and forward-looking leader. While part of the answer may lie in how Dilma Rousseff identifies herself as a feminist, we contend that through a discussion of balance-of-power arguments we may find an explanation for the way women are framed in this speech, considered in the next section.

4.3 Redressing the balance of power

From the analyses in which Brazil is in focus we can claim that Rousseff acknowledges ongoing “have not” status for her country and the other emerging nations. By presenting women as victims, she clearly places them in the “have not” category. Thus, while members in each category have had success (Brazil, Rousseff herself as president of Brazil, Michelle Bachelet as head of UN Women), the group to which they belong retains its “have not” status.

In terms of argumentation strategies, once a connection is established in the mind linking the history and fate of Brazil (as representative of the emerging countries) and women, then arguments relating to any of the three may serve as arguments for all or, more specifically in this case, as arguments in support of the same cause: Brazil’s permanent membership in the UN Security Council. When Rousseff says that as a woman she represents more than half of the people on the planet and, like those with “tenacity”, have come to “occupy the place they deserve in the world”, she sets up a cognitive frame that makes possible the reflection that more than half of the population resides in an emerging country. As a result, when she then claims that the 21st century will belong to women (lines 6-8), the thought that the “have nots” will own the 21st century is activated. It is impossible to know the reaction of her audience to her claim about women’s role in this century, but it was not likely considered highly contentious or shocking. On the other hand, had she claimed instead that the century would belong to the emerging countries, it would probably be viewed as not only confrontational but possibly incendiary. Further consideration of an expanded role for Brazil within the UN might come to a standstill.

With the same logic, we can interpret the overt mention of the victimization of women as a frame for viewing the exploitation of the emerging countries, evidence for which is plentiful, if Rousseff wished to make the argument. However, as in the previous case, doing so would have been counterproductive in the fight for greater inclusivity; after all, the woman-as-victim scenario is not as threatening as an entire nation or group of nations claiming victim status. A question still remains: why create a situation in which Brazil can be viewed a victim? An answer can be found in Rousseff’s personal story: despite having previously been imprisoned and tortured, she not only survived but now holds the highest office in her country. Thus, in the victim/survivor paradigm it is the survivor portion that she aims to activate. The authority she has gained from her *personal* experience and that Brazil

has gained from its *expertise* give them the credentials to be credible partners in the international arena.

5. Mapping Rousseff's UN strategies onto visions of EU legitimacy

In contrast to the analytical frameworks of van Leeuwen, Suchman and Castelló and Lozano, which have provided tools for analyzing how legitimation strategies are conceived, Eriksen and Fossum's (2004) examination of legitimacy at the EU provides a framework for analyzing an analogous situation. While the EU was considering the enlargement of its entire body, Rousseff is focused on a specific body within the UN. Eriksen and Fossum describe three options for the EU to work through its "alleged legitimacy deficit" (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 436), each with its own logic: a) *problem-solving*; b) *rights-based*; and c) *values-based*.

Underlying the *problem-solving* logic or perspective is the notion that the traditionally powerful are the most adept at solving problems (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 439). Thus, in order to make a strong case for inclusion, one would have to argue greater competence than that displayed by existing parties. Rousseff implies this when she notes that "[a] part of the world still has not found the equilibrium between the appropriate financial adjustments and correct fiscal stimuli" (lines 30-31). That she is referring to the developed countries is clear from the foregoing, when she specifies "the developed countries" as those who have not yet found a solution (lines 27-28), as well as noting that the emerging countries, including Brazil, have not been as severely affected by the crisis (lines 45-46).

The *rights-based* notion of legitimacy implies, in Eriksen and Fossum's words, a "recognized need for continuing the process of institution building at the political level" (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 445). As this happens in the public sphere, they draw on Habermas' claim that the debate must be free and open (Habermas, 1996: 107, as cited in Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 446). They state that the "generic set of conditions are freedom, inclusion, equality, participation, and an open agenda" (Eriksen and Fossum, 2004: 446). Dilma cites each of these in her appeal on the basis of rights: freedom (line 105), inclusion (in the guise of "help", line 47, and cooperation, line 48), equality (line 2) and participation (line 26).

A natural difference exists in the *value-based community* logic at the EU as opposed to the UN, as the EU has a natural geopolitical boundary and therefore a contiguous group that can be referred to as “we”. Still, one of the challenges facing the EU is defining a common European identity and even determining whether it is ultimately desirable. A recent article on forging a common European identity (Darnstädt, Schult and Zuber, 2011) notes people’s expressions of fear that in defining a European identity, national identities and, by extension, national rights, are weakened. This is not a problem that the UN faces, given its representation of countries around the world. Therefore, the values of the UN are shared human values, as opposed to ones that may arise through geographic connections (Brazil) or socioeconomic status (emerging countries). Rousseff is skillful in that her identification of values is done with comparisons to women (who represent more than half of humanity and are not bound to any particular region or class), which she then points out as UN values. Mentioned in the discussion above on women as victims/survivors is Rousseff’s comment about how her own suffering of jail and torture gives her the authority to speak about the importance of the values she has named. In the following lines she ties this back to the UN: “It is with the hope that these values continue inspiring the work of this House of Nations, that I have the honor of opening the General Debate...” (lines 201-202).

These analyses indicate that Rousseff’s overall argumentation strategy can effectively counter arguments based on any of these logical perspectives.

6. Conclusions

The assessment of the strength and internal coherence of Rousseff’s historic speech must rest on the force of its arguments, as Rousseff does not offer brilliant oratory; there are no instances in which phrases or sentences are repeated providing a lilting cadence, nor do we find evidence that any effort was made to select words that will sound melodic to the ears. Instead, the success of the speech rests entirely on the force of its arguments. Our conclusion is that her arguments have been carefully crafted and are skillfully argued.

As Brazil's prospects are her central focus, the majority of arguments present Brazil's successes, although at times she argues on behalf of the emerging nations generally. Rousseff also creates a cognitive frame that links Brazilian successes to those of other emerging countries and to the successes of women, making it possible to advance arguments that benefit her central argument without being overly confrontational or casting Brazil in a less appealing light (e.g., women as victims, the emerging countries as representing more than half of the world's population).

Rousseff lays out a number of areas in which Brazil has shown itself to have developed expertise and therefore should, *rationally and morally*, be viewed as a responsible partner for the fellow nations at the UN. Rather than viewing *authority, rationalization and morality* as distinct strategies, as van Leeuwen (2007) does, Rousseff's arguments suggest that the legitimation strategies are intertwined. This complexity may be attributable, at least in part, to the fact that Rousseff is arguing for a change in the *status quo*. She is asking that the "traditional" voices of authority cede some ground (i.e., power) to newer ones which have gained expertise, the "coin" of authority traditionally used to separate the "haves" and "have nots." In reminding the General Assembly of the long-held values of the UN towards democracy and representativity, she connects expertise and morality. Thus, maintenance of the *status quo* would be immoral.

Through the construction of her speech, Rousseff demonstrates her own preparedness to counter any arguments that may be raised against her proposal. In fact, so similar are her statements on gender to the World Economic Forum's, so well do her relevant themes fit those of Corporate Social Responsibility rhetoric, and so well do her macro-level argumentation strategies respond to Eriksen and Fossum, that we have at times been left with the impression that we are merely tracing her footsteps.

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Discurso da Presidenta da República, Dilma Rousseff, na abertura do Debate Geral da 66ª Assembleia Geral das Nações Unidas - Nova York/EUA

21/09/2011 às 11h20

Nova York-EUA, 21 de setembro de 2011

Senhor presidente da Assembleia Geral, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,

Senhor secretário-geral das Nações Unidas, Ban Ki-moon,

Senhoras e senhores chefes de Estado e de Governo,

Senhoras e senhores,

Pela primeira vez, na história das Nações Unidas, uma voz feminina inaugura o Debate Geral. É a voz da democracia e da igualdade se ampliando nesta tribuna, que tem o compromisso de ser a mais representativa do mundo.

É com humildade pessoal, mas com justificado orgulho de mulher, que vivo este momento histórico.

Divido esta emoção com mais da metade dos seres humanos deste Planeta, que, como eu, nasceram mulher, e que, com tenacidade, estão ocupando o lugar que merecem no mundo. Tenho certeza, senhoras e senhores, de que este será o século das mulheres.

Na língua portuguesa, palavras como vida, alma e esperança pertencem ao gênero feminino, e são também femininas duas outras palavras muito especiais para mim: coragem e sinceridade. Pois é com coragem e sinceridade que quero lhes falar no dia de hoje.

Senhor Presidente,

O mundo vive um momento extremamente delicado e, ao mesmo tempo, uma grande oportunidade histórica. Enfrentamos uma crise econômica que, se não debelada, pode se transformar em uma grave ruptura política e social. Uma ruptura sem precedentes, capaz de provocar sérios desequilíbrios na convivência entre as pessoas e as nações.

Mais que nunca, o destino do mundo está nas mãos de todos os seus governantes, sem exceção. Ou nos unimos todos e saímos, juntos, vencedores ou sairemos todos derrotados.

Agora, menos importante é saber quais foram os causadores da situação que enfrentamos, até porque isto já está suficientemente claro. Importa, sim, encontrarmos soluções coletivas, rápidas e verdadeiras.

Essa crise é séria demais para que seja administrada apenas por uns poucos países. Seus governos e bancos centrais continuam com a responsabilidade maior na condução do processo, mas como todos os países sofrem as consequências da crise, todos têm o direito de participar das soluções.

Não é por falta de recursos financeiros que os líderes dos países desenvolvidos ainda não encontraram uma solução para a crise. É – permitam-me dizer – por falta de recursos políticos e, algumas vezes, de clareza de ideias.

Uma parte do mundo não encontrou ainda o equilíbrio entre ajustes fiscais apropriados e estímulos fiscais corretos e precisos para a demanda e o crescimento. Ficam presos na armadilha que não separa interesses partidários daqueles interesses legítimos da sociedade.

O desafio colocado pela crise é substituir teorias defasadas, de um mundo velho, por novas formulações para um mundo novo. Enquanto muitos governos se encolhem, a face mais amarga da crise – a do desemprego – se amplia. Já temos 205 milhões de desempregados no mundo – 44 milhões na Europa, 14 milhões nos Estados Unidos. É vital combater essa praga e impedir que se alastre para outras regiões do Planeta.

Nós, mulheres, sabemos – mais que ninguém – que o desemprego não é apenas uma estatística. Golpeia as famílias, nossos filhos e nossos maridos. Tira a esperança e deixa a violência e a dor.

Senhor Presidente,

É significativo que seja a presidenta de um país emergente – um país que vive praticamente um ambiente de pleno emprego – que venha falar, aqui, hoje, com cores tão vívidas, dessa tragédia que assola, em especial, os países desenvolvidos.

Como outros países emergentes, o Brasil tem sido, até agora, menos afetado pela crise mundial. Mas sabemos que nossa capacidade de resistência não é ilimitada. Queremos – e podemos – ajudar, enquanto há tempo, os países onde a crise já é aguda.

Um novo tipo de cooperação, entre países emergentes e países desenvolvidos, é a oportunidade histórica para redefinir, de forma solidária e responsável, os compromissos que regem as relações internacionais.

O mundo se defronta com uma crise que é, ao mesmo tempo, econômica, de governança e de coordenação política.

Não haverá a retomada da confiança e do crescimento enquanto não se intensificarem os esforços de coordenação entre os países integrantes da ONU e as demais instituições multilaterais, como o G-20, o Fundo Monetário, o Banco Mundial e outros organismos. A ONU e essas organizações precisam emitir, com a máxima urgência, sinais claros de coesão política e de coordenação macroeconômica.

As políticas fiscais e monetárias, por exemplo, devem ser objeto de avaliação mútua, de forma a impedir efeitos indesejáveis sobre os outros países, evitando reações defensivas que, por sua vez, levam a um círculo vicioso.

Já a solução do problema da dívida deve ser combinada com o crescimento econômico. Há sinais evidentes de que várias economias avançadas se encontram no limiar da recessão, o que dificultará, sobremaneira, a resolução dos problemas fiscais.

Está claro que a prioridade da economia mundial, neste momento, deve ser solucionar o problema dos países em crise de dívida soberana e reverter o presente quadro recessivo. Os países mais desenvolvidos precisam praticar políticas coordenadas de estímulo às economias extremamente debilitadas pela crise. Os países emergentes podem ajudar.

Países altamente superavitários devem estimular seus mercados internos e, quando for o caso, flexibilizar suas políticas cambiais, de maneira a cooperar para o reequilíbrio da demanda global.

Urge aprofundar a regulamentação do sistema financeiro e controlar essa fonte inesgotável de instabilidade. É preciso impor controles à guerra cambial, com a adoção de regimes de câmbio flutuante. Trata-se, senhoras e senhores, de impedir a manipulação do câmbio tanto por políticas monetárias excessivamente expansionistas como pelo artifício do câmbio fixo.

A reforma das instituições financeiras multilaterais deve, sem sombra de dúvida, prosseguir, aumentando a participação dos países emergentes, principais responsáveis pelo crescimento da economia mundial.

O protecionismo e todas as formas de manipulação comercial devem ser combatidos, pois conferem maior competitividade, de maneira espúria e fraudulenta.

Senhor Presidente,

O Brasil está fazendo a sua parte. Com sacrifício, mas com discernimento, mantemos os gastos do governo sob rigoroso controle, a ponto de gerar vultoso superávit nas contas públicas, sem que isso comprometa o êxito das políticas sociais, nem nosso ritmo de investimento e de crescimento.

Estamos tomando precauções adicionais para reforçar nossa capacidade de resistência à crise, fortalecendo nosso mercado interno com políticas de distribuição de renda e inovação tecnológica.

Há pelo menos três anos, senhor Presidente, o Brasil repete, nesta mesma tribuna, que é preciso combater as causas, e não só as consequências da instabilidade global.

Temos insistido na interrelação entre desenvolvimento, paz e segurança, e que as políticas de desenvolvimento sejam, cada vez mais, associadas às estratégias do Conselho de Segurança na busca por uma paz sustentável.

É assim que agimos em nosso compromisso com o Haiti e com a Guiné-Bissau. Na liderança da Minustah temos promovido, desde 2004, no Haiti, projetos humanitários,

que integram segurança e desenvolvimento. Com profundo respeito à soberania haitiana, o Brasil tem o orgulho de cooperar para a consolidação da democracia naquele país.

Estamos aptos a prestar também uma contribuição solidária, aos países irmãos do mundo em desenvolvimento, em matéria de segurança alimentar, tecnologia agrícola, geração de energia limpa e renovável e no combate à pobreza e à fome.

Senhor Presidente,

Desde o final de 2010 assistimos a uma sucessão de manifestações populares, que se convencionou denominar “Primavera Árabe”. O Brasil é pátria de adoção de muitos imigrantes daquela parte do mundo. Os brasileiros se solidarizam com a busca de um ideal que não pertence a nenhuma cultura, porque é universal: a liberdade.

É preciso que as nações aqui reunidas encontrem uma forma legítima e eficaz de ajudar as sociedades que clamam por reforma, sem retirar de seus cidadãos a condução do processo.

Repudiamos com veemência as repressões brutais que vitimam populações civis. Estamos convencidos de que, para a comunidade internacional, o recurso à força deve ser sempre a última alternativa. A busca da paz e da segurança no mundo não pode limitar-se a intervenções em situações extremas.

Apoiamos o Secretário-Geral no seu esforço de engajar as Nações Unidas na prevenção de conflitos, por meio do exercício incansável da democracia e da promoção do desenvolvimento.

O mundo sofre, hoje, as dolorosas consequências de intervenções que agravaram os conflitos, possibilitando a infiltração do terrorismo onde ele não existia, inaugurando novos ciclos de violência, multiplicando os números de vítimas civis.

Muito se fala sobre a responsabilidade de proteger, pouco se fala sobre a responsabilidade ao proteger. São conceitos que precisamos amadurecer juntos. Para isso, a atuação do Conselho de Segurança é essencial, e ela será tão mais acertada quanto mais legítimas forem suas decisões, e a legitimidade do próprio Conselho depende, cada dia mais, de sua reforma.

Senhor Presidente,

A cada ano que passa, mais urgente se faz uma solução para a falta de representatividade do Conselho de Segurança, o que corrói sua eficácia. O ex-presidente Joseph Deiss recordou-me um fato impressionante: o debate em torno da reforma do Conselho já entra em seu 18º ano. Não é possível, senhor Presidente, protelar mais.

O mundo precisa de um Conselho de Segurança que venha a refletir a realidade contemporânea, um Conselho que incorpore novos membros permanentes e não permanentes, em especial representantes dos países em desenvolvimento.

O Brasil está pronto a assumir suas responsabilidades como membro permanente do Conselho. Vivemos em paz com nossos vizinhos há mais de 140 anos. Temos promovido com eles bem-sucedidos processos de integração e de cooperação. Abdicamos, por compromisso constitucional, do uso da energia nuclear para fins que não sejam pacíficos. Tenho orgulho de dizer que o Brasil é um vetor de paz, estabilidade e prosperidade em sua região, e até mesmo fora dela.

No Conselho de Direitos Humanos, atuamos inspirados por nossa própria história de superação. Queremos para os outros países o que queremos para nós mesmos.

O autoritarismo, a xenofobia, a miséria, a pena capital, a discriminação, todos são algozes dos direitos humanos. Há violações em todos os países, sem exceção. Reconheçamos esta realidade e aceitemos, todos, as críticas. Devemos nos beneficiar delas e criticar, sem meias-palavras, os casos flagrantes de violação, onde quer que ocorram.

Senhor Presidente,

Quero estender ao Sudão do Sul as boas vindas à nossa família de nações. O Brasil está pronto a cooperar com o mais jovem membro das Nações Unidas e contribuir para seu desenvolvimento soberano.

Mas lamento ainda não poder saudar, desta tribuna, o ingresso pleno da Palestina na Organização das Nações Unidas. O Brasil já reconhece o Estado palestino como tal, nas fronteiras de 1967, de forma consistente com as resoluções das Nações Unidas. Assim como a maioria dos países nesta Assembleia, acreditamos que é chegado o momento de termos a Palestina aqui representada a pleno título.

O reconhecimento ao direito legítimo do povo palestino à soberania e à autodeterminação amplia as possibilidades de uma paz duradoura no Oriente Médio. Apenas uma Palestina livre e soberana poderá atender aos legítimos anseios de Israel por paz com seus vizinhos, segurança em suas fronteiras e estabilidade política em seu entorno regional.

Venho de um país onde descendentes de árabes e judeus são compatriotas e convivem em harmonia, como deve ser.

Senhor Presidente,

O Brasil defende um acordo global, abrangente e ambicioso para combater a mudança do clima no marco das Nações Unidas. Para tanto, é preciso que os países assumam as responsabilidades que lhes cabem.

Apresentamos uma proposta concreta, voluntária e significativa de redução [de emissões], durante a Cúpula de Copenhague, em 2009. Esperamos poder avançar, já na reunião de Durban, apoiando os países em desenvolvimento nos seus esforços de redução de emissões e garantindo que os países desenvolvidos cumprirão suas obrigações – com novas metas no Protocolo de Quioto – para além de 2012.

Teremos a honra de sediar a Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Desenvolvimento Sustentável, a Rio+20, em junho do ano que vem. Juntamente com o secretário-geral Ban Ki-moon, reitero aqui o convite para que todos os chefes de Estado e de Governo compareçam.

Senhor Presidente e minhas companheiras mulheres de todo mundo,

O Brasil descobriu que a melhor política de desenvolvimento é o combate à pobreza, e que uma verdadeira política de direitos humanos tem por base a diminuição da desigualdade e da discriminação entre as pessoas, entre as regiões e entre os gêneros.

O Brasil avançou política, econômica e socialmente sem comprometer sequer uma das liberdades democráticas. Cumprimos quase todos os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento do Milênio, antes de 2015. Saíram da pobreza e ascenderam para a classe média quase 40 milhões de brasileiras e brasileiros. Tenho plena convicção de que cumprimos nossa meta de, até o final do meu governo, erradicar a pobreza extrema no Brasil.

No meu país, a mulher tem sido fundamental na superação das desigualdades sociais. Nossos programas de distribuição de renda têm, nas mães, a figura central. São elas que cuidam dos recursos que permitem às famílias investir na saúde e na educação de seus filhos.

Mas o meu país, como todos os países do mundo, ainda precisa fazer muito mais pela valorização e afirmação da mulher. Ao falar disso, cumprimento o secretário-geral Ban Ki-moon pela prioridade que tem conferido às mulheres em sua gestão à frente das Nações Unidas.

Saúdo, em especial, a criação da ONU Mulher e sua diretora-executiva, Michelle Bachelet.

Senhor Presidente,

Além do meu querido Brasil, sinto-me aqui também representando todas as mulheres do mundo. As mulheres anônimas, aquelas que passam fome e não podem dar de comer aos seus filhos; aquelas que padecem de doenças e não podem se tratar; aquelas que sofrem violência e são discriminadas no emprego, na sociedade e na vida familiar; aquelas cujo trabalho no lar cria as gerações futuras.

Junto minha voz às vozes das mulheres que ousaram lutar, que ousaram participar da vida política e da vida profissional, e conquistaram o espaço de poder que me permite estar aqui hoje.

Como mulher que sofreu tortura no cárcere, sei como são importantes os valores da democracia, da justiça, dos direitos humanos e da liberdade.

E é com a esperança de que estes valores continuem inspirando o trabalho desta Casa das Nações, que tenho a honra de iniciar o Debate Geral da 66ª Assembleia Geral da ONU

Muito obrigada.

Ouçã a íntegra do [discurso](#) (23min49s) da Presidenta Dilma

The author:

Sandi Michele de Oliveira is an associate professor of Luso-Brazilian Studies at the University of Copenhagen. The core areas of her research include identity construction, political discourse, politeness and address. She was President of RC25 from 2002 – 2006 and co-President from 2006 – 2010.