Violence Against Black Women in Politics: Experiences and Testimonials from Brazil

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Violence Against Women in Politics: An Intersectional Phenomenon

On 14 March 2018, Black City Councilwomen Marielle Franco was assassinated. Elected in 2016, Marielle Franco was executed with her driver Anderson Silva in the center of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second-largest city. This political feminicide[1] (Souza 2020) ignited a prominent debate for Black women aspiring to or participating in the institutional political sphere. Apart from discussing the need to include Black women in political institutions, these women have also been discussing the obstacles they face as they overcome the barriers of an unequal system and make their way into institutional politics. The progressive entry of Black women into politics suggests a crucial question: Who takes care of them now? The question – posed by Anielle Franco, sister of Marielle Franco – has become a central issue for Black women who are inside or aspire to enter the arena of institutional politics. The political feminicide of Marielle Franco remains both a shadow hanging over and an imminent threat to other Black women and human rights defenders. The presence of this specter is intensified by the impunity and negligence of official authorities in responding to a crime that shook the country. The demand for more Black women in politics goes hand in hand with a concern for these women's safety and the possibility for them to exercise their mandates freely.

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to understand the specificity of violence against Black women in politics. For this, we analyzed the testimonials given by Black women politicians in Brazil, followed by their participation in discussions and panels organized in 2021 by political institutions and civil society entities. These discussions were centered on the topic of political violence of gender and race, in which these women were invited to talk about their personal experiences of violence. Adopting the framework of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWIP) developed by Mona Lena Krook (2020), our objective is to highlight the forms this violence takes in the Brazilian context at the intersection of gender and race. In applying this framework, we pursue two main objectives. The first is to offer an overview of the violence against Black women in Brazilian politics, identifying how this phenomenon manifests itself. This quantitative panorama is carried out inductively by applying the framework proposed by Krook (2020, 127-187). The second aim is to observe how the testimonies of Black women politicians go beyond the framework proposed, considering the intersectional specificities of political violence. Intersectionality is an analytical critical perspective that takes the simultaneous articulation of various axes of oppression into account. It is crucial to our case, as we are considering non-White women, crossed by the social markers of race, gender, class, and territory, and

who are affected by forms of oppression that reflect power relations that exceed the gendered matrix of power (Collins/Bilge 2020).

In this contribution, we understand violence as a normalized repertoire of gender domination, which makes aggressions and hostilities against women a reflection of patriarchy as an institution, sustained by the control of women's bodies and the maintenance of its punitive capacity over them (Segato 2006, 2018; Federici 2017). According to Bandeira and Martins (2020), violence against women and gender-based violence is manifested in several ways and extends to different relationships and spaces of coexistence, both private and public, to which politics is no exception. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the global percentage of women in parliaments is 25.9% (IPU 2022), and this gap is, in itself, a reflection of gender-based political inequality and violence. Institutional and professional politics are spheres of power and historically considered a male realm. Political violence functions as a mechanism that prevents women from participating in politics and builds obstacles to their permanence in it.

Understanding and analyzing a specific type of violence that is directed at women participating in politics, whether institutional or not, has been an object of concern in academic, political, and legal debates. Although violence against women in politics is not new, naming it and debating about its occurrence and conceptualization is recent. Concepts vary between "political violence against women" or "gender-based political violence". These terminologies can signify potential differences in framing and scope, the first being restricted to (cis- or transgender) women; the second being open to include violence directed at LGBTQ* politicians (Piscopo 2016).

Violence against women in politics is treated here in a broader and complex sense that accounts for the whole system of depreciation of women's existence in the face of patriarchal, colonial, and hierarchical systems of domination. Within this larger perspective, all forms of inequality and discrimination that transform women's lives into a field of hostilities are forms of violence, whether symbolic, psychological, sexual, economic, or physical.

We are aware that the proposed reflection does not exhaust the possibilities of understanding the phenomenon. Still, it helps us to have a more descriptive understanding of the violence and hostility suffered by Black women as they exercise their political activity.

## Manifestations of Violence Against Black Women in Brazil

We present here two main types of results. First, we demonstrate the findings of our quantitative analysis, where we cross-referenced the statements used for this case study with Krook's typology (2020). Subsequently, we present the quantitative distribution of modes of political violence as they appear in the testimonies, but this time adding, for comparison, the categories that emerged through deductive analysis. For both cases, we also reproduce some excerpts to illustrate some of the main

points arising from the results that account for the specificity of political violence against Black women in Brazil and its intersectional nuances.

Applying Krook's Typology of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWIP)

In Figure 1, we display the frequency of the categories of political violence within the framework of violence against women in politics, as proposed by Krook (2020).

Figure 1: Distribution of Segmented Codes According to the Five Types of Violence Characterized by Krook (2020)
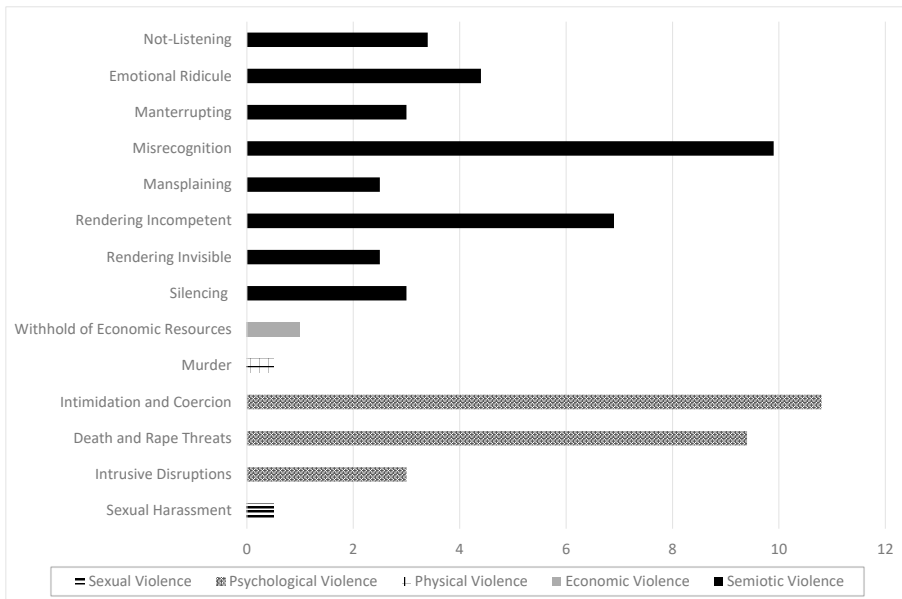
Using only the selected categories, as exhibited in Figure 1, we have verified that the most frequent manifestations of political violence appearing in the analyzed statements are: "intimidation and coercion" with 10.8%, "misrecognition" with 9.9%, and "death and rape threats" with 9.4% of the mentions.

A) Intimidation and Coercion

Among the manifestations under the category of "intimidation and coercion", several types of aggressions are reported: name-calling, messages inciting violence, and propagation of hate speech, many of them through social networks. Carolina Yara, an intersex Black woman, acting as a Co-Councilor in São Paulo, states that her home was attacked by gunfire and sound effect bombs; Renata Souza, an MP in Rio

de Janeiro, reveals that her residential address was made public on social networks. They both identify these attacks as coming from sources external to the political institutions, highlighting how political conflicts in society have a direct effect on the exercise of their political offices.

B) Death and Rape Threats

Within the category "death and rape threats", all the acts of violence reported fall under the variable of death threats. This is a highly critical point in these agents' political existence and the repertoire that is most closely related to the form of violence of "neglect". Death threats have become frequent, ranging from verbal attacks to intercepting actual execution plans. Some of these threats were so severe that the politicians receiving them took drastic measures for protection and security. The Federal MP Talíria Petrone, a Black woman from the same political party as Marielle Franco, had to flee her home and city with her partner and child and now lives under constant police protection. She describes politics as a place of horror:

> It is a horror to have on our backs at least a dozen reports of militia plans to assassinate us; it is a horror to know that a plan by White supremacist groups to kill me has been intercepted.

Another testimony reveals how the political feminicide of Marielle Franco is mobilized as a different repertoire of intimidation. Benny Briolly, a trans Councilwoman in the city of Niterói, reports having received an email, stating she would be assassinated; the perpetrator adding: "just as I killed Marielle". This menace demonstrates how the political feminicide of Marielle does not end with her assassination but is continued and reiterated.

C) Misrecognition

The third most frequently mentioned form of violence is "misrecognition", accounting for 9.9% of the modes of violence reported in the testimonies. This category is a type of symbolic violence. It serves to identify hostilities that mainly transmit the message that political institutions do not belong to specific groups, especially marginalized ones (Krook 2020, 191). In the cases analyzed, alienation appears as the primary mode of misrecognition, as noted by these women in the disparaging gazes they receive. They interpret these gazes as a rejection of their presence in a political power arena, where they supposedly occupy a space that is not rightfully theirs. The description of their first days as politicians reveals another form of alienation that starts at the entrances to institutional buildings and workplaces. One Councilor reports that even after seven months of legislative work, the security guards still stop her as she moves around the building and ask for identification. This type of barrier,

the security barriers, demonstrate the cultural (racist) aspect of politics. The under-lying worldview does not conceive of a Black woman as belonging to and circulating in spaces of power. These unwritten rules can be interpreted at the discretion of those who enforce them.

Next, we present the aggregated results of the measurement we made using the clo-sed categories and the new categories that arise from the deductive analysis of the statements in this case study.

Categories Emerging from Testimonies of VAWIP

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the repertoires of political violence as reported by the testimonials. The manifestations are considered standalone categories and not grouped under the five encompassing categories that Krook (2020) suggested. This shows which manifestations are not included in Krook's detailed typology and how the framework might be enlarged to incorporate other relevant repertoires of violence.

Figure 2: Distribution of Segmented Codes According to Manifestations of Violence
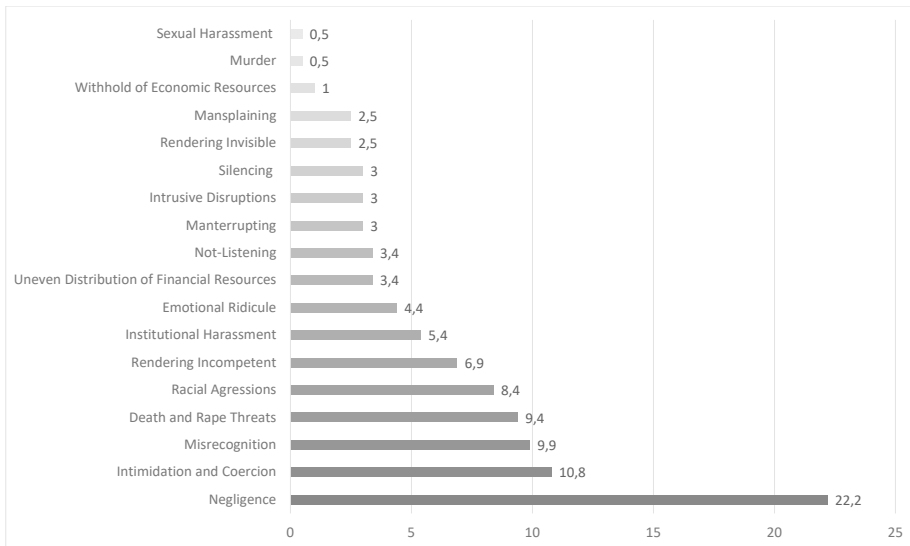
In Figure 2, we observe four repertoires of political violence that do not fit Krook's (2020) typology: negligence, racial aggressions, institutional harassment, and un-even distribution of economic resources. According to the framework adopted for this article, VAWIP is a concept that helps to identify the repertoires of action that contribute to the removal and intimidation of women from engaging in politics. We

were interested in understanding how these mechanisms are being manifested in the political agency of Black women in the Brazilian context. In this way, we explore the relationship between the categories presented here and their contribution to making politics a hostile environment for Black women.

A) Negligence

According to the testimonies, negligence ranks high in the series of concerns Black women have when exercising their political rights and conducting elected mandates. One of the most critical cases is the one of Ana Lúcia Martins, Councilor from the municipality of Joinville, who has received several death threats and uses her own resources to finance private security.

> Today, I have to give up the salary I earn from the City Council to maintain security to move around the city and within my workplace, losing part of my freedom. This is the price we have to pay.

The feeling of being neglected when faced with situations of violence and death threats is a factor that causes fear and insecurity, as we can see in the following account given by Councilor Dandara from Belo Horizonte:

> We only have this feeling of insecurity and fear because we often look around and see no one on our side. We only feel threatened because sometimes our rearguard is weakened.

Why is negligence a problem and manifestation of gender- and racially motivated political violence? Effectively, the "Ley Modelo Interamericana" considers that omission, i.e. a failure to act on political aggressions against women, constitutes in itself part of the phenomenon of violence against women in politics. A study conducted by the Marielle Franco Institute (2021) concludes that the absence of a protocol of care and assistance is one of the main obstacles for Black women in institutional politics. In a similar vein, Pinho (2020), analyzing cases of gender political violence directed at the Ethics Council of the Brazilian Federal Parliament, observes that the central repertoire of this institution is silence. The author concludes that the absence of recognition implies an institutionalized relationship of violation of justice that impedes equal political participation in Brazilian society.

It is essential to emphasize two aspects of negligence. The first is that the fear and insecurity caused by a lack of assistance, the feeling of being left alone, is not unfounded. We verified through the data that threats of death and rape appear with a frequency of 9.4% in the statements considered for this study. The testimonials mention concrete threats, making the recipients take radical measures such as leaving their homes, neighborhoods, cities, and even the country.

In this way, the lack of systematized and substantial assistance against political violence, under the repertoire of negligence, can be considered a relevant manifestation of political violence of gender- and racially motivated violence in the Brazilian political context. This negligence is a substantial risk to the physical and psychological integrity of Black politicians in Brazil.

Negligence turns into a severe concern, especially considering the collective memory around the case of Marielle Franco. Marielle's name was mentioned 81 times during the events considered for this study. These mentions express both a semantic relationship between Marielle and Black women's resistance and the constant presence of Marielle's political feminicide.

The second relevant point that emerges from these mentions of negligence is that the women consider this manifestation of violence to be a form of omission, which they attribute to the state, its institutions, their parties, and male party fellows. When neglect is positioned as a repertoire coming from the state, it signals an institutional issue and the state's incapacity or unwillingness to protect its politicians.

Furthermore, neglect manifests itself as a lack of solidarity from fellow party members and the political parties' failure to respond to the seriousness of racially motivated and gender-based political violence. The following excerpts by Councilors Dandara and Carol Dartora highlight the internal tension between Black women politicians and their political organizations:

> I want to take this opportunity to question our fellows from the left to what extent your solidarity is selective. Because there's that motto, "nobody let's go of anybody's hand", and I want to know how many times the hand of the Black woman was held. Because often, it's not about letting it go; it's about not taking our hand in the first place, which is much more severe.

> (…) there is no care, no preoccupation about how we are and if we are or are not being taken care of. Effectively, care is not for us; all that remains for us is taking care of and not being taken care of.

These declarations show a perception that violence against Black women is not recognized as a problem to be addressed within the party institutions. The testimonies question how far party solidarity goes and what its limits are. This is a critical point, as it demonstrates how political violence is not a phenomenon only because of ideological and programmatic disputes. It is especially effective towards particular bodies and identities, following hegemonic occupation patterns.

In the second statement, the intersection between race, gender, and care is highlighted in a discussion dear to Black feminism that deals with the relation between Black women and care and the different stereotypes of femininity. While there is a prevalent image of women as the fragile sex, as beings that need to be cared for with respect and delicacy, Black women have historically been subjected to slave labor and severe physical punishment just as much as their male enslaved partners (Passos

2021). Sojourner Truth (2020, 3) already pointed to this very different form of being gendered in her seminal provocative speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, when she stated: "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! Ain't I a Woman?" Such intersectional positioning continues to present real challenges for Black women: of (self-)care, of valuing their emotions and recognizing their humanity. This fact demonstrates the importance of paying close attention to how the intersection between gender and race produces specific forms of political relationships that are important to unravel.

B) Racial Aggressions

Krook (2020, 154) suggests the manifestation of sexual violence as one umbrella category that "comprises a host of unwanted behaviors targeting a person's sexuality and sexual characteristics". Through the category of sexual violence, the author typifies violence common to women as a practice of abuse that, from a gender perspective, is an expression of power and male domination over women's bodies.

Similarly, racial violence and aggression focus on race as a structure that organizes certain inequalities and dominant repertoires. In the same direction, but following the intersectional lens, we privileged the analysis of aggressions reported in the considered testimonies according to their relationship with racial discrimination. The manifestations of racial and political violence are differentiated from semiotic violence ("mobilizing semiotic resources – words, images, and even body language – to injure, discipline, and subjugate women", Krook 2021, 187) when observing the racist dimensions of the hostilities observed.

It is essential to mention that much semiotic violence, such as silencing, rendering invisible or incompetent may also contain a racial motivation. According to Jioni Lewis and Helen Neville (2015), many Black women's experiences of discrimination differ from those experienced by Black men and White women. They are the combination of racism and sexism. These experiences, referred to as gender- and racially motivated microaggressions, also include processes of marginalization, silencing, and objectification as a reflection of racism as a structure that intersects the lives and identities of women racialized as non-White. Thus, many acts of violence classified as semiotic may have a racist imprint that can be exploited. For example, the account of Councilor Erika Hilton is illustrative of how the misrecognition of Black women can be identified with typical repertoires of racial discrimination in the Brazilian context:

> It's not a surprise that we hear many reports of Black women in politics who get stopped by security guards; they will be confused with cleaners. I come from a home where all my aunts were domestic workers, and my mother works as a cleaner, but that's not what we're

> talking about. It's a racist, sexist gaze that positions our bodies in a place where we can't
> be portrayed or be seen in the spaces we occupy.

In this statement, misrecognition is directly related to the extended complex of terms about Black women in Brazilian society. Stuart Hall (1997) argues that stereotypes are formulated according to essentialization, reductionism, naturalization of differences, and binary oppositions. The delimitation of these positions is not neutral. Instead, it produces and establishes power and domination relationships that attribute values and hierarchies to diverse social identities.

Studies on cultural representations of Black women in the Brazilian media show that one of the roles most commonly attributed to them is that of a domestic servant (Candido/Junior 2019; Silva 2018). At the same time, such stereotypes do also relate to material, empirical realities. In Brazil, most domestic workers are Black women, which evidences the racial and gendered division of labor (Ávila/Ferreira 2020). But the issue lies precisely in how this specific social representation is linked to a discursive message, the aim of which is to maintain Black women in certain positions, even if symbolically. It ascribes the arenas where these women belong, whether they enter politics or not, and whether they are welcome. When reproduced in the political field, these representations help establish the field's imagination and practices. In this case, it delimits the political space to certain agents with specific characteristics and behaviors, producing further exclusions and inequalities that potentially impact the entrance and permanence of Black women to positions of power.

However, in most testimonies, this direct relationship cannot be inferred; which is why we classify incidents with more evident racist content as racial aggressions. The testimonies point to the repertoire of racist insults received from various sources, within the institution, from other elected officials, and the virtual attacks Black women received in politics. These insults are not qualified in detail in the testimonies considered here, but most are reported as "racist insults".

There are also references to repertoires that deny the existence of racism as an underlying phenomenon that shapes the Brazilian social context or distorts the significance of racism as a structural issue. The testimony of one of the Councilors well illustrates this point. After defending a Black colleague who had been the victim of racist aggressions in the Chamber's plenary, Councilor Lívia Duarte from Belém do Pará reports the following:

> That day I was accused that I always reference the "White man" and the "White population". They say in this, I am practicing reverse racism.

On that occasion, the Councilor was threatened with a reprimand from the House ethics committee. Additional testimonials mention use of the color-blindness discourse, insinuating that it is not necessary to create or propose intersectional approaches to the parliamentary decision-making process.

The denial or downplaying of racism is a practice that represents a barrier to addressing racial inequalities in Brazil. The so-called myth of racial democracy, which creates the image of Brazil as a racial paradise, is one of the most harmful hegemonic discourses that hinders the development of a serious discussion about racism (Guimarães 2001; Pereira 2013). Lélia Gonzales (2020, 220) names this practice "racism by omission" and understands that the attempt to conceal racism as a cultural and structural phenomenon is also a manifestation of racism.

C) Institutional Harassment

Under the umbrella category of psychological violence, Krook (2020, 145) suggests using the typology of "judicial harassment" to talk about spurious legal actions and baseless legal accusations taken against women to attack, weaken, or even remove them from their power. While judicial harassment refers to the use of legal institutions to impose sanctions on women or to activate the police forces against them, we are dealing here with the bureaucratic and regimented apparatuses of legislative or executive entities that create internal sanctions or threats of punishment to these women, but which might not have a judicial character. In the testimonies analyzed for this article, we found no mention of cases of judicial harassment but rather of what we call "institutional harassment". We draw this category from Sarah Ahmed (2020, 125), who uses this repertoire to describe how institutions participate in harassment "by trying to stop complaints about harassment from being made, but also how the resources of the institution are mobilized to increase the pressure on those who are trying to make harassment complaints".

Similarly, the internal complaints of gender-based political violence in the Brazilian National Congress are often rejected or not adequately recognized by the institution's ethics committee. In effect, this commission is composed chiefly of and presided by male politicians. It is an example of the relationship between presence, identity, and ideas and how the descriptive occupation of institutions influences their operating rules (Phillips 1991; Ahmed 2021).

In our specific case, the data demonstrates how the internal bureaucracy of legislative and executive houses act to restrain, harass, and intimidate Black women as they exercise their functions. The statement by Divaneide Basílio from Natal illuminates the importance of understanding how the internal procedures and regulations of political institutions are used as a form of coercion and limitation of the political agency of Black women:

> They use the internal bureaucracy to intimidate us all the time; they think they dominate the bureaucracy; this violence tries to diminish us and silence us in the plenary.

In the previous session, we discussed the case of the Councilor who was accused of reverse racism. This story shows us how internal apparatuses are mobilized as

a form of intimidation. After the accusation, Councilor Lívia Duarte reports the following:

> We have a great ally in the City Council, (…) and he got involved, talked to the guys, and decided not to go to the ethics committee for reverse racism. But I suffered a threat, and it always happens. Almost every day, there is a threat of action by the ethics committee for reverse racism.

Here, the Councilor was accused of having committed a racist insult, in a distortion of the very concept of racism. On top of this, in a process of inversion, the victims are thus criminalized, harassed, and threatened. One further detail reveals something interesting: It took the interference of a male colleague to prevent more violence from being perpetrated. There are many layers of complexity involved in this account, including institutional abuse of power, racism, and sexism, since the woman as a colleague, also elected, does not have the respect of her peers but needs the intermediation of someone who is seen as an equal.

An ethics commission effectively does not have the power to apply judicial sanctions, but rather to mitigate political influence and make future referrals that may have judicial consequences, such as loss of mandates or political rights. It is essential to discuss how institutions' implicit and explicit rules are important in how women and Black women practice their political work and how spaces and institutions are established and regulated, with some ideal types in mind. Understanding how alliances and solidarities are constructed within institutions and how institutional ethics are shaped by the individuals who occupy them is essential.

Knowing how the bureaucratic machine works is a powerful tool for groups that have always been present in professional politics. On the other hand, it is strategic for dominant groups to occupy institutional positions to strengthen their performance and weaken the political effectiveness of competing groups.

Here again, there is a close link to misrecognition repertoires. It is a common complaint of Black parliamentarians to have been denied access to their workplaces during their first days in office. Again, there is a racist component of not understanding Black women as natural members of arenas of power and how this is reflected in the institution's culture. Although it is not an explicit rule, discriminatory cultural views and practices may result in violence and aggression by employees of political institutions, such as security guards or receptionists. Institutional violence may be caused by failing to create regulatory mechanisms to prevent embarrassment and aggression. In other words, the lack of anti-racist and anti-sexist training for employees and members of a political institution can be characterized as institutional violence. This touches on the point of omission, where it is evident that the manifestations of gender-based and racially motivated violence are closely connected.

Therefore, we suggest including "institutional harassment" as a category to measure and identify manifestations of political violence that is motivated by gender and

race, and to take measures for its prevention, to understand the internal functioning of political institutions, and to know what changes need to be made to accommodate plurality and the free exercise of political rights of those whose identities are not commonsensical in decision-making spheres.

D) Uneven Distribution of Economic Resources

In a direct relationship with the umbrella category of economic-political violence, we propose "uneven distribution of economic resources" as a term that more adequately reflects the most relevant form of economic violence affecting Black women in institutional politics. As observed in Table 2, the lack of funding to run competitive political campaigns accounted for 3.4% of the manifestations of violence reported by the testimonies analyzed for this study and for the totality of mentions of violence that could be categorized under "economic violence". Despite the relatively rare mention of a lack of financial resources for electoral campaigns in the data analyzed, we consider this finding central because it relates to one of the structural issues of the electoral political scenario in Brazil (Fabris 2021). In terms of electoral competitiveness and viability, poor access to campaign financing is the major factor negatively impacting electoral chances of candidates in the Brazilian context (Araújo 2013; Sacchet/Speck 2012). When cross-referencing data on electoral resources by gender and race criteria, Black women receive the least campaign resources in all electoral contests at the federal and municipal levels (Campos/Machado 2020).

In her framework, Krook (2020, 182) takes into account the "withholding of economic resources" as a tool that undermines political participation by "restricting resources that are otherwise available to men". However, the issue here is not mainly the withholding of reserved resources but the unequal distribution of resources that impact electoral campaigns and constitute the strongest gatekeeper for Black women to enter politics. The centrality of this factor to the electoral success of Black women justifies creating this variable to better highlight the main obstacles to the entry and permanence of Black women in institutional politics. This specific manifestation affects Black women from the start as one of the biggest impediments to accessing the institutional political sphere. And this is a sensitive matter for these women, as expressed in the following statements, given subsequently by Carol Dartora from Curitiba and Mônica Francisco from Rio de Janeiro:

> For us, to get into this place and manage to get ourselves elected, to have actual conditions to run a campaign, (…) and present our political project within this space that for so long has been contaminated and dominated by a cis-heteronormative Whiteness is a challenge that is not only linked to the campaign, to the electoral fund but a challenge that is linked to our life trajectory.

> We are speaking here about women who sometimes campaigned hungrily, starving. And she had to go on. You either pay the train fare or have a snack. Do you understand? It is real, and I am not saying this: Oh, wow! We were unemployed; we campaigned in the middle of turbulence while we were mourning. One day we had a job, and the next, we were unemployed. This is the reality of many people. I can even say that I was privileged because I had friends and people that helped in any way they could because everyone belongs to the working class.

This account invites us to look at the socio-economic conditions of Black women who decide to take part in the electoral race. Aspects beyond campaign financial resources come into play, as their life stories and social positions offer additional obstacles to their electoral success. A woman who campaigns while taking care of children is often a single parent and responsible for her family. How can this woman stop working to dedicate herself entirely to a political campaign? How can she run any campaign without the possibility of paying for campaign materials? In summary, inequality does not begin with the distribution of exclusive campaign resources but rather with the social status of the woman candidate running for office. With this complexity in mind, we suggest focusing on inequality as a crucial aspect of the economic violence against Black women in politics and as one of the most significant obstacles for these women to enter institutional politics.

Final Remarks

As a result of our analysis, we can formulate the following considerations. First, intersectionality must appear as an integral dimension in the study of violence against women in politics. Our approach reveals the essential methodological contribution of analyzing Black women's experiences and their diagnosis of political violence. An intersectional approach to violence against women in politics must further give centrality to racism as a penetrating structure that is constantly reproduced in the political sphere.

Considering the accounts of Black women in politics helps us to better understand the complexity of gender- and race-based political violence and verify that political violence does not begin or end with the individual action of a third party, that is, the perpetrator of such violence. We propose that the very underrepresentation of Black women in institutional politics is a form of political violence based on gender and race. In this way, all individual or collective actions that further the permanence of underrepresentation may be considered a manifestation of political violence.

In the Brazilian case discussed here, the most often-cited problem in the analyzed testimonies was neglect as a repertoire of political violence. This resonates directly with the assassination of Marielle Franco in 2018 and the lack of judicial and political responses to the case. The repercussion of Franco's murder remains a landmark for the discussion of political violence of gender and race (as well as class and sexuality) in Brazil, and a constant presence, particularly for Black women politicians.

This indicates the urgent need to develop institutional action plans that formulate protocols to prevent gender- and race-based political violence. And we see that violence against Black women in politics follows similar patterns as the repertoires of discrimination and exclusion of Black women in society, such as dehumanization, demeaning, disqualification, questioning their critical and propositional capacity, and rejecting the idea of Black women occupying positions of power.

The intersectional treatment of political violence against women requires broadening the context of such violence. Mona Lena Krook's framework works with the notion of patriarchy and male domination to understand gendered political violence as a practice whose primary function is to obstruct women's access to politics. We are convinced, however, that attentive listening to Black women's experiences leads us to consider further contextual intricacies that broaden the meaning of political violence as well as its manifestations.

Note

1   The initial term used in the English language was "femicide", formulated by Diane Russell (2012, 1) in 1976. She altered the definition over time and more recently defined it as "the killing of a female because she is a female" (ibid.). In turn, the term "feminicide" stems from Marcela Lagarde, who translated Russell's book (Lagarde, quoted in Russell/Radford 1992, 17). Later, Marcela Lagarde added that institutional violence was part of feminicide, leading to impunity (Lagarde 2006, 223). Yet, both terms are often used as synonyms. The term "feminicide" has been established in Latin America and has also been used in English. Here, we use the term "feminicide" because we consider the state to be responsible for the violence against and murder of women. In the specific case of Marielle Franco's killing, the state is responsible not only for failing to ensure her safety as a Member of Municipal Parliament, but also for not conducting the investigation properly, neither having this crime resolved, nor holding the perpetrators accountable for it.

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