

A SNAPSHOT OF  
**THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN  
IN BRAZIL  
2019**





# **A Snapshot of the Status of Women in Brazil: 2019**

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# Letter from the Editors

Anna Prusa & Lara Picanço

The status of women in Brazil is emblematic of the country's internal tensions. Brazil is a country where a woman can become president; yet it also has one of the highest rates of femicide—the killing of women due to their gender—in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The 2018 elections underscored the growing polarization of this issue in Brazil. Even as a record number of women ran for office and won seats at all levels of government, the election also ushered in a far more conservative administration that has sought to reinforce traditional gender roles. Moreover, the contributions of women to Brazilian society are not part of the current national debate on Brazil's political and economic agenda—yet greater gender equality strengthens economic resilience and boosts growth.<sup>2</sup>

In an effort to support the inclusion of women and gender issues in the policy debate, the Wilson Center's Brazil Institute asked experts and practitioners from a range of disciplines to reflect on the status of women in Brazil. Our first report of this kind, *A Snapshot of the Status of Women in Brazil: 2019*, is a collection of ten short essays that offer a window into the progress women have made as well as the challenges that must still be confronted to ensure that all women in Brazil are healthy, safe, and able to participate (and lead!) with dignity in all spheres.

This report highlights the two-sided nature of the story of gender equity in Brazil. Women have made enormous strides in recent decades and the long-term trend in most areas is positive. However, in Brazil, as in much of the world, progress towards gender equality has been incremental and remains incomplete.

As the essays in this report discuss, important challenges persist. Globally, Brazil ranks 95th out of 144 countries on the issue of gender equality: down 13 places since 2006.<sup>3</sup> Women's health and safety remain low priorities for the government despite the need for focused action to reduce high rates of maternal mortality and domestic violence (S. Barnes and Brysk). Evidence suggests that policies to support women are not well enforced: in politics, for example, implementation of a gender quota has been accompanied by a rise in fake female candidacies and fewer votes for women

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<sup>1</sup> "Open Data About Femicide Brazil," Open Government Partnership, April 12, 2019, <https://www.open-governmentpartnership.org/stories/open-data-about-femicide-brazil>.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre-Richard Agénor and Otaviano Canuto, "Gender Equality and Economic Growth in Brazil: A Long-Run Analysis," *Journal of Macroeconomics* 43, issue C (March 2015): 155-172, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jmacro.2014.10.004>; Paula Tavares and Otaviano Canuto, "No Women, No Growth: The Case for Increasing Women's Leadership in Latin America," *Latin America & Caribbean: Opportunities for All* (World Bank blog), August 17, 2018, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/no-women-no-growth-case-increasing-women-s-leadership-latin-america>; and Érica Fraga, "Salário mais baixo para as mulheres reduz o crescimento do país," *Folha de S.Paulo*, March 8, 2018, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2018/03/salario-mais-baixo-para-as-mulheres-reduz-o-crescimento-do-pais.shtml>.

<sup>3</sup> "Data Explorer: Global Gender Gap Report 2018 – Brazil," World Economic Forum, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/data-explorer/#economy=BRA>.

(Gatto); and although the rate of femicide is declining among white women, it is rising among black and indigenous women.<sup>4</sup>

Women are increasingly entering the workforce, but remain underrepresented in positions of power. Mirroring trends elsewhere in the world, just 16 percent of Brazilian CEOs are women.<sup>5</sup> Although women are responsible for 70 percent of total scientific publications, they make up just 14 percent of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences (De Negri). And within the judiciary, the percentage of women judges decreases significantly as you move up through the judicial hierarchy (Machado). More generally, women—especially women of color and poor women—continue to face double standards about their abilities outside of traditionally “feminine” work (Silva). Brazilian women earn, on average, 23 percent less than men—and that gap widens to 36 percent for women with university degrees.<sup>6</sup> Black women face additional barriers, as they contend with not only gender prejudice but also racial stereotypes (Pavão).

Feminism—the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities—remains a polarizing topic in Brazil. Recent Datafolha polling found that only 43 percent of female respondents and 49 percent of male respondents see feminism as beneficial to society. However, a majority of the Brazilian population supports feminist causes, such as equal pay. Researchers argue that they do not identify with feminism due to negative stereotypes associated with the term and reinforced by conservative rhetoric.<sup>7</sup>

Brazilian women have made important gains, demonstrating that progress is possible. Although violence against women is alarmingly high, there is at last a growing consensus that domestic abuse is not a private matter but a crime: Brazil passed in 2006 the landmark “Maria da Penha” law against domestic violence and in 2015, a law that recognizes femicide as a distinct crime to the Brazilian penal code and strengthens penalties. The formalization of labor rights in recent decades, including for domestic servants, has provided women with important legal protections (despite the need for better enforcement). Women are now the most educated demographic in the country.<sup>8</sup> Roughly 39 percent of managers in the public and private sectors are women—not yet parity, but an indication that women are finding ways to rise through

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<sup>4</sup> Lara Haje, “Feminicídio cresce entre mulheres negras e indígenas e diminui entre brancas, aponta pesquisadora,” Chamber of Deputies, July 11, 2018, <https://www2.camara.leg.br/camaranoticias/noticias/DIREITOS-HUMANOS/565155-FEMINICIDIO-CRESCE-ENTRE-MULHERES-NEGRAS-E-INDIGENAS-E-DIMINUI-ENTRE-BRANCAS,-APONTA-PESQUISADORA.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Tatiane Oddone Constantini, “Women Take More CEO Positions in Brazil,” LinkedIn, July 2, 2018, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/women-take-more-ceo-positions-brazil-tatiana-oddone-correa-costantini/>.

<sup>6</sup> César Muñoz, “Women’s Work for Free in Brazil,” Human Rights Watch, October 11, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/11/womens-work-free-brazil>.

<sup>7</sup> Ana Estela de Sousa Pinto, “Feminismo é mais bem avaliado entre homens que entre mulheres, diz Datafolha,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 14, 2019, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2019/04/feminismo-e-mais-bem-avaliado-entre-homens-que-entre-mulheres-diz-datafolha.shtml>.

<sup>8</sup> Of the population that is 25 and over, 20.7 percent of white men and 23.5 percent of white women have obtained higher education. For black or pardo men and women, the number is only 7 percent and 10.4 percent respectively. See: IBGE, “Estatísticas de Gênero: Indicadores sociais das mulheres no Brasil,” *Estudos e Pesquisas: Informação Demográfica e Socioeconômica*, n. 38 (August 2018), [https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101551\\_informativo.pdf](https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101551_informativo.pdf).

the ranks.<sup>9</sup> Women were elected to public office at record numbers in 2018, and are gaining ground in the private sector and the military (Gatto, Trabucco, and Milani). Moreover, the fight against corruption, in dismantling traditional male-dominated patronage networks, could create space for women to gain greater political power (T. Barnes). These are all positive developments on the road toward true gender equality.

As Alison Brysk persuasively argues, “women are both vulnerable and threatening to traditional masculine roles” during periods of modernization and globalization; essentially, women’s status is most precarious during the push for greater equality. Seen through this lens, the current conservative backlash on gender issues is itself a sign of the progress Brazilian women have already made in stepping beyond traditional gender norms.

The challenge now is to consolidate and build on these gains. Several of the essays in this collection offer concrete proposals to shift gender imbalances, from a case study on hiring practices at Azul Brazilian Airlines to the need for more educational campaigns to encourage girls to become scientists—or generals. Gender equity is important not only for women, but for society. Evidence suggests there are innumerable benefits to allowing men and women to share in a country’s resources and opportunities—benefits reaped by society at large. Closing the gender pay gap alone could add roughly 0.2 percentage points to Brazil’s annual GDP growth rate.<sup>10</sup> Women’s skills and distinctive perspectives enrich economies, policymaking, and the way companies do business.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, equal treatment of men and women, boys and girls, leads to stronger relationships, healthier child development, and more peaceful communities.

Despite the challenges, women are driving positive change for themselves and for Brazil. On March 29, the United Nations named Brazilian Lieutenant Commander Marcia Andrade Braga its Military Gender Advocate of the Year, in part for her work to integrate women into peacekeeping patrol teams. Lt. Cdr. Braga argued that “It is not about wanting a woman on the mission just to have equality. It’s because it produces results...[and] when you show the results, the prejudice begins to fade.”

As this report highlights, the status of women—and gender equality more broadly—is far from a niche issue: it touches every facet of society, with profound implications for governance, economic growth, public security, and more. Support for greater equality—whether through programs designed to increase gender bias awareness in the military, to improve maternal health outcomes, or to encourage more young women to pursue science—will also drive progress toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous future for all Brazilians.

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<sup>9</sup> Bruno Villas Bôas, “Mulheres ocupam apenas 38% dos cargos de chefia no brasil, aponta IBGE,” *Valor Econômico*, March 7, 2018, <https://www.valor.com.br/brasil/5368813/mulheres-ocupam- apenas-38-dos-cargos-de-chefia-no-brasil-aponta-ibge>.

<sup>10</sup> Agénor and Canuto, “Gender Equality and Economic Growth in Brazil.”

<sup>11</sup> “2013 Gender Inequality in Emerging Markets: Findings & Recommendations,” The Emerging Markets Symposium, <https://ems.gtc.ox.ac.uk/ems-2013/findings-recommendations>.

# Stuck in the Middle: Gender Violence in Brazil

*Alison Brysk*

Over a third of Brazil's women have suffered battering and sexual assault: over the past generation, almost 100,000 women have been killed, most by partners. As the Inter-American Human Rights Commission reminds us, Brazil accounts for 40 percent of the femicide in Latin America—with a rising rate of four women killed each day in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the victimization of vulnerable groups including women of color, indigenous women, and LGBTQ has increased. Women's rights advocates and political activists have been threatened, harassed and even assassinated; for almost a year it seemed no charges would be brought for the murder of black Rio de Janeiro councilwoman Marielle Franco. The recent notorious case of a sixteen-year old whose gang rape went viral online has highlighted the pervasiveness of impunity and "rape culture."

Gender violence is an urgent human rights issue, as it hurts tens of millions of Brazilian women and often children as collateral victims. Beyond its impact on individuals and families, pervasive violence also damages communities, national development, public health, and rule of law. Partner violence and public sexual assault alike are associated with Brazil's ongoing struggle with HIV/AIDS, as well as substance abuse, gang violence, and trafficking.

Why do we see this shocking rate of gender violence in a middle-income democracy, recently headed by a woman president, with rising rates of women's education and labor? Brazil's vigorous women's movement spearheaded the passage of the 2006 landmark Maria da Penha domestic violence legislation that includes

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<sup>1</sup> "IACHR Expresses Deep Concern Over Alarming Prevalence of Gender-based Killings of Women in Brazil," Organization of American States, Press release, February 4, 2019, [http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2019/024.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/024.asp).

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special police, courts, and reporting mechanisms, which has resulted in increased reporting and limited improvement in some sectors. Similarly, Brazil further criminalized femicide in 2013, and broadened legal attention and social services for sexual assault. But recent governments have cut back the Women's Ministry and already woefully inadequate shelters, militarized policing, and weakened gun laws—even though firearms are used in half of femicides. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has revived misogynist discourse; he publicly told a female opposition-party deputy that he would not rape her because she did not deserve it.<sup>2</sup>

Along with such policy reversals, recent social trends in Brazil have intensified the formula that seems to drive gender violence in middle-range modernizing societies worldwide: a toxic brew of growing inequality, rising insecurity, contested globalization, and conflicted urbanization. From Brazil to India, Russia, Turkey, and the Philippines, the response is too often a public embrace of populist demagogues who espouse patriarchal values, privilege economic allies, undermine democratic institutions, and unleash state violence to crack down on political challengers and civil society. In this scenario, much of the violence comes from men who are economically and physically insecure—and culturally cued to displace their frustration onto women who are both vulnerable and threatening to traditional masculine roles. In all of these societies stuck in the middle of conflicted modernization, gender violence is rising, despite long-term women's empowerment.<sup>3</sup>

How can we begin to address these problems? There are worldwide lessons for best practices to respond to gender violence when there is political will to support them: from “one-stop” integrated medical-legal service centers for domestic violence to community participation in planning safe cities. But gender security is more than a policy problem—rule of law, the struggle against impunity and corruption, and the protection of human rights defenders are essential to reporting, prosecuting, and advocating for women's safety. Development matters: the conflicted globalizing countries of Latin America have the world's highest inequality and highest crime, and the region must find sustainable pathways to more equitable growth to confront a range of social pathologies. Last but not least, social movements and social media must build upon burgeoning efforts to engage modernizing men and rising youth to rethink toxic gender roles and imagine a society of freedom from fear and self-determination.

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<sup>2</sup> *Editor's note:* In November 2003, in an incident caught on camera by media outlet RedeTV, then-Congressman Jair Bolsonaro told fellow Congresswoman Maria do Rosário: “... *jamais iria estuprar você porque você não merece*” (I would never rape you, because you do not deserve it). Bolsonaro repeated the statement in remarks on the floor of the House in 2014, after Maria do Rosário called the military dictatorship (1964-1985) an “absolute disgrace”; and he later told *Globo* that she did not deserve to be raped because she was “*muito feia*” (very ugly).

<sup>3</sup> Alison Brysk, *The Struggle for Freedom From Fear: Contesting Violence Against Women at the Frontiers of Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

# Maternal Health: Persistent Challenges Continue to Endanger Women's Lives

Sarah B. Barnes

Despite Brazil's history of progressive legislation and protections focused on women's maternal health, Brazilian women continue to face significant challenges to their health, safety, and rights.

In the 1980s, Brazil established programs to support women's health and humanize labor and delivery, and Brazil's 1988 Constitution established health as a fundamental right and a responsibility of the state.<sup>1</sup> These efforts to acknowledge women's rights to health should have put Brazilian women on a path to equitable and quality care that respects their individual needs around sexual, reproductive, and maternal health, but much more needs to be done before they can arrive at their destination.

Three important maternal health issues continue to put women's lives at risk in Brazil today: high maternal mortality rates, the over- and under-usage of caesarean section (CS) deliveries, and the high incidence of unsafe abortions.

**Maternal mortality rates are five to ten times higher than in countries with similar economies.<sup>2</sup>**

Brazil's maternal mortality rate (MMR) is forty-four maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, far above the rate of twenty maternal deaths per 100,000 live births that the World Health Organization (WHO) deems acceptable.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maria do Carmo Leal, et al., "Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health in the 30 Years Since the Creation of the Unified Health System (SUS)," *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* 23, no. 6 (June 2018): 1915-1928, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232018236.03942018>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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In Brazil, 68 percent of maternal deaths are due to unspecified obstetric conditions; hypertensive disorders due to pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum; and labor and delivery complications. Another 13 percent of maternal deaths are due to complications predominantly related to the postpartum period, and complications from unsafe abortions contribute to up to 12 percent of maternal deaths.<sup>4</sup>

These numbers can be explained in part by delays that slow women's access to care: the delay in deciding to seek care, the delay in traveling to a care facility, and the delay in receiving quality care once at a facility. Poor women and women living in remote areas face the greatest challenges in seeking and receiving quality care. Brazil's high rate of CS and unsafe abortions contribute to high rates of maternal death.

### **Brazil has one of the highest rates of caesarean section deliveries in the world.**

Almost 50 percent of all deliveries occur by caesarean section in Brazil and an alarming 80-90 percent of deliveries in private hospitals are done by CS.<sup>5</sup> For comparison, WHO advises that CS be performed only when medically necessary and that the CS rate in any population be kept under 15 percent, due to the many life-threatening complications that accompany them.<sup>6</sup> With 84 percent of CS deliveries being performed prior to the onset of labor, it is clear women are electing CS deliveries despite the documented risks.<sup>7</sup> Studies have also connected physician coercion and even instances of forced CS deliveries to explain the high rates.<sup>8</sup>

Caesarian deliveries, in Brazil, are associated with an almost threefold higher risk of postpartum maternal death compared with vaginal delivery mainly due to deaths from postpartum hemorrhage and anesthesia complications.<sup>9</sup>

Yet in stark contrast, some women are dying in Brazil due to a lack of access to medical professionals who can perform a CS. Women in remote areas or poorer women

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<sup>3</sup> Katia M.S. Figueiredo, et al., "Actions of Primary Health Care Professionals to Reduce Maternal Mortality in the Brazilian Northeast," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 17 (2018): 104, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0817-x>.

<sup>4</sup> Do Carmo Leal, et al., "Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health."

<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Slutsky, "Brazil: The Challenge of Maternal Healthcare," *Yale Global Review*, May 9, 2016, <https://yaleglobalhealthreview.com/2016/05/09/brazil-the-challenge-of-maternal-healthcare/>; and Michaelleen Doucleff, "Rate of C-Sections is Rising at an 'Alarming' Rate, Report Says," *NPR*, October 12, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/10/12/656198429/rate-of-c-sections-is-rising-at-an-alarming-rate>.

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization, "Caesarean Sections Should Only Be Performed When Medically Necessary," News release, April 10, 2015, <https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/caesarean-sections/en/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ana Paula Esteves-Pereira, et al., "Caesarean Delivery and Postpartum Maternal Mortality: A Population-Based Case Control Study in Brazil," *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 4 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0153396>.

<sup>8</sup> Slutsky, "Brazil: The Challenge of Maternal Healthcare"; and Vanezza Barbara, "Latin America Claims to Love Its Mothers. Why Does It Abuse Them?" *New York Times*, March 11, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/11/opinion/latin-america-obstetric-violence.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Esteves-Pereira, et al., "Caesarean Sections."

are less able to procure a CS even when medically necessary because they cannot pay for travel to or deliveries in private hospitals.<sup>10</sup>

**More than one million illegal abortions occur each year in Brazil.**<sup>11</sup>

Brazil's strict anti-abortion laws allow abortions in only certain cases of rape, fetal abnormality, or life-threatening pregnancy. Illegal abortions, which tend to be unsafe, accounted for the majority of the over 200,000 hospitalizations that were due to abortion-related complications in 2015.<sup>12</sup> Since abortion is restricted, it is hard for women to receive proper post-abortion care, which can affect the severity of post-abortion complications.

Unreliable alternative methods of family planning have fueled the high rate of unsafe abortion in Brazil. Although 78 percent of women who live with their partners say they use modern contraception, 46 percent of pregnancies are unintended, which points to the need for other methods of contraception, such as long-acting reversible contraceptives, which are often not available through Brazil's health insurance system.<sup>13</sup>

As of October 2018, the Supreme Court was considering allowing elective abortions up to twelve weeks of pregnancy. The government's strong shift to the right after the 2018 elections suggests that the courts remain the best chance for progress on this issue. Unless social movements, similar to those that sparked reforms in the 1980s, can reignite Brazil's dedication to women's health and lives, Brazil's current political crisis, economic recession, newly inked austerity policies, and politics aimed at reversing the right to health may well further reverse any gains made over the past 30 years.

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<sup>10</sup> Slutsky, "Brazil: The Challenge of Maternal Healthcare."

<sup>11</sup> Do Carmo Leal, et al., "Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health."

<sup>12</sup> Slutsky, "Brazil: The Challenge of Maternal Healthcare."

<sup>13</sup> Ana Luiza Vilela Borges, et al., "Women's Reproductive Health Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices in Relation to the Zika Virus Outbreak in Northeast Brazil," *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190024>.



# Women in Politics

*Malu A. C. Gatto*

In October 2018, women were elected to the Brazilian national legislature in record numbers. Despite this, when it comes to women's political representation, Brazil still ranks last in Latin America, placing 133<sup>rd</sup> globally. Currently, women occupy 15 percent of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate (with seventy-seven and seven seats, respectively). In stark contrast, more than 40 percent of seats in the national legislatures of Bolivia, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua are occupied by women.

Women's low presence in office in Brazil is not restricted to the national level, also permeating other levels of government: only one of Brazil's twenty-seven governors is a woman (Fátima Bezerra, from the state of Rio Grande do Norte), with women also only occupying 15 percent of the seats in state assemblies and 13 percent of the 64,673 municipal-level elected offices.

Brazil's failure to elect more women despite its neighbors' successes has often been attributed to a mismatch between open-list proportional representation and gender quotas. First adopted in Argentina in 1991, gender quotas reserve a certain share of candidate nominations for women. In just under three decades, the policy has spread across regional borders, adopted in all Latin American countries to date (except for Guatemala), and becoming fundamental in transforming the gender composition of political bodies throughout the region.

Brazil first applied a 30 percent quota for women's candidacies in the 1996 municipal elections, expanding it to national elections for the first time in 1998.

Elsewhere in the region, the success of quotas have been attributed to strong policies. In Brazil, the policy's weak design and the use of informal institutions to circumvent the spirit of the law have largely undermined the quota's effects. For example, until 2009, the law only required parties to reserve 30 percent of the

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available candidate nominations for women. Because coalitions could submit lists with up to 150 percent of the number of seats (e.g., ten available seats means a list could have up to fifteen candidates), they could comply with the quota by submitting shorter candidate lists with a lower share of women and argue that empty nomination slots were being reserved (i.e., set aside) for additional women.

Starting in 2010, when the revised legislation establishing that parties had to fill 30 percent of nominations with women candidates came into effect, parties responded by nominating *laranjas*: phantom candidacies with the sole aim of complying with the quota, or candidates who indeed had the goal of being elected but who were not given administrative or financial support to make their campaigns viable.

Recognizing how informal institutions prevented the effective application of the quota law, the cross-partisan Women's Caucus submitted numerous proposals to amend the quota legislation and close the law's loopholes. After failing to make substantial advances in Congress, women appealed to the judiciary. In 2018, judges' interpretation of overlap between the newly created campaign fund and the gender quota resulted in the reservation of 30 percent of public campaign funds for women's candidacies—a sum that corresponds to R\$510 million (\$135.7 million).

This decision could have transformed the dynamics of candidate nomination by ensuring that women were not only placed on candidate lists, but were also given the resources to conduct effective campaigns and viably compete.

Yet, soon after the 2018 elections, new scandals surrounding women's candidacies emerged. This time, however, besides using phantom candidacies to comply with the quota legislation without increasing competition, these candidacies were also used to fraudulently re-route women's campaign funds to party leaders. Most prominently, four female candidates from President Jair Bolsonaro's party (Social Liberal Party, PSL) allegedly received a total of R\$279,000 (\$74,221) from the public campaign fund, but did not carry out campaigns. This example showcases parties' continued defiance of the gender quota and their attempt to favor certain candidacies over others by concentrating resources among small groups of party elites, who tend to be male.<sup>1</sup>

Brazil's ongoing crisis of representation and voters' lack of trust in political elites, however, suggest that changes in electoral preferences can have transformational results in spite of parties' lack of support for women's candidacies.

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's note:* This example also shows the persistence of corruption in Brazilian politics and political parties, and the ways in which laws often are twisted for the illicit gain of those in power at the expense of those who lack power, including women.

Although the successes of the far-right have been widely discussed, far less attention has been dedicated to the inauguration of Brazil's most gender and ethnically diverse Congress. While still overrepresented, white men now occupy 62.5 percent of seats in the Chamber of Deputies (down from 72 percent in 2014), representing a loss of forty-eight seats.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-six of those forty-eight seats have been taken-up by women—including Joênia Wapichana (from the northern state of Roraima), the first indigenous woman to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>3</sup> The number of self-identified feminists in Congress also increased (from twenty-seven to thirty-six seats), suggesting that a Feminist Caucus (in addition to the Women's Caucus) could be an important player in future legislative debates.

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<sup>2</sup> White men correspond to less than 25 percent of the Brazilian population. See: Murilo Roncolato, et al., "130 Anos Pós-Abolição: Os Obstáculos Na Trajetória Da População Negra," *Nexo Jornal*, May 12, 2018, <https://www.nexojornal.com.br/especial/2018/05/11/130-anos-pós-abolição>; and Carolina de Assis, Marília Ferrari, and Natália Leão, "Câmara Dos Deputados Terá Menos Homens Brancos e Mais Mulheres Brancas, Negras e 1ª Indígena Em 2019," *Gênero e Número*, October 8, 2018, <http://www.generonumero.media/camara-dos-deputados-tera-mais-mulheres-brancas-negras-e-indigena-e-menos-homens-brancos-em-2019/>.

<sup>3</sup> De Assis, Ferrari, and Leão, "Câmara Dos Deputados Terá Menos Homens Brancos."



# A View from the Private Sector: Closing Our Gender Gap at Azul

*Carolyn Trabuco*

Azul was created out of a desire to be the best. The best airline, the best service, the best company. Our initial challenge was to assemble a leadership team, originally from the United States, who could fuse the entrepreneurial spirit of Americans with the adroit managerial excellence of Brazilians. Together we would create something brand new and exciting in aviation.

Aviation is a challenging business with a less than stellar reputation for gender parity. Simultaneously capital intensive, labor intensive, fuel intensive and service intensive, a commercial airline can only perform at its best when its people perform at their best. This means men and women, at all levels of the company and in all career paths.

At Azul we have taken on the challenge of increasing the presence of women in leadership across the company. Women as a whole represent just under 50 percent of our total workforce, but they make up over 80 percent of our flight attendants and only 3 percent of our pilots.

In 2012, Azul had one female director (roughly the equivalent of other companies' vice presidents) out of eighteen. As a member of the Board of Directors, I was well positioned to advocate for closing the gender gap. David Neeleman, our company's founder and John Rodgerson, our current president embraced the idea. Azul adopted a company-wide priority to identify and develop female leaders. Twice a year we sit down together to review Azul's overall progress. We discuss who each of our leaders is, how she or he was identified, and where they might be able to rise within the company. I ask our vice presidents who the

Carolyn Trabuco has over twenty-five years of success recognizing and creating opportunities as a direct investor, an advisor, a board member and as an advocate. She has been serving as a Board Member and Chair of the Compensation Committee for the largest dual-listed publicly traded commercial airline in Brazil, Azul Brazilian Airline, since 2009. She is a financial expert with both domestic and international financing, investing, operating and M&A experience in local stand-alone and large multi-divisional, multi-national companies. Currently, as Founder and CEO of Thistle-down Advisory Group, she advises and advocates for companies, including MGM Resorts International, who are looking to establish business operations in Connecticut.

up-and-comers are and, if the information is not volunteered, who the women are specifically. One question I ask when reviewing external senior hires is how many other candidates were considered for the position and how many were women. I request that, when possible, at least three women are considered for each position. This increases the likelihood that (1) the women candidates are seen as individuals instead of as “the woman candidate,” and (2) the level of competition for the position is higher overall. The goal is not only to address gender disparity, but also to build a pipeline of future executive leadership in a way that supports organizational resiliency and growth.

Today about one-third of Azul’s leadership is women—a 600 percent increase in six years. Women directors currently lead a number of Azul’s functional divisions: airport operations, cargo, marketing, legal, aircraft finance, financial reporting, and human resources. We do not yet have a woman among the six highest executive positions, but I am confident that we will see a woman rise to that level at Azul. We have been working toward it for years.

What have I learned from Azul’s ongoing effort to reduce gender disparity?

It takes time. It requires attention. It is best done in harmony with the organization’s culture, corporate strategy and vision. It also helps to have at least two champions at the top—a member of the Board of Directors and a president of the company who are willing to work together in partnership to see it through.

The greatest lesson is that we are becoming a better company because of this effort. I have observed a few changes at Azul as more women have obtained leadership roles. While our corporate style remains the same—ambitious, agile, service oriented, innovative—conversations have become more broad-ranging. New feedback loops have emerged that seek ways to improve cross functionally. We are looking at our internal programs through the eyes of women and men who may evaluate programs differently and are becoming more equally positioned to do something about it. As we learn about internal areas for improvement, we quickly look for opportunities to apply that new knowledge to our external facing areas. We get smarter. We get better. This is the benefit of diversity overall.

# Women in Science: Still Invisible?

*Fernanda De Negri*

Imagine a conference at the most important scientific society in Brazil. Several speakers (all men) are chatting while waiting for their turn to go up on stage. One woman, acquainted with several of the speakers, is also there, mingling and waiting to watch the panel. Another man joins the group and is introduced one by one to the people around him, with one exception: the woman, although acquainted, is absolutely ignored by the scientist leading the introductions. Overcoming women's invisibility is a daily challenge for each and every one of us, especially in areas such as science, where your career hinges on being recognized for your intellectual contributions to your field.

Today, women are around 54 percent of doctorate degree-holders in Brazil, which represents an impressive increase of 10 percent in the last two decades.<sup>1</sup> This figure is similar to that of developed countries such as the United States, where in 2017 women earned 53 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded in the country.<sup>2</sup> In Brazil, as well as in the rest of world, however, this participation varies a great deal according to the area of knowledge. In life and health sciences, for instance, women are the majority of researchers (more than 60 percent), while in math and computer science they represent less than 25 percent.

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<sup>1</sup> CGEE, "Mestres e Doutores 2015 - Estudos da demografia da base técnico-científica brasileira," <https://www.cgee.org.br/web/rhcti/mestres-e-doutores-2015>.

<sup>2</sup> Niall McCarthy, "Women are Still Earning More Doctoral Degrees than Men in the U.S. [Infographic]," *Forbes*, October 5, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/10/05/women-are-still-earning-more-doctoral-degrees-than-men-in-the-u-s-infographic/#4b29f85345b6>.

Fernanda De Negri is a research leader at the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) and holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). She was visiting researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2015 and 2017 and at Harvard University in 2017. She was economic adviser to the Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (2008) and head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Office of the Ministry of Science and Technology (2010-2012). She was also director (2012-2017) and deputy director (2009-2010) of Ipea. She is the author of numerous articles and books, including a book she organized on productivity in Brazil that was a finalist for the prestigious Jabuti Prize in 2014.

Despite being the majority of people with doctorate degrees in several areas, Brazilian women are not so well represented at higher career levels. A recent study showed that women make up only 24 percent of recipients of a Brazilian government grant awarded to the most productive scientists in the country.<sup>3</sup> Underrepresentation in leadership positions also persists: female scientists are only 14 percent of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences.

One could raise the hypothesis that, for several reasons (such as still being the primary caregiver for children), women are less productive than men. However, when it comes to scientific output, several figures show that Brazilian women outperform their male colleagues. An article published in *Nature* magazine a couple years ago found that women were responsible for almost 70 percent of total publications of Brazilian scientists between 2008 and 2012, one of the highest ratios in the world.<sup>4</sup> The impact of the work of men and women is also comparable, as shown in a more recent study about gender in the global research landscape, by Elsevier, which takes into account the number of citations of these papers.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the lack of women in top scientific positions is the result of a deeper issue in the country, caused by the same factors that explain why women's salaries are lower or why there are few women on the boards of companies, or even in high-level government positions. Perhaps women are not yet recognized as capable and competent by those responsible for selecting the candidates who get access to these positions: in most cases men. Perhaps, we are still invisible, just like the woman at that conference.

Overcoming this invisibility requires the commitment of society as a whole. More initiatives like the ongoing educational campaigns in Brazil that encourage girls to become scientists, as well as programs to discuss unconscious bias in selection processes are needed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Somente 14% de membros da Academia Brasileira de Ciências são mulheres," *Galileu*, August 8, 2018, <https://revistagalileu.globo.com/Ciencia/noticia/2018/08/somente-14-de-membros-da-academia-brasileira-de-ciencias-sao-mulheres.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent Larivière, et al., "Bibliometrics: Global Gender Disparities in Science," *Nature*, December 11, 2013, <https://www.nature.com/news/bibliometrics-global-gender-disparities-in-science-1.14321>.

<sup>5</sup> Elsevier, *Gender in the Global Research Landscape* (2017), <https://www.elsevier.com/research-intelligence/campaigns/gender-17>.

<sup>6</sup> *Editor's note*: For example, the project Meninas na Ciência (Young Women in Science) aims to attract young women to careers in science and technology (S&T) and encourage them to become agents of Brazil's scientific and technological development. The project includes graduate training on the dissemination of S&T through teaching astronomy, robotics, and physics in public schools. The project also aims to do away with gender stereotypes by raising awareness of the role of women in society. For more information, see <http://www.revistagenero.uff.br/index.php/revistagenero/article/view/744/411> and <https://www.ufrgs.br/meninasnaciencia/>.

# Women in the Fight Against Corruption

Tiffany D. Barnes

Although corruption in Brazil is widespread, penetrating all levels of government, recent high-profile scandals have put graft at the center of Brazilian politics. When reflecting on women's involvement in politics, and how politics affects women's daily lives, it is therefore critical to consider both women's role in combating corruption, and what women can gain from curbing corruption in Brazil.

## Are Women More Likely to Combat Corruption?

A growing body of research indicates that women politicians may be less likely to engage in corruption owing to their higher levels of risk-aversion and their status as political outsiders who lack access to the patronage networks necessary to sustain practices of corruption.<sup>1</sup> This trend is at odds with what we recently observed at the highest level of politics in Brazil. Indeed, although Dilma Rousseff's administration oversaw a series of anti-corruption reforms in an effort to restore perceptions of government legitimacy in the wake of ongoing corruption scandals, Rousseff later faced corruption allegations herself, contributing to her eventual impeachment. This series of events leaves us with little evidence that Rousseff was less associated with corruption than her male predecessors.

In the case of Brazilian local governments, by contrast, municipalities governed by women are about 30 percent less likely to engage in corruption such as fraud,

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<sup>1</sup> Justin Esarey and Gina Chirillo, "'Fairer Sex' or Purity Myth? Corruption, Gender, and Institutional Context." *Politics & Gender* 9, no. 4 (2013): 361-389, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X13000378>; and Elin Bjarnegård, *Gender, Informal Institutions and Political Recruitment: Explaining Male Dominance in Parliamentary Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Tiffany D. Barnes is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Kentucky. She received her PhD from Rice University in 2012. She researches a range of topics including comparative political institutions, representation, corruption, gender and politics, and Latin American politics. Her book, *Gendering Legislative Behavior* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), won the Alan Rosenthal Prize from the Legislative Studies Section of the American Political Science Association in 2017. Her other peer-reviewed work appears in journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Governance*, and *Politics & Gender*.

over-invoicing, or diverting funds from social programs to public or private goods.<sup>2</sup> So, why do women mayors combat corruption in Brazil? Probably because mayors are subject to random audits. Those implicated in corruption receive reduced federal fiscal transfers, which ultimately diminishes their probability of reelection.<sup>3</sup> In other words, they are held accountable.

Indeed, recent cross-national research indicates that higher levels of women in government are only associated with lower levels of corruption in democracies where politicians are held accountable for corruption.<sup>4</sup> Thus, for women's representation to lead to lower levels of corruption on the national political stage in Brazil, there need to be stronger political institutions that increase electoral accountability.<sup>5</sup>

### **What Can Women Gain by Combating Corruption?**

Women may have more than men to gain both economically and politically by combating corruption. First, corruption stifles economic development, perpetuates inequality, and depletes resources for public services. Corruption thus disproportionately affects poor citizens. As women—and particularly women of color—are over represented among the poor and as the head of single parent households in Brazil, women are more likely to suffer the economic consequences of corruption.

Second, corruption may disproportionately limit women's access to services necessary to fulfill their basic needs and makes them vulnerable to sexual extortion. Women in Brazil are less likely than men to report being asked for a bribe by a police officer, a government employee, or someone in their workplace.<sup>6</sup> One explanation for these gender differences is that men are asked to pay bribes more often because they are more likely to be exposed to settings where bribes are solicited.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, schools are the only arena where women are more likely to report bribe solicitations, and women are more active in this arena. An alternative explanation is that men are viewed as more willing or able to pay a bribe. For

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<sup>2</sup> Fernanda Brollo and Ugo Troiano, "What Happens When a Woman Wins an Election? Evidence From Close Races in Brazil," *Journal of Development Economics* 122 (September 2016): 28-45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2016.04.003>.

<sup>3</sup> Fernanda Brollo, "Why Do Voters Punish Corrupt Politicians? Evidence from the Brazilian Anti-corruption Program," *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2141581>. Accessed at: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/fbrollo/whospunishing\\_online.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/fbrollo/whospunishing_online.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Justin Esarey and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, "Women's Representation, Accountability and Corruption in Democracies," *British Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 3 (July 2018): 659-690, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123416000478>.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie Schwindt-Bayer, "Does the Presence of Women in Politics Reduce Corruption in Latin America?" Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, Issue Brief, July 29, 2016. [http://schwindt.rice.edu/pdf/publications/schwindtbayer2016\\_LAI\\_Baker.pdf](http://schwindt.rice.edu/pdf/publications/schwindtbayer2016_LAI_Baker.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> These differences are statistically different using a two-tailed t-test. Data are from the 2016 Brazil wave of the Latin American Public Opinion Project. See: "Data Sets," Latin American Public Opinion Project, Vanderbilt University, <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/raw-data.php>.

instance, more Brazilian men than women agree that bribes are sometimes justified (12.4 percent to 9.5 percent, respectively). And their higher socioeconomic status relative to women's means they are more likely to be viewed capable of paying bribes. The notion that women are unwilling or unable to pay bribes limits their access to basic services and makes them vulnerable to sexual extortion in lieu of bribes.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, women stand to gain politically. Corruption reinforces male dominated patronage networks that perpetuate women's exclusion from politics. A study of seventy-six democracies, including Brazil, from 1990–2010, demonstrates that women are less likely to be elected in democracies with entrenched patterns of corruption.<sup>9</sup> With that said, women who do gain access to the ballot may have some electoral advantages, as survey research indicates citizens are less likely to suspect women of corruption, particularly in contexts where women are viewed as political outsiders and perceived as less willing to incur the risk of being caught.<sup>10</sup> However, in the wake of corruption scandals, women politicians may be held to higher standards, and hence punished more harshly, than men.<sup>11</sup>

Women are thus more likely to incur both higher rewards and higher costs when it comes to political and economic corruption.

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<sup>7</sup> Frédéric Boehm and Erika Sierra, "The Gendered Impact of Corruption: Who Suffers More? Men or Women?" Chr. Michelsen Institute, U4 Brief 9 (2015), <https://www.cmi.no/publications/5610-the-gendered-impact-of-corruption>.

<sup>8</sup> Transparency International, "Corruption and Gender in Service Delivery: The Unequal Impacts," Working Paper 2 (2010), [https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/working\\_paper\\_02\\_2010\\_corruption\\_and\\_gender\\_in\\_service\\_delivery\\_the\\_unequal](https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/working_paper_02_2010_corruption_and_gender_in_service_delivery_the_unequal).

<sup>9</sup> Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer. 2018. "Estimating Causal Relationships Between Women's Representation in Government and Corruption," *Comparative Political Studies* (March 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830744>.

<sup>10</sup> Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu, "Gender Stereotypes and Corruption: How Candidates Affect Perceptions of Election Fraud," *Politics & Gender* 10, no. 3 (2014): 365-391, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X14000221>; and Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu, "Women Politicians, Institutions, and Perceptions of Corruption," *Comparative Political Studies* 52, no. 1 (2019): 134-167, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018774355>.

<sup>11</sup> Ryan E Carlin, Gregory J. Love, and Cecilia Martínez-Gallardo, "Security, Clarity of Responsibility, and Presidential Approval," *Comparative Political Studies* 48, no. 4 (March 2015): 438-463, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414014554693>.



# Gender Equity on the Bench and Before the Law

Tainá Machado de Almeida Castro

If you were to picture a judge—in Brazil or in the United States—who would come to mind?

Although women represent 51.4 percent of the Brazilian population, they are a minority in positions of power. Women account for just 38 percent of all judges: not negligible, but well below the OECD average of 54 percent of professional judges.<sup>1</sup> In private legal practice, the number is more encouraging: women make up 45 percent of the Brazilian Bar Association.<sup>2</sup>

Brazil has made some progress in recent years to secure women's rights, passing a new law to fight domestic violence; increasing sentences for femicides; and implementing a quota to encourage women's participation in politics, but women's access to senior-level positions has been slow.<sup>3</sup>

According to a 2018 CNJ report, the number of woman judges consistently decreases as you move up the judicial hierarchy (consistent with trends worldwide).<sup>4</sup> In the early stages of their careers, women represent 44 percent of all judges. At the appellate court level, women are just 23 percent; and the Superior Court

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<sup>1</sup> Conselho Nacional de Justiça (CNJ), *Perfil Sociodemográfico dos Magistrados Brasileiros 2018*, <http://www.cnj.jus.br/files/conteudo/arquivo/2018/09/49b47a6cf9185359256c22766d5076eb.pdf>; and OECD, "Women in the Judiciary: Working Towards a Legal System Reflective of Society," March 2017, <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/women-in-the-judiciary-working-towards-a-legal-system-reflective-of-society.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, *Quadro Quantitativo por Gênero de Advogados*, <https://www.oab.org.br/institucionalconselhoconselho/quadroadvogados>.

<sup>3</sup> Law 11.340/2006, [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_Ato2004-2006/2006/Lei/L11340.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2004-2006/2006/Lei/L11340.htm); Law 13.104/2015, [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_Ato2015-2018/2015/Lei/L13104.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2015-2018/2015/Lei/L13104.htm); and Law 12.034/2009, [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_Ato2007-2010/2009/Lei/L12034.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2009/Lei/L12034.htm).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.K/20 (New York: United Nations, 2015), 119, [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015\\_chapter5\\_t.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015_chapter5_t.pdf).

Tainá Machado de Almeida Castro is a criminal lawyer in Brazil. She holds a Bachelor's of Laws from Centro Universitário de Brasília and completed her graduate studies in Criminal Law and Criminal Proceedings at Instituto de Direito Público (IDP). She also holds an M.A. in Regional Studies - Latin America from Columbia University where she focused her studies in Latin American politics, public policy, and the anti-corruption agenda.

of Justice currently has five women in its thirty-three seats.<sup>5</sup> The first woman to reach the Supreme Court, of only three to date, was nominated in 2000. Currently, just two women sit on the Supreme Court out of eleven justices—this same court has had more than 150 male justices in its history.

To be named a judge in Brazil, the candidate must first pass a highly competitive and rigorous exam—a challenging, but gender-impartial bar. However, to be promoted to the highest levels of the judiciary, she needs more than knowledge of the law. She must have an impeccable reputation and understand how to network and navigate politics, since the Senate is responsible for approving judges to the upper levels of the Brazilian judiciary. To this end, it matters that the Brazilian Senate itself lacks diversity (with seven female senators out of eighty-one), as research shows that people tend to hire candidates similar to themselves, not only in terms of sex and race, but also in terms of culture and experience.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, female judges and other professional women in Brazil continue to face a double standard about their ability to juggle motherhood and a career, their personal appearance, their competence, and leadership capacity.<sup>7</sup> These and other gender expectations are a detriment to female candidates being considered for a position, especially at managerial and senior levels. This further explains why the number of woman judges decreases as you move closer to top-ranking judicial positions.

Yet, this issue is not solely about increasing the numbers. Democracy must be representative of the population and diversity on the bench is a requirement. Diversity brings new perspectives to judicial decision-making (reducing the likelihood of biases), as well as greater legitimacy to the decision-making process. People are more likely to respect decisions if they feel represented.<sup>8</sup> It is in court that decisions are made on fundamental human and civil rights. The key to avoiding narrow thinking and impartiality in decision-making is to vary the composition of the decision-makers. Speaking at a public hearing before the Supreme Court on the issue of abortion, Supreme Court Justice Cármen Lúcia Antunes Rocha emphasized: “This is a space of freedom and, in this hearing, we are guaranteeing the principle of plurality...all opinions are worthy of being heard and of being believed, even if we differ, since one only differs from what one knows.”<sup>9</sup> It is

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<sup>5</sup> CNJ, *Perfil Sociodemográfico dos Magistrados Brasileiros 2018*.

<sup>6</sup> Lauren A. Rivera, “Hiring as Cultural Marching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms,” *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 6 (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0003122412463213>.

<sup>7</sup> See: Lygia Gonçalves Costa Hryniewicz and Maria Amorim Vianna, “Women and Leadership: Obstacles and Gender Expectations in Managerial Positions,” *Cad. EBAPE.BR* 16, no. 3 (July/Sept. 2018), [http://www.scielo.br/pdf/cebape/v16n3/en\\_1679-3951-cebape-16-03-331.pdf](http://www.scielo.br/pdf/cebape/v16n3/en_1679-3951-cebape-16-03-331.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Nienke Grossman, “Sex on the Bench: Do Women Judges Matter to the Legitimacy of International Courts,” *Chicago Journal of International Law* 12, no. 2, article 9 (2012): 647, <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cjil/vol12/iss2/9>.

<sup>9</sup> Supremo Tribunal Federal, “Audiência Pública: Interrupção Voluntária da Gravidez,” ADPF 442, Relatora Ministra Rosa Weber, 17, <http://www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/audienciasPublicas/anexo/TranscrioInterrupvoluntriadagravidez.pdf>. The original Portuguese remarks were: “Este é um espaço de liberdade e que, nesta audiência, estamos garantindo o princípio da pluralidade na vida em sociedade...todas as opiniões são dignas de serem ouvidas e de serem acreditadas, ainda que seja para delas divergir, pois só se diverge do que se conhece.”

therefore only when men and women from diverse backgrounds equally participate in the decision-making process that we can ensure inclusive governance and development. The current lack of gender equity and representation on Brazilian courts and in other offices of power thus matters for political engagement.<sup>10</sup>

The path to equality is long, but there are concrete steps that the Government of Brazil can take to support women in the judiciary. Education about how gender biases affects recruitment can reduce bias and inequality and help women receive consideration for senior positions and appointments, and establishing quotas can prove effective in ensuring female participation in decision-making.<sup>11</sup> The OECD encourages mentorship programs and independent monitoring of outcomes as other decisive measures for a more diverse judiciary.<sup>12</sup> Now is a pivotal time for change. Underrepresented groups are engaging more than ever, with women demanding equal opportunities and assuming a greater role in Brazilian society. Representation on the bench is an essential part of ensuring women's equal access to their constitutional rights and to justice.

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<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey A. Karp and Susan A. Banducci, "When Politics is Not Just a Man's Game: Women's Representation and Political Engagement," *Electoral Studies* 27, no. 1 (2008): 105-115, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2007.11.009>; and Sonia Bhalotra and Irma Clots-Figueras, "Health and the Political Agency of Women," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 6, no. 2 (2014): 164-97, <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.6.2.164>.

<sup>11</sup> Shelley J Correll, "SWS 2016 Feminist Lecture: Reducing Gender Biases in Modern Workplaces: A Small Wins Approach to Organizational Change," *Gender & Society* 31, no. 6 (2017): 725-750, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0891243217738518>; and Rohini Pande and Deanna Ford, *Gender Quotas and Female Leadership* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9120>.

<sup>12</sup> OECD, *Women in the Judiciary: Working Towards a Legal System Reflective of Society*, 2017, <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/women-in-the-judiciary-working-towards-a-legal-system-reflective-of-society.htm>.



# Racism, Sexism, and Modern Slavery\*

Mércia Consolação Silva

Brazil is known for its cultural and demographic diversity, for its joy and peaceful coexistence between all people: *um país de festa* (a country of celebration)! Looking closely, however, there are still historical maladies that need to be confronted and resolved, so that we can become what we imagine ourselves to be. Elements of institutional racism and sexism still operate on a daily basis in Brazil, via the economic exploitation of labor in the global supply chain, exploitation that can be characterized as analogous to slavery and child labor.

Environmental preservation, decent working conditions, and the protection of human rights are part of international governance agendas and the business strategies of global companies. Our export products must follow new regulations and compliance policies, whether issued by governments or companies, in order to remain important players in complex global supply chains. This includes promoting decent working conditions and combating and eradicating its antithesis: modern slavery and child labor.

Labor has had an essential role in the formation of societies since time immemorial, and is fundamental for human development. The locus of work is the basis of support for individuals and the collective. For the Brazilian population, the particular nature of the interaction between the world of labor and its subjectivities, in the formation of its character, was extremely marked by inequality among ethnic and racial groups (especially between blacks and whites), and also by the financial

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\* Editor's note: This essay was translated from its original Portuguese by the Brazil Institute. The Portuguese version is included on pages 30-31.

Mércia C. Silva is director of InPACTO, a national pact that involves private sector in the public and private agenda to eradicate slavery in supply chains. She has worked for over fifteen years as a coordinator and researcher on programs designed to monitor labor rights, sustainability, and environmental issues in national and multinational companies in Brazil. As a consultant for the International Labor Organization (ILO), Silva wrote a handbook on ILO Conventions to help unions negotiate with companies in 2008, which has been published around the world. From 2006 to 2007, Silva was a Fulbright Scholar as a "Hubert Humphrey Fellow" of the U.S. State Department at the University of Maryland. She holds an M.A. in Political Science from the University of São Paulo (USP).

and symbolic hierarchy of the type of work being done. The jobs performed by white men and women were and continue to be better paid and more valued than jobs performed by black men and women. This is the result of nearly 400 years of exploitation of slave labor.

Racism and the symbolic experiences of work defined our unequal state of affairs and created a vicious feedback system of racism and socioeconomic inequality. Work defines social class, identity, and character according to the various networks and symbolisms involved in the act of working.

Combating modern slavery as well as child labor will be essential to building a country with greater dignity and better working conditions for all men and women. Data indicates that most people freed from work comparable to modern slavery are black or *pardo*.<sup>1</sup> Most women who work as domestic servants [maids] do not have their rights respected, are black or *pardas*, have low levels of education, and are on the threshold of being considered modern slaves. The most recent executive order to combat slave labor creates specific procedures for the liberation and assistance of maids, whether they are Brazilian or foreign nationals.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the exploitation of slave labor affects about 40 million people worldwide, with 71 percent of these victims being women, who are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation.<sup>2</sup> In Brazil, the statistics still do not depict the full scope of this challenge, since data for sexual exploitation are not included in the statistics of workers freed from slave labor in value chains. We still have a long way to go.

Data from the 2018 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) indicates that women remain in more vulnerable conditions and that their work [is perceived as] less socially and symbolically valuable in relation to men, with 21 percent of women working in education, health and social services; 19 percent in sales and repairs, and 14 percent in domestic service, the locus of work commonly considered the extension of feminine domestic and care labor. Pay for women remains 28 percent lower than that of men. White women earn 70 percent more than black women. Brazil's current labor distribution shows that 47 percent of women work jobs in the informal sector.<sup>3</sup>

Sexism also operates in the opposite direction: men are not allowed to complain

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's note:* The term *pardo* generally refers to Brazilians of mixed-race heritage. In 2010, in the most recent census, 44.2 percent of Brazilians identified as *pardo*.

<sup>2</sup> International Labour Office, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2017).  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575479.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos, "PEC 06/2019: as mulheres, outra vez, na mira da reforma da Previdência," Nota Técnica, no. 202 (March 2019): 4, <https://www.dieese.org.br/notatecnica/2019/notaTec202MulherPrevidencia/index.html?page=4>.

about working conditions or exhausting commutes. If they do so, they are considered “less of a man” or “effeminate,” and often succumb to pressure from social groups and recruiters, since “a real man” can endure hard work without complaining.

The idea that there is a hierarchy among people [based on] racism, sexism, or economic factors provides [an explanation for why] there is still work analogous to slavery in Brazil and in the world. Cultural change is necessary, permitting new generations of workers with a sense of dignity and self-worth to create a better Brazil for everyone!

### **Racismo, sexismo e trabalho escravo contemporâneo**

Mércia Consolação Silva

O Brasil é conhecido por sua diversidade cultural e humana, pela alegria e convivência pacífica entre todos: um país de festa! Mas, olhando bem de perto, ainda temos mazelas históricas que precisam ser enfrentadas e resolvidas, para que possamos ser o que o imaginamos. Elementos de racismo e sexismo institucional operam cotidianamente no Brasil, via exploração econômica extrema da mão de obra, caracterizando trabalho análogo ao escravo e infantil em cadeias produtivas globalizadas.

A preservação do meio ambiente, condições dignas de trabalho e ausência de violação de direitos humanos está na agenda internacional governamental e na estratégia de empresas globalizadas. Nossos produtos destinados à exportação, precisam atentar para as novas regulamentações e políticas de compliance, tanto de governos quanto de empresas, para se manterem como importantes player em cadeias globais complexas. O caminho passa por promover trabalho decente, combater e erradicar suas antíteses: trabalho escravo contemporâneo e o trabalho infantil.

O trabalho tem um papel essencial na formação das sociedades desde tempos imemoriais sendo fundamental para o desenvolvimento do ser humano. O locus do trabalho é a base para a sustentação dos indivíduos e do coletivo. A peculiaridade, para a população brasile-

ira, da interação com o mundo do trabalho e suas subjetividades na formação do caráter foi extremamente marcada pela desigualdade entre os grupos étnicos raciais, em especial entre negros e brancos, e também pela hierarquização – financeira e simbólica – do tipo de trabalho realizado. As funções desempenhadas por brancos/as eram e continuam sendo, melhor valorizadas em relação às funções executadas por negros e negras. Resultado da exploração de trabalho escravo por quase 400 anos.

O racismo e as experimentações simbólicas do trabalho definiriam essa situação de desigualdade, gerando um subsistema de retroalimentação tanto do racismo quanto das desigualdades socioeconômicas. O trabalho é definidor do lugar social, identidade e caráter em função das diversas conexões e simbologias envolvidas no ato de trabalhar.

Combater a exploração do trabalho escravo contemporâneo, bem como do trabalho infantil, serão essenciais para a construção de um país com maior dignidade e melhores condições de trabalho para todos e todas. Os dados apontam que a maior parte dos libertos do trabalho análogo ao escravo são pessoas pretas ou pardas. A maioria das mulheres que trabalham como doméstica não têm seus direitos respeitados, são pretas ou pardas, têm escolaridade baixa e estão no limiar de serem consideradas trabalhadoras escravas. Na última edição da portaria governamental de combate ao trabalho escravo cria procedimentos específicos para a libertação e assistência de trabalhadoras domésticas, sejam elas brasileiras ou estrangeiras.

No Mundo, segundo a Organização Internacional do Trabalho, a exploração do trabalho escravo atinge cerca de 40 milhões de pessoas, sendo que 71% dessas vítimas são mulheres, em especial para a exploração sexual. No Brasil, as estatísticas ainda não trazem uma real imagem do desafio, os dados de exploração sexual não se somam com as estatísticas de libertos de trabalho escravo em cadeias produtivas. Ainda temos um longo caminho para percorrer.

Dados da PNAD de 2018 apontam que as mulheres continuam em condições mais vulneráveis e com menor valorização social e simbólica do trabalho em relação aos homens, sendo 21% delas trabalhadoras na educação, saúde e serviços sociais; 19% no comércio e reparação e 14% no trabalho doméstico, locus de trabalho comumente relacionado à “extensão” do trabalho “feminino doméstico e de cuidar”. A remuneração de mulheres segue 28% inferior à dos homens. Mulheres brancas recebem mais de 70% do que recebem as negras. O quadro atual do trabalho da mulher no Brasil aponta que 47% delas estão na informalidade.

O sexíssimo também opera na lógica inversa: aos homens não é permitido “reclamar” das condições de trabalho ou de jornada exaustiva. Ao fazerem isto são considerados “menos homens” “mulherzinha”, e, sucumbem à pressão social do grupo e dos recrutadores, pois “homem que é homem aguenta trabalho pesado sem reclamar”.

A ideia de que há uma hierarquia entre as pessoas baseado no racismo, sexíssimo ou fatores econômicos proporciona que ainda haja trabalho análogo ao escravo no Brasil e no Mundo. É preciso mudar culturalmente, permitir que tenhamos novas gerações de trabalhadores com dignidade e valorizados, para ter um Brasil melhor para todos e todas!

# Women in Combat: The Long Fight to Join the Armed Forces

Livia Peres Milani

The Brazilian Constitution states that it is the president's duty to exercise "supreme command" over the armed forces, so technically and symbolically, Brazil has already had a female commander in chief, Dilma Rousseff—Brazil's first woman president.<sup>1</sup> In reality, however, women are a minority in the armed forces, making up only 8 percent of the military in 2016, and still face restrictions in access to certain military specialties.<sup>2</sup> Despite progress in recent years, there is a long way to go before the Brazilian Armed Forces are numerically proportional and equal when it comes to gender.

Worldwide, the military is one of the most difficult environments for the integration of women in equal conditions. However, among many advanced democracies, there are no longer formal limitations for women in the armed forces, including in the United States, where formal restrictions were eliminated in 2015; and Canada, where they were eradicated in 1989. Compared to many other South American countries, Brazil also lags behind in fully integrating women into the military: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Uruguay no longer restrict women's access to all combat positions.<sup>3</sup>

The integration of women into the Brazilian Armed Forces goes back to the country's democratization process. The navy started to integrate women in 1980, the

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<sup>1</sup> Instituto Igarapé, "Papel feminino nas Forças Armadas não é consenso, mostra pesquisa inédita," Press release, August 11, 2017, <https://igarape.org.br/release-papel-feminino-nas-forcas-armadas-nao-e-consenso-mostra-pesquisa-inedita/>.

<sup>2</sup> Brazil, *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil* (Brasília: Senado Federal, 2016), [https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/518231/CF88\\_Livro\\_EC91\\_2016.pdf](https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/518231/CF88_Livro_EC91_2016.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Renata Avelar Giannini, Maiara Folly and Mariana Fonseca Lima, *Situações extraordinárias: a entrada de mulheres na linha de frente das Forças Armadas brasileiras*, (Instituto Igarapé, 2017), <https://igarape.org.br/mulheres-forcas-armadas/pt/>.

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air force in 1981, and the army in 1992. Initially, women were only allowed to perform non-combat supporting roles, such as administrative and health functions, and were overrepresented in temporary positions. Additionally, women were unable to enroll in the military officers academies. As a result, women faced institutional obstacles to career advancement, as leadership positions are usually granted to graduates of the military academies and those in permanent career tracks.<sup>4</sup> Surmounting these challenges is rare: in 2012, Rear Admiral Dalva Maria Carvalho became the first and only female general officer in the Brazilian Armed Forces.<sup>5</sup>

Addressing some of these obstacles, Brazil recently began to integrate women into combat positions, although they are still barred from a few military occupational specialties. The Brazilian Air Force pioneered this shift by allowing women to enroll in the Air Force Academy and apply for the specialties of *intendentes* in 1996 and aviators in 2003.<sup>6</sup> The other services have followed suit, facilitated by a 2012 law requiring military academies to admit qualified female candidates: the Brazilian Naval School, for example, graduated its first class of female officers in 2017. That same year, the navy began allowing women to serve on naval vessels and to join the Marine Corps.

One woman who joined the Navy eighteen years ago, Lieutenant Commander Marcia Andrade Braga, recently received the 2019 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award for her work increasing gender awareness while a peacekeeper with the UN Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Lt. Cdr. Braga noted that the inclusion of women in peacekeeping forces is important not for optics, but because it produces better security results.<sup>7</sup>

The ongoing integration of women into direct combat positions and their full inclusion in the military academies is essential for the Brazilian military to become more gender-equitable. The 2012 law opening the military academies to women was a significant step forward. And in 2014, the Defense Ministry created an internal gender commission to research and make recommendations regarding the integration of women into the Brazilian Armed Forces and the Ministry itself. These developments show the positive impact policies can have in promoting gender equity, so that women generals and admirals become the norm, not the exception, in the Brazilian Armed Forces.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> “Presença feminina é cada vez maior no meio militar,” Ministério da Defesa, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.defesa.gov.br/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/12854-presenca-de-mulheres-e-cada-vez-maior>.

<sup>6</sup> The *Intendência* is a military occupational specialty in the Brazilian Armed Forces responsible for logistics, including the distribution of supplies, financial management, and other administrative assistance to commanders.

<sup>7</sup> Brazil Institute, “Brazilian Navy Officer Receives UN Gender Advocate Award, Shows Why Women Peacekeepers Matter,” *Think Brazil*, April 12, 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/brazilian-navy-officer-receives-un-gender-advocate-award-shows-why-women-peacekeepers>.

# On the Margins: Black Women, Public Policy, and Black Feminism\*

Claudielle Pavão da Silva

“Now the trash will speak, and speak properly.” It was with this sentence that the black intellectual Lelia Gonzalez broached the subject of how whiteness domesticates and infantilizes black people in her article “Racism and Sexism.”<sup>1</sup> Her analysis of the insistent effort to make black individuals into a subordinate class discussed not only concepts of race, but also of gender.<sup>2</sup> In other words, thirty years ago, the impact of *machismo* on black women’s lives was analyzed from an academic perspective by a black woman intellectual. Feminist reflection and practice is thus no novelty among black Brazilian women.<sup>3</sup> Our steps come from far, and I ask for the blessing of my ancestors.<sup>4</sup>

Black intellectualism has produced innumerable works and reflections on black feminism and the formation of the white race. The scholarly groups created to debate and ponder epistemologies that conceive of black experience in Brazil through the lens of decolonization are diverse. The late Azoilda Loreto, as well as Carla Akrotirene, Carolina Rocha, Djamila Ribeiro, Fernanda Oliveira, Giovana

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\*Editor’s note: This essay was translated from its original Portuguese by the Brazil Institute. The Portuguese version is included on pages 36-37.

<sup>1</sup> Lelia Gonzalez, “Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira,” in *Movimentos sociais urbanos, minorias étnicas e outros estudos*, ed. Luiz Antônio Machado Silva, et al, (Brasília: ANPOCS, 1983), 223-44.

<sup>2</sup> Sueli Carneiro, “Enegrecer o feminismo: a situação da mulher negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero,” *Geledes.org.br*, March 6, 2011, <https://www.geledes.org.br/enegrecer-o-feminismo-situacao-da-mulher-negra-na-america-latina-partir-de-uma-perspectiva-de-genero/>.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, “O que é um nome? Mulherismo, Feminismo Negro e além disso,” *Cadernos Pagu* 51 (December 2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/18094449201700510018>.

<sup>4</sup> Jurema Werneck, “Nossos passos vêm de longe: movimentos de mulheres negras e estratégias políticas contra o sexismo e o racismo,” *Revista da Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores/as Negros/as (ABPN)* [Online] 1, no. 1 (June 2010): 7-17, <http://abpnrevista.org.br/revista/index.php/revistaabpn1/article/view/303>.

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Xavier, Janete Ribeiro, Joice Berth, Luciene Lacerda, Winnie Bueno, and Ynaê Santos are just a few of the women who confront racism and machismo in order to further their intellectual production and pedagogical practices that strive for an anti-racist approach in different fields of knowledge.

Despite the growing number of black people producing important intellectual work, the political context has presented grave setbacks in the social sphere since 2016. The gains from civil rights struggles are faltering with the advancement of projects that question and immobilize affirmative politics, which principally affect the agenda to guarantee rights for black populations. And it is important to consider that it is these black populations, women as much as men, who account for the majority of cases of incarceration, perinatal mortality, obstetric violence, violent death from firearms, and truancy.

The guarantee of rights becomes even more fragile for black populations that intersect other categories. When blackness is linked to precarious socioeconomic conditions, to little or no formal schooling, or when black people do not conform to heterosexual norms, when they practice a non-dominant religion and are thus subject to “religious racism,” or reside in areas where the state apparatus is scarce and under the control of the police or criminal organizations, the experience of being black is even more of a risk. Social vulnerability becomes a precise indicator for the conditions of these populations.

The concept of intersectionality, so well analyzed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in discussing public policies, theorizes on this tangle of categories.<sup>5</sup> This concept causes us to think about the intense dispute that social and racial markers are subjected to. And it is through the use of this concept in Brazilian black feminist studies that the most recent critiques of the reproduction of structural racial privilege in Brazil have been made.

Because identities intersected by different social markers subject black people to different experiences of racism, intersectionality has also underpinned debates over black colorism. The concessions made by whiteness to black women and men with lighter skin, or features closer to the white phenotype, reflect the racial hierarchy in Brazil and the development of a politics of eugenics during the beginning of the twentieth century. Colorism thus also becomes a relevant marker in studies on blackness and whiteness.

Gonzalez’s analysis of domestication, cited previously, shows how this violence—at times symbolic and other times physical—restricts the power of black women to act, and tends to increase during moments of political and economic crisis.

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<sup>5</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–299, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>.

A strong body for manual labor, ready to perform sexual fantasies for someone else, [these] are stereotypes that deprive black womanhood of its humanity, and reinforce the common, subordinate places where black bodies should stay, according to whiteness.<sup>6</sup> With this in mind, the rolling back of affirmative politics contributes significantly to the strengthening of these stereotypes and the further deterioration of living conditions for these women.

In this moment, more than ever before, black feminism needs to be attentive to the demands of women.

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<sup>6</sup> Djamila Ribeiro, *O que é lugar de fala* (Belo Horizonte: Grupo Editorial Letramento and Justificando, 2017).

### **À margem: mulheres negras, políticas públicas e feminismo negro**

Claudielle Pavão da Silva

“Agora o lixo vai falar, e numa boa”. Foi com esta frase que a intelectual negra Lelia Gonzalez abordou a domesticação e a infantilização das pessoas negras pela branquitude no artigo “Racismo e sexismo”. A análise sobre a insistente tentativa de subalternizar indivíduos negros não abordou somente a questão racial, mas também a questão de gênero. Ou seja, há trinta anos o impacto do machismo na vivência das mulheres negras era analisado a partir de uma perspectiva acadêmica por uma intelectual negra. As reflexões e práticas feministas não são novidades entre as mulheres negras brasileiras. Nossos passos vêm de longe, peço a benção às minhas ancestrais.

A intelectualidade negra tem produzido inúmeros trabalhos e reflexões acerca do feminismo negro e da racialização dos brancos. São diversos os coletivos e grupos de estudos acadêmicos criados para debater e pensar epistemologias que considerem a experiência negra no Brasil a partir de um olhar decolonial. Azoida Loreto (in memoriam), Carla Akotirene, Carolina Rocha, Djamila Ribeiro, Fernanda Oliveira, Giovana Xavier, Janete Ribeiro, Joice Berth, Luciene Lacerda, Winnie Bueno e Ynaê Santos são algumas das mulheres negras que atravessam o racismo e o machismo para seguir com suas produções intelectuais e práticas pedagógicas que visam uma abordagem antirracista em diferentes áreas do conhecimento.

Apesar do crescente número de pessoas negras com importantes produções intelectuais, o contexto político tem apresentado retrocessos graves no âmbito social desde 2016. As conquistas advindas de lutas seculares estão esmorecendo diante do avanço de projetos que questionam e inviabilizam as políticas afirmativas, atingindo principalmente as pautas que garantem direitos para as populações negras. E é importante considerar que são essas

populações que ocupam a maioria dos casos de encarceramento – tanto mulheres quanto homens – de mortes de nascituros, de violências obstétricas, de mortes por arma de fogo e evasão escolar.

A garantia de direitos se torna ainda mais frágil para as populações negras que integram outras categorias. Quando a negritude está relacionada a condições socioeconômicas precárias, possuem pouca ou nenhuma formação escolar, ou quando essas pessoas negras não correspondem ao padrão heteronormativo, pertencem a religiosidades não dominantes e sujeitas ao racismo religioso e residem em territórios com escassez de aparelhos estatais e sob o controle policial ou de organizações criminosas, a experiência de ser negro é ainda mais arriscada. A vulnerabilidade social se torna um indicador preciso da situação dessas populações.

É sobre esse entrecruzamento de categorias que o conceito interseccionalidade, tão bem analisado por Kimberle Crenshaw, ao discutir políticas públicas, teoriza. Este conceito nos provoca a pensar sobre a intensa disputa a qual os marcadores sociais e raciais estão submetidos. E é através do uso deste conceito nos estudos feministas negros que tem se baseado as críticas mais recentes aos privilégios raciais estruturais reproduzidos no Brasil.

Uma vez que as identidades entrecruzadas por diferentes marcadores sociais submetem as pessoas negras a diferentes experiências do racismo, a interseccionalidade também tem corroborado nos debates acerca do colorismo negro. As concessões feitas pela branquitude às mulheres e homens negros de tom de pele mais claro ou traços mais próximos do fenótipo branco refletem a hierarquia racial no Brasil e os desdobramentos da política de eugenia do início do século XX. Dessa forma, o colorismo também se torna um marcador relevante nos estudos sobre negritude e branquitude.

A análise de Gonzalez sobre a domesticação, citada anteriormente, demonstra o quanto essa violência – em alguns momentos simbólica, noutros física – restringe o poder de atuação das mulheres negras, e tende a se tornar ainda maior nos momentos de crise econômica e política. O corpo forte para o trabalho braçal, e quente para a realização de fantasias sexuais do outro são estereótipos que esvaziam de humanidade a negritude feminina, e reforçam lugares comuns – e subalternos, em que os corpos negros deveriam estar, segundo a branquitude. Com isso, o retrocesso das políticas afirmativas contribui gravemente para que esses estereótipos se fortaleçam e definham ainda mais a condição de vida dessas mulheres.

Neste momento, mais do que nunca, o feminismo negro precisa estar atento às demandas das mulheres.



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