

## **Price of Politics: Hindrances and Impediments to Female Political Participation in Brazil**

Despite comprising the majority of the population, women in Brazil are surprisingly absent (or disregarded) from the sphere of politics— their political participation, political representation, and overall influence on political activity is lacking when compared to that of men within the nation.<sup>1</sup> It seems strange that the “world’s largest electorate subject to compulsory voting” with gender quota legislation is unable to represent and include the larger segment of their citizenry proportionately.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon is puzzling and brings to mind a number of questions, the most important being: what hinders the political participation and representation of women in Brazil across various dimensions of politics? While many ideas and theories venture to explain the marginalization of women in the realm of politics— the most logical answer is that participation in politics comes at a cost. Women in Brazil are expected to relinquish either tangible or intangible entities in order to behave politically. This act of concession and payment is expensive for women as involvement in politics can bear a myriad of prices. These can include physical risk, legal uncertainty, loss of bodily autonomy, and the time spent fighting a system that is structured to sideline women. Bearing these costs and attempting to transcend them has proved difficult for the Brazilian populace. Therefore, exploring the nature of these costs and answering the question at hand is a crucial first step towards understanding the state of modern politics in Brazil— which may then create a path for the potential rectification of a system and a society that is exclusionary.

To understand the evidence presented and the arguments being made it is essential first to define the terms political participation and political representation. The words political participation commonly refer to the “legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions that they take.”<sup>3</sup> The term political representation refers to the “activity of making citizens’ voices, opinions, and

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<sup>1</sup> "The World Factbook: BRAZIL." Central Intelligence Agency. March 14, 2018. Accessed March 18, 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Power, Timothy J., and J. Timmons Roberts. "Compulsory Voting, Invalid Ballots, and Abstention in Brazil." *Political Research Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1995): 795-826. Accessed March 17, 2018. doi:10.1177/106591299504800407.

<sup>3</sup> Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim. "Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison." International Stratification and Mobility File. 1987. Accessed March 17, 2018. <http://www.harryganzeboom.nl/Teaching/SocPart/Readings/Verba,%20Nie,%20Kim%20-%201978%20-%20Political%20Participation%20CH1.pdf>.

perspectives present in public policy making processes” through “political actors [who] speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on the behalf of others in the political arena.”<sup>4</sup> Political participation and proportional political representation are implied facets of a functioning democracy. This is the case as both representation and participation contribute to the core competency of democracy: the empowerment of the masses and a system that facilitates the rule of the many over the rule of the select few. Active participation and proper representation act as tools of empowerment by bridging the gap between citizens and their elected leaders—endowing the masses with a sense of connection and the ability to influence the political sphere. Furthermore, a society with universal suffrage and political engagement strengthen the formal democratic institutions in place—making them seem fair and legitimizing them in the eyes of the people.<sup>5</sup> Understanding the gravity of political participation and representation in the most general sense primes one to understand the importance of the two concepts in the context of women.

Recognizing that political participation and political representation act as instruments of empowerment is imperative when examining women’s political activity and presence in Brazil. This is the case as “participation [...] has crucial distributional implications” meaning that the “voice [...] heard in politics bears powerfully upon the allocation of public and private goods and thus upon the distribution of income and advantage in society.”<sup>6</sup> The connection between political participation and representation is palpable—high levels of female political participation contribute to high levels of female representation in democratic polities which then reshapes typical voter attitudes that aim to undermine female politicians. Furthermore, active political participation by women creates a “supply of [individuals] with professional experience and resources who are capable of mounting credible electoral campaigns” in the future.<sup>7</sup> In the context of Brazilian women, their voice being ignored, misrepresented, or underrepresented

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<sup>4</sup> Dovi, Suzanne. "Political Representation." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. January 06, 2017. Accessed March 18, 2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-representation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Brooks, Sarah M. "The Journal of Politics." University of Chicago Press Journals. 2014. Accessed March 18, 2018. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1017/S0022381614000553>

<sup>6</sup> Brooks, Sarah M. "The Journal of Politics." University of Chicago Press Journals. 2014. Accessed March 18, 2018. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1017/S0022381614000553>

<sup>7</sup> Iversen, Torben, and Frances Rosenbluth. "Work and Power: The Connection Between Female Labor Force Participation and Female Political Representation." *Work and Power: The Connection Between Female Labor Force Participation and Female Political Representation* | Annual Review of Political Science. 2008. Accessed March 18, 2018. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.151342.

directly correlates to the construction of a society that treats their needs and wants as being lesser than that of Brazilian men. The current political structure, unfortunately, reflects a society where women are not heard proportionately. This can be seen when observing the percentage of women present in Congress. Data combined by the Inter-Parliamentary Union reveals that of the 513 seats available in the Lower House, only 53 are occupied by women— meaning that only 10.7% of the Lower House consists of women.<sup>8</sup> The percentage of women present in the Upper House is only slightly higher as 12 women fill the 81 available seats— resulting in a female population of 14.8%.<sup>9</sup> The fact that women are so underrepresented culminates in Brazil being ranked 152<sup>nd</sup> amongst 193 countries in terms of female Congressional presence— putting it below nations such as Saudi Arabia, which is governed by a unitary absolute monarchy, and placing Brazil well below the combined average of the Americas which rests at 28.4%.<sup>10</sup> The ideal associated with high levels of female political representation and the good that female representatives can potentially bring to society are unrealized within the borders of Brazil. As a result, it is critical to investigate the potential causes that may contribute to these low levels of female political engagement. The explanations for low levels of political representation in Brazil are all connected by the same thread— women have to bear higher costs than men to participate in politics. While this argument may seem unclear, it is possible to understand it by looking at specific explanations— such as the costs that accompany Brazil’s open list electoral system.

The costs borne by women within Brazilian politics truly crystallizes when observing and examining the personalistic nature of Brazilian political institutions. This is because Brazilian institutions impose expenses on women that impede their autonomy and free choice over their bodies. Brazil’s political institutions can be classed as being personalistic because the electoral system instituted within the country is an open list system. This form of system relies on a mechanism wherein a list of candidates is created for each party and voters are able to pick candidates and allocate them to their respective positions. This type of system leads to a culture that focuses on the individual candidates and their appeal to the populace. In open list systems, candidates can “cultivate [...] personal vote[s]” as they compete against one another in an

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<sup>8</sup> Women in Parliaments: World Classification. Accessed March 18, 2018. <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages. Accessed March 18, 2018. <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>.

attempt to rank higher on the list— elevating their position and granting them more power within the party.<sup>11</sup> While open list systems can vary from nation to nation, the specific system in play in Brazil is particularly unfair towards women due to prevailing social attitudes and sexism.

Women are inherently disadvantaged in open list electoral system because personalistic bias often allows for the perception that men are more seasoned and experienced candidates. This is usually the standard belief amongst voters because “men can more credibly commit to long and continuous careers.”<sup>12</sup> This makes men more dependable in the minds of constituents, increasing the election and reelection chances for male politicians. Furthermore, men have been and continue to be represented in higher numbers within the political arena: making it hard to introduce female candidates as the remainder of the candidate pool consists of male incumbents. This furthers the notion that men are more dedicated to politics than women. Female politicians are viewed as having more fragmented careers because they often have to extricate themselves from the sphere of politics when and if they choose to have children or engage in activities associated with the domestic sphere. Voters often view the choice to have children as highly disadvantageous to functioning politics as it removes women from their work and inhibits “membership in important committees and the ability to make credible bargains with other politicians”— effectively making women a riskier choice than men for constituents who have specific goals that they want to see realized in the short, long, and medium term.<sup>13</sup> The notion that bearing children interrupts a woman’s political contribution and renders her as being less effective when compared to her male peers in the eyes of the electorate is cause for concern. This notion is troubling because it insinuates that in order to be viewed in the same regard as their male competition, women need to surrender their bodily autonomy. The open list system in Brazil functions in such a way that female politicians are forced to weigh the options between a political career and the ability to make their own choices about their own body. Men are easily able to avoid this choice because of their inability to bear children. While this choice is expensive enough, bearing the cost and sacrificing bodily autonomy to pursue politics often does

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<sup>11</sup> Iversen, Torben, and Frances Rosenbluth. "Work and Power: The Connection Between Female Labor Force Participation and Female Political Representation." *Work and Power: The Connection Between Female Labor Force Participation and Female Political Representation* | Annual Review of Political Science. 2008. Accessed March 18, 2018. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.151342.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

not pay off. This is because the inherent sexism present in Brazilian society ensures that voters rely on the use of “gender as a cue for candidate selection when information is incomplete” serving only to magnify the problem further as “parties cannot know the true types, career interrupters or not, among first-term candidates.”<sup>14</sup> Bearing the costs once is simply not enough in Brazil for women—the open list electoral system ensures that even when women pay the price and attempt to compete with men, they are plunged into a political atmosphere that is “heavily skewed toward males.”<sup>15</sup> While the cost of autonomy and choice is immense, it is not the only cost that women have to face and attempt to pay in the complex realm of Brazilian politics.

Beyond the sacrifice of bodily autonomy, female politicians also have to deal with economic costs that they either cannot meet or are prevented from meeting if they want to compete with men. This is once again as a result of the personalistic character of the open list system. The open list system in Brazil creates an atmosphere of heightened competition in comparison to other open list systems across the world. In most other nations employing an open list system, such as Peru, lists created by parties include the number of candidates that are equal to the number of seats available.<sup>16</sup> In Brazil, parties stack the record by creating a list where the “number of candidates on each party list may equal 150% of the seats to be elected and coalitions may present lists with 200%.”<sup>17</sup> This results in some party resources and funds being spread thin amongst an overwhelmingly large number of candidates—many of whom will not be elected and will not hold seats. The rest of the party funds, the majority, is allocated for top candidates. Women are often added in large quantities to the list as “orange candidates.” Orange candidates in “popular Brazilian culture are proxies who only occupy a place on the list in service of another candidate or party.”<sup>18</sup> The use of orange candidates is important to the open list system because it “allows candidates who are public servants to dedicate themselves to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Piatti-Crocker, Adriana, Gregory Schmidt, and Clara Araujo. "Gender Quotas in the Big Three South American Countries: Findings, Trends, and Prospects." 9<sup>o</sup> Congreso Latinoamericano De Ciencia Política. Accessed March 20, 2018.

<http://www.congresoalacip2017.org/arquivo/downloadpublic2?q=YToyOntzOjY6InBhcmFtcyI7czozNToiYToxOntzOjEwOiJJRF9BUiFVSZPIjtzOjQ6IjI2ODciO30iO3M6MT0iaCI7czozMjoiNWlzMmIxYjdmY2VkN2RhMzFiNmFjMTM0ZGY3MjI3NWEiO30%3D>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Tadros, Mariz. *Women in Politics Gender, Power and Development*. London: Zed Books, 2014.

electoral campaigning for candidates who are priorities for the party.”<sup>19</sup> The existence of ghost candidates such as orange candidates allows parties to pretend that they include women in the sphere of politics, when in reality women are used merely as tools to aid top candidates— most of whom are male incumbents hoping for reelection. It is therefore clear that women are not afforded the economic resources they need to compete with men, and instead are often used as pawns to enrich the party image and the profiles of prominent male candidates. Furthermore, the gender allocation quotas that exist in Brazil are not highly stringent— making it possible to shirk the requirement that 30% of political bodies consist of women.<sup>20</sup> The “expensive campaigning, support networks and access to media visibility required for electoral success in open list systems” is simply not provided to women in Brazil.<sup>21</sup> As a result, women are faced with high costs that they are unable to meet because institutional design prevents them from gaining the economic assets and political acumen necessary to get elected in numbers proportional to the number of men being elected. Looking at Argentina, another Latin American country further clarifies and expounds upon the immense damage brought about by Brazil’s open list PR system. This is the case as Argentina employs a closed list electoral system where “every third candidate must be female” and “sanctions against parties that fail to comply with the gender quotas are severe.”<sup>22</sup> In Argentina, women are aided by the political parties that they belong to and represent— making it possible for them to cover the costs associated with campaigning and connecting with the populace. This effort to bridge the costs by the Argentine government makes it possible to have a Congress where 40% of the population is female.<sup>23</sup> While these costs associated with political participation are incredibly high, there are other costs faced by Brazilian women are even a more significant cause for unease.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Moura, Paula. "Do Quotas for Female Politicians Work?" *The Atlantic*. October 10, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/do-quotas-for-female-politicians-work/381320/>.

<sup>21</sup> Jones, Emma, comp. "Quota Systems & Women’s Political Representation." *Pathways of Women’s Empowerment*, 2007. Accessed March 20, 2018. [http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pathwaysofempowerment-org-staging/downloads/quota\\_systems\\_and\\_women\\_s\\_political\\_representation\\_originalf72385dd691050a611c23a68152abc4c.pdf](http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pathwaysofempowerment-org-staging/downloads/quota_systems_and_women_s_political_representation_originalf72385dd691050a611c23a68152abc4c.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Douglas, Bruce. "The Party of the Brazilian Woman Is Not Actually a Women's Political Party." *The Guardian*. December 29, 2015. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/29/brazil-party-of-the-brazilian-woman-not-feminist-sexism-politics>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

The cost of politics in Brazil at times eclipses standard economic costs— this is the case as political participation can at times come with the concession of physical safety and well-being. Prior to exploring this cost, it is important to understand the nature of violence in Brazil as crime against women is rampant in the nation. The term femicide is used to describe homicides that occur as a result of gender-based violence. Femicide refers “to any manifestation of the unequal power relations between men and women that [culminate] with the death of one or more women because of their gender.”<sup>24</sup> Defining femicide is crucial as Brazil is characterized as having a problem with the phenomenon.<sup>25</sup> This is clear as Brazil ranks as having the “fifth highest rate of femicide” when compared to 83 other nations.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, femicide and violence against women in Brazil is highly racialized and dependent on social class— in fact, in 2003 the “murder rate of black women was 23 percent higher compared to their white female counterparts” and ten years later, in 2013 “the homicide rate of black women was 67 percent higher compared to the homicide rates of white women.”<sup>27</sup> Coming to terms with the influence of violence on the lives of Brazilian women makes it viable to investigate the specific ways in which female political participation is constrained by acts of aggression and brutality.

Femicide and other forms of violence against women imprint themselves as being a cost associated with political participation. An example of this can be discerned when looking at the circumstances surrounding the recent assassination of Marielle Franco— a Rio city councilwoman and human rights activist.<sup>28</sup> Franco, a lesbian woman of color, was “shot dead by assailants [...] while returning from an event focused on empowering young black women.”<sup>29</sup> It is commonly accepted by the masses and the media that “Franco was targeted for being a human

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<sup>24</sup> Meneghel, Stela Nazareth, and Vania Naomi Hirakata. "Femicides: Female Homicide in Brazil." *Rev Saúde Pública*, 2011. Accessed March 20, 2018.

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2c3b/d2c81b76897d634be55231fd752ebf8cd132.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> "Brazil Passes Femicide Law to Tackle Rise in Gender Killings." Reuters. March 10, 2015. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-femicide-women-s-rights/brazil-passes-femicide-law-to-tackle-rise-in-gender-killings-idUSKBN0M61YO20150310>.

<sup>26</sup> "What Does It Mean to Be a Woman in Brazil? The Answer Will Surprise You." World Bank. Accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/03/08/ser-mujer-brasil>.

<sup>27</sup> Gonçalves, Juliana. "Femicide in Brazil Is Directly Linked to Race and Class, According to Researchers." *Brasil De Fato*. November 08, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2017/11/08/femicide-in-brazil-is-directly-linked-to-race-and-class-according-to-researchers/>.

<sup>28</sup> Times, The New York. "In Brazil, 1,000 Protest Murder of Rio De Janeiro Councilwoman." *The New York Times*. March 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/18/world/americas/marielle-franco-rio-de-janeiro-protest-brazil.html>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

rights defender, a politically engaged favela resident, and, perhaps most of all, a successful black woman” who was actively attempting to change and challenge the politics of her nation.<sup>30</sup> Franco’s assassination, a likely “act of retaliation by those she criticized” highlights the dangers faced by women in the sphere of politics and the trade-off that exists— political participation and representation can come at the cost of security.<sup>31</sup> Women in Brazil who attempt to challenge the status quo are punished for their efforts and are therefore limited in number. The impact of violence is immense and far-reaching because the “social representations of [marginalized] women [and] their role as victims” serves “to keep them passive and confused about violence” influencing their day to day and defining their “womanhood in society” in both the social and political context.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, violence hinders female activity in the political world because it removes women from it— death and abuse erases their input and their opinions. The dehumanization of the female position in society leaves political rule to men: subjecting women to a political existence that at its best misunderstands their needs and wants, and at its worst threatens, silences, and kills. While the evidence presented shows that political activity is costly for women, many individuals may contest this evidence— believing that women have appropriate political representation and that the current state of affairs within Brazil facilitates women and their political endeavors.

A commonly held belief is that in recent times, Brazilian politics has welcomed women into the fold, removing the costs that previously impeded them and their advancement in the realm of politics. This notion is rooted in the fact that prior to her impeachment and removal from office, Dilma Rousseff was elected in 2011 to serve as Brazil’s first female president and was reelected in 2014.<sup>33</sup> Despite its abrupt end, Rousseff’s presidency in one of Latin America’s most prominent nations with one of the “fastest growing economies” for many individuals

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<sup>30</sup> Soifer, Raphi, Federal University of Rio De Janeiro, and Teatro De Operações. "Military Rule in Rio's Favelas: What Marielle Franco Died Fighting." CityLab. March 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2018.

<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/03/military-rule-in-rios-favelas-what-marielle-franco-died-fighting/555881/>.

<sup>31</sup> Wilson, David A. "The Assassination of Marielle Franco and the Dawn of Brazil's New Civil Rights Movement." OkayAfrica. March 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.okayafrika.com/marielle-franco-police-murder/>.

<sup>32</sup> Ribeiro De Faria, Daniele, and Andrésa Helena De Lima. "Black Women And Femicide In Brazil: Violence In Its Two Faces." *Gender, Human Rights And Activisms Proceedings Of The Fifth International Congress In Cultural Studies*. Accessed March 20, 2018. <http://estudosculturais.com/congressos/vcongresso/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/black-women-and-femicide-in-brazil-violence-in-its-two-faces.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Wallenfeldt, Jeff, and Michael Ray. "Dilma Rousseff." Encyclopædia Britannica. March 15, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dilma-Rousseff>.



symbolized a change in Brazilian ideology and political life— a marker for a more equal future.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the position of President being held by a woman in Brazil for a relatively lengthy period of time, for some paints the nation as a stable and highly functional democracy— one that is ahead of its Western counterparts such as the United States. Beyond the position of president, “women’s representation as national lawmakers and Cabinet ministers has [also] grown” across Latin America— the number of female lawmakers has increased by almost 10% when compared to data from the 1990s and women filling the role of cabinet ministers “has nearly tripled over the past 25 years.”<sup>35</sup> While these statistics and gains appear to be significant, it is possible that they are merely superficial— that they are not likely to be “signs of permanent progress toward sustained female influence in politics.”<sup>36</sup> This is the case as “attitudes toward female leadership” and “trends toward greater representation for women do not necessarily have their foundation in firm or immutable egalitarian values” instead, it seems that “support for female leadership, especially among men is context-dependent and thus prone to reversal.”<sup>37</sup> For example, most male attitudes across Latin America are “influenced by elite cues” a process through which men are encouraged to vote for and include female candidates only because they are endorsed by male politicians in positions of power.<sup>38</sup> This logic can be applied to Rousseff and her presidency as her relationship with Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula)— regarded as the “Most Popular Politician on Earth” with “approval ratings of about 80%” upon leaving office — potentially influenced the opinions of voters across Brazil, making Rousseff’s presidency possible.<sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> The existence of elite actions undermines the potential for sustained success for female politicians as the absence of said elite cues or cues that “fail to promote women’s political

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<sup>34</sup> Morgan, Jana, and Melissa Buice. "Latin American Attitudes toward Women in Politics: The Influence of Elite Cues, Female Advancement, and Individual Characteristics." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 4 (November 2013). Accessed March 20, 2018. doi:10.1017/S0003055413000385.

<sup>35</sup> Morgan, Jana. "Political Exclusion Lingers for Women in Latin America." *The Washington Post*. May 15, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2018. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/15/political-exclusion-lingers-for-women-in-latin-america/?utm\\_term=.2ff76d1f4a85](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/15/political-exclusion-lingers-for-women-in-latin-america/?utm_term=.2ff76d1f4a85).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> "Elite Cues or Social Cues? The Formation of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy." *Epicenter*. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://epicenter.wcfia.harvard.edu/blog/elite-cues-or-social-cues-formation-public-opinion-foreign-policy>.

<sup>39</sup> "Brazil's Lula: The Most Popular Politician on Earth." *Newsweek*. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20101229032256/http://www.newsweek.com/2009/09/21/the-most-popular-politician-on-earth.html>.

<sup>40</sup> "Lula Leaves Office as Brazil's 'most Popular' President." *BBC News*. December 31, 2010. Accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-12097490/lula-leaves-office-as-brazil-s-most-popular-president>.

credibility can erode or stymie men's support for women in politics."<sup>41</sup> Additionally, female political success comes at a cost to men. This is the reality as increased opportunities for women leads to a perception of decreased opportunities for men. As a result, it is clear that women being able to attain high levels of political power in Brazil is not indicative of actual societal and political change. To achieve female representation that is substantive and not context based a need exists to reduce the costs that hinder female political participation— ideological and institutional reform is required. Furthermore, women are needed across all positions within politics— a woman placed in the highest station with little to no female support in Congress and local government is unlikely to make genuinely egalitarian decisions. There are other arguments that also aim to put forth the image of Brazilian society as one that drives women forward in the domain of politics, championing their success and presence.

Many individuals posit that the “rights of women are enshrined in law, and there are no formal legal barriers to women's political participation”— making the costs of political participation either nonexistent or lowering them.<sup>42</sup> In the context of Brazil, many individuals believe that the gender quota laws currently in place are enough to ensure the presence of women within the political sphere. The notion that Brazilian law endorses female political activity is a dangerous dismissal of all the other factors that influence the political participation and representation of women. Furthermore, this argument intimates that all women need is the establishment of laws to thrive politically. This not only puts the blame on women for their lack of political participation but also moves towards erasing the social ills and societal constructs that plague Brazilian women. Furthermore, the law in Brazil only serves to aid women in the most casual ways. The quota system and other legal structures currently in place are ineffective because they are not and never have been “a threat to men's power in politics.”<sup>43</sup> Patriarchal structures, as a result, are left unimpeded, and women are left unrepresented and unable to engage politically. Addressing these counter-arguments lends further credence to the idea that women are expected to pay in some way, shape, or form in order to have a hand in politics.

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<sup>41</sup> Morgan, Jana. "Political Exclusion Lingers for Women in Latin America." *The Washington Post*. May 15, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2018. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/15/political-exclusion-lingers-for-women-in-latin-america/?utm\\_term=.2ff76d1f4a85](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/15/political-exclusion-lingers-for-women-in-latin-america/?utm_term=.2ff76d1f4a85).

<sup>42</sup> "Chapter 3." United Nations. Accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter3.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> Moura, Paula. "Do Quotas for Female Politicians Work?" *The Atlantic*. October 10, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/do-quotas-for-female-politicians-work/381320/>.

Furthermore, responding to opposing arguments sheds light on the notion that women do not have access to the same quantity of social and political capital as men— making them poorer in comparison to their male counterparts across all demographics and standard measurements.<sup>44</sup> Scrutinizing the evidence and assessing contradictory explanations allows for an understanding of the importance and weight of the subject matter. Covering all the possible angles of inspection ensures that no argument goes ignored, and only serves to strengthen the proposition that political life is costly for women in Brazil.

The analysis and the evidence explored exhibits that Brazil as a nation poses many political challenges to women. It implores individuals to think deeply about the conditions present within the nation— encouraging an investigation that goes beyond the superficial. The research undertaken, and the dissection of the costs faced by women adds value because it reveals that there is an explicable reason behind the absence of women in the political sphere in Brazil. Furthermore, the investigation conducted allows for a comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced by women— which further allows for the formulation of ideas regarding the destruction and removal of said barriers. While the conditions for women in Brazil seem dark and bleak, a realization is required to grow and move forward. The concrete claims made throughout about the expenses paid by women demands action and condemns complacency. Furthermore, the value added by this work is that it outlines the major institutions and discrepancies that hinder women— making it possible to institute corrective action. For example, the open list system is identified as being a prominent obstacle to the political presence of women. This act of recognition allows for the formulation of a new or altered electoral system that supports women— for instance, the institution of a closed list PR system that allocates women and men in an evenly matched manner where no single group is able to subdue and suppress the other. This research also acts as a primer for other research because it defines the costs of political participation to women in a very general sense. Additional research can be conducted based off of the evidence presented that potentially looks into the influence of media on female political activity and the costs associated with the media representations of politically active women. Reviewing the research conducted and the contribution of this work to the larger

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<sup>44</sup> Lowndes, Vivien. "Getting on or Getting By? Women, Social Capital and Political Participation." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6, no. 1 (March 23, 2004): 45-64. Accessed March 20, 2018. doi:10.1111/j.1467-856x.2004.00126.x.

body of information present facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the matter at hand and paves a path forward.

Bringing together all the information provided explicitly communicates that Brazilian political life is an expensive realm for women to explore and exist within. The costs that exert themselves on Brazilian women very clearly do not impact male politicians within the nation—explaining and accounting for the absence of women from politics in a country where women constitute the more considerable portion of the whole. The high prices faced by women across Brazil act to not only limit their political participation and representation, but also move towards delegitimizing their positions within society as a whole. The excessive costs that women are expected to deal with are undoubtedly pervasive throughout all layers of Brazilian society—hurting and impeding women throughout the nation. That being said, some limitations obstruct certain facets of this argument. For example, it is very challenging to discern the true value of some of the costs and whether or not all the costs are universally important and relevant. The cost of bodily autonomy is difficult to measure and quantify as different women have different attitudes regarding children and child-rearing. Further exploration of the topic and experimental research might make it easier in the future to quantify these aspects—making the research, on the whole, more reliable and credible. This work and the research conducted is also constrained by access to resources and the scope of the study in its totality. Research with a broader scope, performed by an individual with a greater base of knowledge would likely illuminate more issues in greater detail. That being said, the statements made, and the analysis conducted serve to help answer questions about political life in Brazil and bring up further questions and puzzles. For example, what are the long-term implications of using orange candidates? All in all, the research presented not only clarifies the notion that costs exist for Brazilian women but creates a deeper connection to the topic—spurring thought, insightful questions, change, and even more research.

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