



## Article

# Gender and Politics: A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis of the Statutes of Brazilian and Portuguese Political Parties

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**Abstract:** This paper presents a descriptive and comparative analysis of the statutes of Brazilian and Portuguese political parties regarding women's political participation. The main objective was to evaluate if and in what way women are included in the statutory guidelines. By means of the document analysis technique, we analyzed the statutes of political parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies in the case of Brazil and the Assembly of the Republic in the case of Portugal. Our research hypothesis is that although the explanatory potential of party ideology has declined as political parties from different positions on the spectrum have started to adopt discourses in favor of women's political participation, left-wing parties remain more inclusive in their texts. We could observe that in both countries, leftist parties remain the main encouragers of women's political participation, at least in their statutory rules.

**Keywords:** women's political participation; political parties; party statutes; party ideology



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## 1. Introduction

Gender equality and women's empowerment, beyond human rights, are imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development (IDEA 2021). The political participation of this group has been the subject of several scientific research in recent decades that seek to understand why women are underrepresented and ways to change it (Fraga and Hassell 2020; Janusz et al. 2021; Krook 2010). In this scenario, political parties are consistently identified as responsible for women's low access to decision-making spheres, as they act as the main "gatekeepers" to elective positions in most countries (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2019).

In the last 20 years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of women holding political positions worldwide, a percentage which, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has risen from 11.7 percent in 1996 to 26.8 percent in 2023 (IPU 2023). However, this growth, driven in large measure by the implementation of gender electoral quotas, has occurred unequally among countries. Citing as an example two cases that had different results with this implementation, we have Brazil and Portugal. In the former, where the first version of the law was passed in 1995 (Law No. 9100/95), the percentage of women elected as federal deputies was 17.5 percent (IPU 2023). In the latter, where the first version of the so-called "Parity Law" came into force in 2006 (Organic Law No. 3/2006 of 21 August), after the 2022 elections, there were 37.0 percent women in the Assembly of the Republic (IPU 2023).

We know that these two countries have significant differences, both in their geographical dimensions and in the functioning of their political systems. However, in addition to sharing a historical past, they are part of what Huntington (1994) has called the "third wave" of democracy. In these societies with late democratic development (Hermet 2001), women

are equally socially integrated. In both countries, they are a majority in the group of poorest people (ECLAC 2019; INE 2021) and of unemployed people (IBGE 2022a; PORDATA 2022a), make up almost 50% of the formal labor force (IBGE 2022b; PORDATA 2022b), and continue to be paid less than their male compatriots (IBGE 2022b; PORDATA 2022c); as well as devoting more hours to caring for people or housework than men do (IBGE 2022c; Perista et al. 2016; Santos et al. 2021). At the same time, women have higher degrees of education than men (Amâncio and Santos 2021; IBGE 2019; PORDATA 2022d) and consider it an essential feature of democracy that men and women have the same rights (World Values Survey 2022).

In sum, while they share many cultural and socioeconomic similarities, Brazilian and Portuguese women have achieved different results in occupying elective positions. This (greater or lesser) female access to decision-making spaces is related to the combination of various variables, which we will address in the next section.

### *1.1. Factors Involved in Women's Political Participation*

Understanding the persistent political under-representation of women, especially in elected positions, involves considering cultural, socio-economic, and institutional aspects (Schwindt-Bayer 2009). Although some combination of these aspects, mainly related to institutional designs, has promoted an increase in the number of women legislators, they remain a minority group in the percentage of elected positions in most countries (IPU 2023), as shown above.

The process involving women's participation in electoral competitions is influenced by several variables and, according to the combinations among them, results in different scenarios of women's eligibility. In general, these variables can be divided into three groups (Matos 2011).

In the first group, the main debate revolves around economic issues and how they impact women's political performance. Research along these lines (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Inglehart 1977, 1990, 2001; La Raja and Wiltse 2015; Wylie 2020) finds that in the realm of material inequalities, women are at a greater disadvantage, especially black women. Thus, better distribution of material elements would generate a direct impact in the realm of political candidacies, not only on women but especially on them, who are often worse off in relation to material resources (Delys 2014; Doss et al. 2008).

The work of the second group, on the other hand, prioritizes symbolic-cultural aspects, highlighting the presence of traditional patterns of evaluative perception (based on traditional authority) that influence cultures and, in particular, the civic culture of countries. In this sense, one should consider the importance of cultures and distinct formats of symbolic and political capital in establishing quality and (gender and racial) justice in a democracy (Biroli 2016; Burns et al. 2001; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Marques et al. 2021; Verba et al. 1997). The fact that a traditional attitude toward women persists in the current political culture, limiting them to roles in the private realm, such as mother and housewife, keeps the political arena organized according to masculine norms, values, and lifestyles (Lawless and Fox 2010). This, in turn, makes it difficult for women to enter these spaces, perpetuating a vicious and dysfunctional cycle.

Finally, the third group focuses on the different formats and designs of the political and electoral systems existing in the countries and especially on the presence of rules, procedures and/or affirmative actions implemented for greater access of excluded groups from the spaces of power (Lijphart 1995, 1999; Norris 2004; Sacchet 2018; Smulders et al. 2018). Institutional barriers are considered the first cause in explaining systematic differences in women's representation in relatively similar societies (Schwindt-Bayer 2009).

Highlighting some aspects of the latter group, in relation to electoral systems, it is observed that proportional, closed-list systems with quotas, position mandate and real sanctions on parties would be the most conducive combination to increase the number of women elected (Araújo 2005; Eduardo et al. 2019; Htun and Jones 2002; Sacchet 2018; Smulders et al. 2018; Spohr et al. 2016). The electoral district's size (the number of seats

assigned for a given district) has a still ambiguous effect in this regard. While many studies state the benefit that more contested positions would bring to women's election chances (Araújo 2005; Dowling and Miller 2015; Espírito-Santo et al. 2022; Schwindt-Bayer 2009), other research has come to different results (Matland 2005; Sacchet 2013). However, it is to be expected that with more positions to be won, parties tend to have a more balanced list, offering more space to minority political groups, such as women (Schwindt-Bayer 2005).

An analysis of the various institutional designs shows that political parties play a central role in promoting women's political participation. This is mainly due to the fact that they are responsible for the process of candidate selection and nomination, which varies considerably between countries and between parties (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Norris 2013).

### 1.2. Political Recruitment

Political recruitment, in general, has been the subject of research in political science (Braga 2008; Bolognesi 2013; Rahat and Hazan 2001; Rahat 2009). In recent decades, we can notice that the analysis of gender effects on party recruitment has been gaining more attention, given the gap in the literature on the inclusion and exclusion aspects of certain groups in this process (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2019; Verge 2020; Wang et al. 2023).

In this sense, we should mention the work of Norris and Lovenduski (1995), which proposes a supply and demand model (based on classical economic theory) for a better understanding of which factors shape the recruitment process. The idea would be to explore the factors that influence and shape the transition from the group of eligible citizens to a smaller group of candidates for an elected office, that is, the offer of possible candidates. Likewise, would be explored aspects relevant to the composition of the group of people nominated to compete in an election or the demand for certain types of candidates. This model is considered dominant in analyses of women's access to political office (Krook 2010). Such analyses show that there is a party preference for people endowed with certain social characteristics favorable to politics (Araújo 2005; Hinojosa 2012).

Apparently, the emphasis placed on "neutral" merits—such as the aspirant's access to networks of political support, prior experience within the party, background, and qualifications, among others—has generated a pattern that results in a greater selection of male profiles than female ones (Lawless and Fox 2010; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Thus, even if party selection criteria are not directly gendered, the requirements that political parties impose on candidates end up implicitly favoring male candidates. This is because the mostly male party elites tend to prefer recruiting profiles like their own (Butler and Preece 2016; Crowder-Meyer 2013; Hinojosa 2012).

The importance of informal norms and conventions at work in political processes such as recruitment is an issue already raised by feminist theorists (Fraser 1992; Mansbridge 1999; Pateman 1993). A research agenda arising from this idea is entitled "Feminist Institutionalism" and focuses especially on the implications of the interaction between gender and formal and informal institutions (Mackay et al. 2010).

These studies seek to present how gender, in the sense of constructions of masculinity and femininity, is embedded in political institutions, constraining and shaping social interactions in these spaces (Waylen 2007, 2011). This strand of (neo)institutionalism highlights the often-tacit ways in which the power relations that sustain political processes are produced and reproduced through gender (Kenney 1996; Krook and Mackay 2011).

We thus see that the party dynamic as a whole is complex and involves, in addition to statutory legislation, many informal aspects peculiar to each party, which can facilitate or hinder women's entry and performance in this space (Álvares 2008; Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2019; Gatto and Wylie 2021). Despite the influence exerted by informal norms, such a discussion goes beyond the objectives of this research, which focuses on the rules documented by the parties in their statutes.

Through document analysis, we seek to verify how these organizations present the issue of women's political participation in their official documents, more specifically, in

their statutes. Statutes are essential documents since, in Brazil, their elaboration is one of the mandatory points for the creation of a party (TSE 2023). The text is written by party members and can be redrafted or updated when necessary. This is also the case in Portugal, where the statutes are one of the required items for party constitution and functioning, as defined in the Political Parties Law (Organic Law No. 2/2003, of 22 August). As defined in this same law, it is up to the parties' representative assembly of affiliates to approve the statutes. We know that the election for political office involves aspects that go far beyond the party proposals described in these documents. However, we understand the party statutes as the guiding text of the internal organization and the first official form of communication of these organizations with society. Such documents are important sources of analysis because they show the main conceptions of the parties and enable the understanding of their structures (Ribeiro 2013).

Moreover, although they can be considered mere formalisms (Michels 2001; Panebianco 2005), party statutes have been little analyzed by Brazilian and international political science (Perissinotto and Bolognesi 2009). Even if these documents are far from being a faithful expression of party dynamics, their analysis can be considered a valid scientific strategy for understanding party structures. This is because they contain the rules that regulate the internal dynamics of the parties (Ribeiro 2013).

With this information in mind, this paper presents a descriptive and comparative analysis of the statutes of Brazilian and Portuguese political parties regarding women's political participation. Our objective was to evaluate if and in what way women are included in the statutory guidelines. To this end, we analyzed the statutes of political parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies, in the case of Brazil, and in the Assembly of the Republic, in the case of Portugal. The observation of the formal party organization offered by the statutes would be the initial step to understanding how women are included in the rules that dictate the functioning of these organizations.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This is a qualitative study that makes use of the document analysis technique. Our corpus was formed by the statutes of parties with representation in the 58th legislature (2023–2026) of the Brazilian Lower House and in the XV legislature (2022–2026) of the Portuguese parliament. The documentary analysis was carried out with the statutes of the Brazilian parties, available on the website of the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE 2023). The Portuguese parties had these documents collected from their websites. In total, 31 statutes were examined, eight from Portuguese parties (a moderate pluralism party system) and 23 from Brazilian parties (a highly fragmented party system). All documents were collected on 15 January 2023.

1. Based on two seminal works in the debate on gender and politics, we focused the reading of the statutes on five main points (Lovenduski 1996; Norris 2004): The identification of inclusive language use (referring to the binary gender): language reflects the complex system of beliefs and values of a society and may reinforce stereotypes and gender roles (Cerqueira and Magalhães 2018), that is, it appears as an integral part of a social process and is able to produce and reproduce gender inequality (Teixeira 2016). Assuming a supposed neutrality, language use tends to maintain masculine as the rule. Thus, by observing how inclusive (or not) party texts are, we can have an idea of how open these spaces are to the inclusion of new groups, as in the case of women.
2. The use of the terms "gender" and/or "woman," as well as the use of inclusive language, the mention of the terms gender and woman may indicate the party's openness to addressing issues related to groups with different profiles.
3. Mention of the principle of non-discrimination and/or gender equality: political parties have the potential to act as promoters of women's inclusion in politics (Norris and Lovenduski 2001). As such, such mention in their statutes indicates not only that

- these organizations are aware of the existence of this problem but that they are also committed to changing this situation.
4. The existence of a party organ dedicated to the political participation of women: the existence of a women's organization provided for in the statute is a general recognition of the inclusion of certain social sectors in the field of politics (Araújo 2005). This space for women's participation can act to mobilize female candidates and act as an instrument of political pressure on party leadership.
  5. The adoption of a quota system or the reservation of seats by gender on National Executive Commissions or General Commissions: participation in decision-making may express the spaces and policies that the parties devote to women. Women's participation in these spheres may be an indicator of the prevailing political culture about gender and party commitment and investment in favor of more balanced participation (Araújo 2005; Caul 1999).

Table 1 summarizes these points and how they were assessed through the documentary analysis:

**Table 1.** Summary of the assessment points of the statutes.

Observation Point	Assessment Method
The use of inclusive language	Identify the use of words in the feminine gender and the proper application of pronouns in order to refer to people who may be part of or make up political parties.
The use of the terms "gender" and/or "woman"	Identification of the use of these terms in some parts of the document.
Mention of the principle of non-discrimination and/or gender equality	Identification of the articles or sections of the document that set out the party commitment to fight gender discrimination in politics and/or party principles that promote equal political participation between women and men.
Existence of a party organ dedicated to women's political participation	Identification of the presence of an organ, secretariat or sector in the party aimed at promoting women's political participation.
Adoption of a quota system or the reservation of places by gender in the National Executive Commissions or General Commissions.	Identification of the adoption of quotas or reservation of seats by the party in the composition of its National Executive Commissions or General Commissions.

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023).

Another variable we address in the analysis is party ideology. It is of interest to us due to the importance of ideological profile in the behavior of parties in relation to women's political participation (Araújo 2001; Peixoto et al. 2017). It is well known that women's political engagement has been more encouraged and, to some extent, conditioned by left-wing parties (Katz and Mair 2018). Our research hypothesis is that, although the explanatory potential of party ideology has declined as political parties from different positions on the spectrum have started to adopt discourses in favor of women's political participation (Kittilson 2006), left-wing parties remain more inclusive in their texts, presenting the issue of women's political participation as a really important party aspect. However, the other parties, which tend to be more conservative about the role of women in public activities (Funk et al. 2017), make little mention of this issue in their statutes.

In this sense, Brazilian parties were divided according to the ideological classification proposed by Barbieri et al. (2019), based on the works of Power and Zucco (2011) and Power and Rodrigues-Silveira (2019). In it, Brazilian parties are grouped into center-left, center and center-right. The classification of the Portuguese parties, on the other hand, was done according to the document prepared by the European Social Survey (2020). Table 2 presents the parties of the 31 parties and their ideological classifications.

**Table 2.** Political parties and ideology by country.

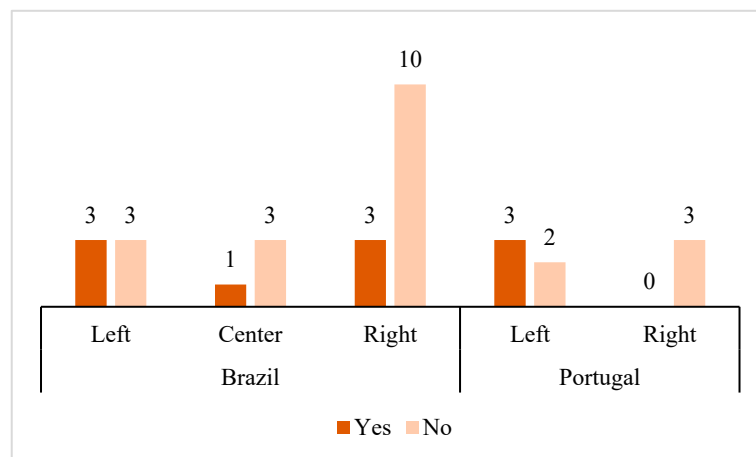
Country	Party Initials	Ideology
Brazil	PCdoB	Left
Brazil	PDT	Left
Brazil	PROS <sup>1</sup>	Left
Brazil	PSB	Left
Brazil	PSOL	Left
Brazil	MDB	Center
Brazil	PSDB	Center
Brazil	PV	Center
Brazil	REDE	Center
Brazil	AVANTE	Right
Brazil	CIDADANIA	Right
Brazil	NOVO	Right
Brazil	PATRIOTA	Right
Brazil	PL	Right
Brazil	PODE	Right
Brazil	PP	Right
Brazil	PSC	Right
Brazil	PSD (BR)	Right
Brazil	PTB	Right
Brazil	REPUBLICANOS	Right
Brazil	SOLIDARIEDADE	Right
Brazil	UNIÃO	Right
Portugal	BE	Left
Portugal	LIVRE	Left
Portugal	PAN	Left
Portugal	PCP	Left
Portugal	PS	Left
Portugal	CH	Right
Portugal	IL	Right
Portugal	PSD (PT)	Right

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023). Note: In the Brazilian cases, the Ideology column, Left refers to Center-Left, and Right refers to Center-Right according to the classification by Barbieri et al. (2019), based on the works of Power and Zucco (2011) and Power and Rodrigues-Silveira (2019). In the Portuguese cases, the parties were classified by the European Social Survey as Center-Left (PS and PAN) and Center-Right (PSD and IL); in this paper, they were classified as Left and Right, respectively, for a better exploration of the data.

### 3. Results

Starting our analysis by observing the use of inclusive language in the statutes, we can mention that, in Brazil, less than a quarter of right-wing parties (AVANTE, CIDADANIA, and REPUBLICANOS), half of the left-wing parties (PT, PDT, and PCdoB), and one center party (REDE) have adopted it. In Portugal, approximately two-thirds of left-wing parties did the same—BE, PAN, and LIVRE. Figure 1 shows this division by ideological group.

Among the parties that used inclusive language, we must highlight the differences found. All PCdoB, PT, BE, and PAN (left-wing parties) party documents use this form of writing. In other words, the text, in its entirety, uses words that contemplate men and women. The REDE party also makes this inflection in large part of its statute; however, the male gender still predominates (for example, the word “affiliated woman” appears 40 times, while “affiliated man” appears 139).

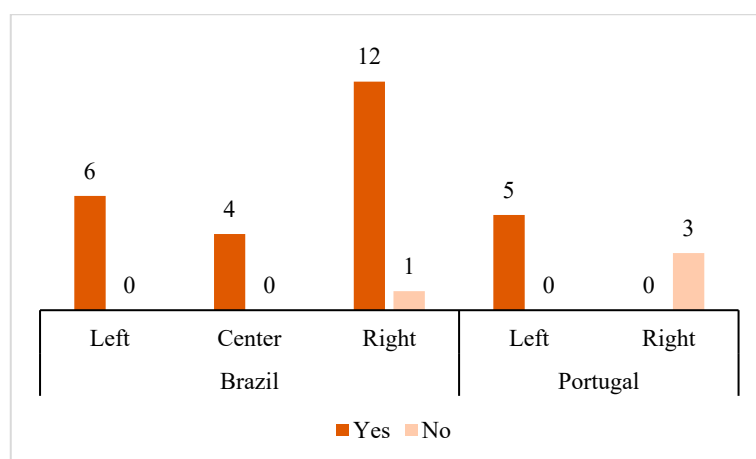


**Figure 1.** Use of inclusive language by ideological party groups (Brazil and Portugal). Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023) based on party statutes.

In the statute of the CIDADANIA (right-wing party), inclusive language appears three times. The first is in Art. 6 “The CIDADANIA members and affiliates share the values of freedom and social justice, ethics, work and solidarity, sustainability and integrity, internationalism and peace” (CIDADANIA 2019, p. 1). The others are in Art. 8 and Art. 15. In the REPUBLICANOS party; however, it appears in the specific chapter on combating, preventing, and repressing political violence against women (Title III, Chapter III). In short, in both parties, there is also a predominance of the male gender.

The AVANTE and LIVRE (both right-wing parties) and PDT (left-wing party) generally use pronominal inclusion at the beginning of their documents to explain that citizens can be part of their compositions. The three parties presented the use of inclusive language only once—AVANTE (Art. 5), LIVRE (Art. 4), and PDT (Art. 6).

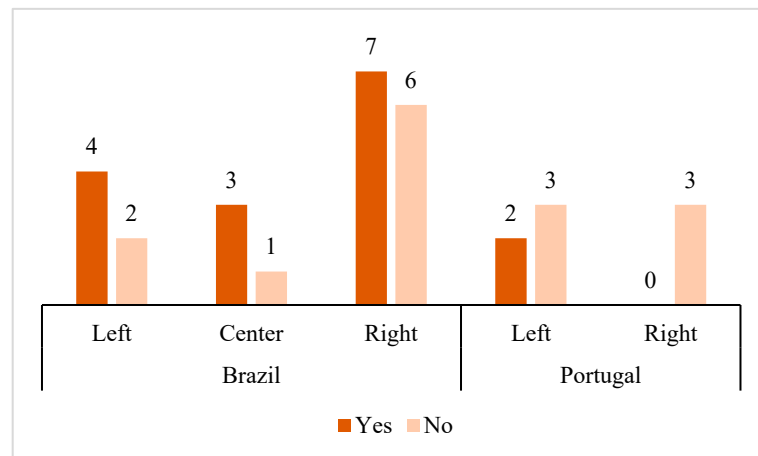
Regarding the second point, concerning the use of the terms “gender” and/or “woman”, we can see that all the right-wing Portuguese parties did not use them in their documents—PSD (PT), CHEGA, and IL. In Brazil, these terms appear in all statutes except the NOVO party (See Figure 2), also classified as right-wing.



**Figure 2.** Mention of the terms gender and/or woman by ideological party group (Brazil and Portugal). Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023) based on party statutes.

It is worth mentioning that, in the MDB party document (Art. 108 and Art. 109), the term “woman” appears only to specify the application of 5 percent of the Party Fund mandatorily directed towards the promotion and diffusion of women’s political participation.

As for the third point (Figure 3), the only Portuguese parties that mention the principle of non-discrimination and/or gender equality are the PS (Art. 1) and the BE (Art. 1), both on the left, representing almost half of this group. In Brazil, the following left-wing parties present this information in their statutory guidelines: PT (Art. 14), PDT (Chapter I, Art. 1), PSOL (Art. 6th), and PCdoB (Art. 53), approximately three-quarters of the group. In the group of right-wing parties, we have PL (Art. 56), REPUBLICANOS (Art. 11), PODE (Chap. III, Art. 13), PSC (Art. 12), CIDADANIA (Art. 6), NOVO (Art. 5) and PTB (Art. 3), just over half of the group. Finally, we have the three following center parties PSDB (Art. 2), PV (Chapter II, Art. 6), and REDE (Art. 4).



**Figure 3.** Mention of the principle of non-discrimination and/or gender equality by ideological party group (Brazil and Portugal). Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023) based on party statutes.

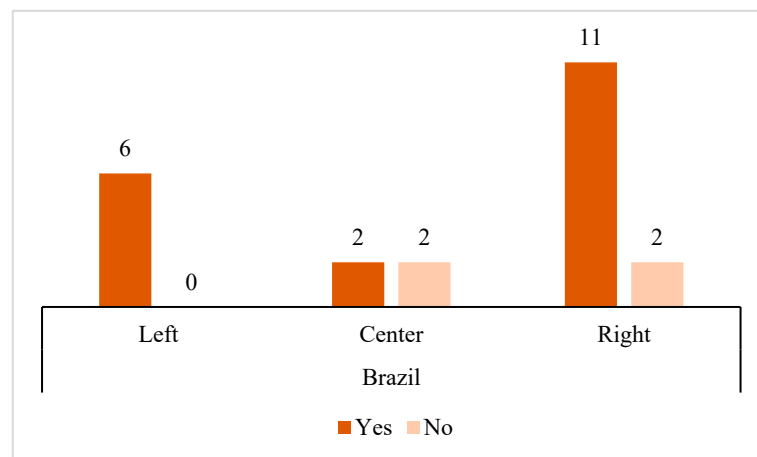
Within this group, some parties have provisions related to political violence against women, declaring their repudiation of the act and affirming the punishment of their members if it were committed. They are PCdoB (Art. 53), PDT (Art. 61)—left-wing parties—PSC (Art. 12), UNIÃO (Art. 95), and REPUBLICANOS—right-wing parties. This last party, as already mentioned, has a chapter of its statute (Chapter III) entirely dedicated to combating, preventing, and repressing political violence against women.

Observing the percentage, in the Brazilian case, three of the four centrist parties and approximately two-thirds of the leftist parties have at least one mention on the issue of non-discrimination and/or gender equality. In right-wing parties, less than half present this issue in their party texts. In the Portuguese case, no right-wing party mentions this principle, which appears in more than half of the statutes of Portuguese left-wing parties.

When we analyze the fourth point about the existence of a party body focused on women's political participation in Portugal, only the PS (Art. 24) foresees this condition in its statute. The text presents the functions and performance of this body (Art. 69). The representative of "Socialists Women—Equality and Rights" is elected by the militants registered in the PS and is part of the composition of all party's Commissions, including the National Political Commission (Art. 53).

In Brazil, of the 23 documents analyzed, four do not have a body for this purpose—MDB, REPUBLICANOS, NOVO, and REDE. The first and last are in the center, and the others are on the right (see Figure 4).



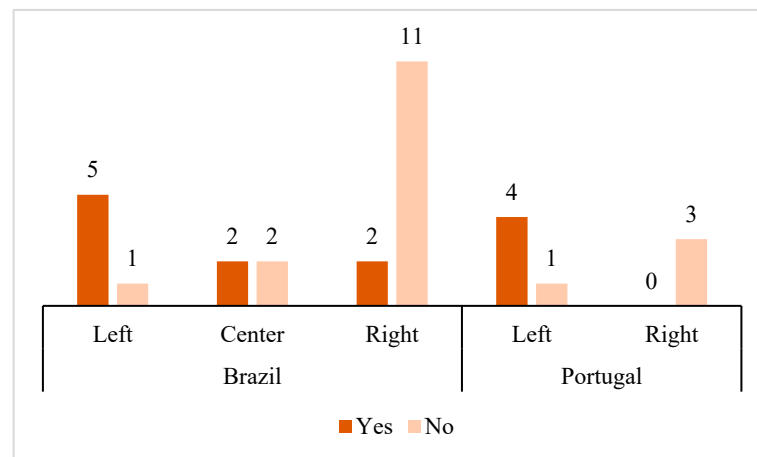


**Figure 4.** Existence of a party body focused on women's political participation (Brazil). Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023) based on party statutes.

The way this party sector is presented differs from one political party to another. Some provide additional information, such as the specific purpose and functioning of these instances, as in the case of PCdoB (Art. 55) and PSC (Art. 29)—the first one a left-wing party and the second one a right-wing party. The functions of the secretary/woman are listed in the statute of the PV (Art. 75)—a center party. In the PT (left-wing party), the functioning of the sectorial secretariats is described, and the Women's Secretariat is considered a sectorial secretariat that is linked to the Secretariats of Popular Movements and Sectorial Policies (Art. 130). Something similar happens in the text of PSOL (left-wing party), which brings information regarding the Base Nuclei (Art. 61) and sectors of the party, spaces that contemplate the theme “woman”.

Parties like PL (Chap. VII § 1º), PODE (Art. 37), PP (Art. 85), UNIÃO (Art. 20 and Art. 74)—right-wing parties, PV (Art. 34)—center party, and PROS—left-wing party (Art. 36) state that the composition of their leading core will be appointed or elected by the National Bodies or Executive Committees. In the PSB (left-wing party), the representative bodies, such as the Women's Secretariat, are elected in their congress and have a guaranteed seat on the party's executive boards at all levels, a dynamic similar to that of the PS. This last point is also mentioned in the texts of the PTB (Art. 62) and SOLIDARIEDADE (Art. 13)—right-wing parties, in which the women presidents of these instances are compulsorily part of the composition of the executive committees of all party levels (national, regional, and local). The parties CIDADANIA (Art. 26), PSD (Art. 14), AVANTE (Art. 51), PATRIOTA (Art. 29)—right-wing parties, and PSDB (Art. 16)—center party, only mention the existence of their secretariats or women's movement, without any additional information.

Finally, on the fifth point of interest considered in this research, the adoption of a quota system or the reservation of vacancies by gender in the National Executive Commissions or General Commissions (see Figure 5), of the eight Portuguese parties analyzed, four out of five left-wing parties foresee in their statutes the adoption of gender quotas for the composition of its central Commissions—PS (Art. 15), BE (Art. 10), PAN (Art. 17) and LIVRE (Art. 8) and three right-wing parties—PDS (PT), CHEGA, IL—and a left-wing party (PCP) does not have this clause. In the Brazilian case, nine parties have reserved seats by gender in their National Executive Commissions, five (out of six) of them are left-wing—PT (Art. 22), PDT (Art. 12), PSB (Art. 22), PSOL (Art. 37-A), and PCdoB (Art. 53). In the center group, we have two parties PSDB (Art. 41) and PV (Art. 27), also two parties in the right-wing group PSC (Art. 1) and CIDADANIA (Art. 15), less than a fifth of the group.



**Figure 5.** Adoption of a system of quotas or reservation of vacancies by gender in the National Executive Commissions or General Commissions (Brazil and Portugal). Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023) based on party statutes.

Having exposed these numbers, some caveats need to be made. Firstly, the PSC (right-wing) party statute states that the National Executive Commissions must have at least 30 percent women in their composition; however, this percentage has not yet been reached and should be reached by 2027. In the case of the PV (center party), unlike the other parties, no minimum and maximum percentage of genres in the composition is presented. The document states that “All the governing bodies of the party must be formed with the participation of both sexes” (Art. 27, p. 4). Finally, the REDE (center party) party was not included in the group of reserved parties since its statute provides for a gender balance only in the composition of the Provisional National Commissions (Art. 26, § 3), but not in its National Executive Commissions.

#### 4. Discussion

Our analysis allowed us to verify that political parties are still far from resorting to an inclusive language, with the predominant use of masculine terms in most party texts, which reinforces the idea of how these spaces continue to be considered specific for the performance of men (Amâncio and Santos 2021). This is because, despite the increasingly recurrent inclusive debates in society (Rodrigues and Abramowicz 2013), party leaders do not seem to be concerned about changing language in the world of politics. If we think that among 31 parties, only four have statutes written in an entirely inclusive way, we see that the language remains masculine. Thus, we can conclude that the political figure still predominates as the male figure. It is also possible to think that the old idea of the supposed neutrality of masculine, universal words remain (de Beauvoir 1970).

Overall, approximately one-third of political parties use inclusive terms in their documents. The way this use is made, however, carries the impression less of inclusion and more of obligation. In other words, the inclusive terms, apart from appearing only once in most cases, are usually at the beginning of texts, giving the document a “politically correct” air. This may be an indication of how superficially party leaders try to deal with the political inclusion of women. This attitude can also be observed in the implementation of affirmative measures such as gender quotas, in which the parties started by complying only with the minimum legal requirements (Espírito-Santo et al. 2022).

Similarly, the absence of the terms “woman” and/or “gender” in four statutes indicates that these issues are not central political issues for these parties. The fact that they are not mentioned shows a party agenda in which these issues do not exist. This can tell us that these parties understand women’s inclusion in politics as something outside their agenda. Here it is worth commenting on the Brazilian party NOVO, which comes up with a proposal to do politics in a different way, but when it comes to women’s political

participation, it continues to reproduce the current pattern. In other words, it ends up being more of the same.

Little more than half of the parties have in their official documents measures in favor of non-discrimination and/or gender equality in party dynamics. It is interesting to note how some associations have specified the repudiation and fight against political violence against women. Acts that have been increasing as the participation of this group in electoral arenas also increases (IPU 2023). Women in political positions face many challenges, and gender-based violence is a persistent problem in many countries, including Brazil and Portugal (Lamartine and Henriques 2021).

Another point that caught our attention was the almost non-existence of formal bodies for women's political participation in the Portuguese parties. In this sense, as presented, only the PS has this body in its statute. In Brazil, most parties present these instances in their official texts. Regarding the functioning of these bodies, there is little information in the documents. What is clear is the lack of autonomy of these secretariats/movements, most of which are occupied by appointments from higher party instances. In general, reading the statutes on this issue indicates an organizational fragility or a low degree of institutionalization of these bodies (Rezende et al. 2020). We can think that the existence of these spaces is a rhetorical party strategy with limited action and effectiveness.

It is interesting to point out that, despite the existence of these organizations having been related to women's performance in competitions (Caul 2001; Kittilson 1997, 2011), the comparison between Brazilian and Portuguese cases does not corroborate this idea. This is because, even with the near absence of these instances in political parties in Portugal, as we saw in the Introduction, the percentage of women elected to the Assembly of the Republic is higher than that of federal deputies in Brazil.

In the analysis of reservations for vacancies within the National Executive Commissions and General Commissions, more parties adopt this practice, with those considered left-wing predominating within this group. In the Portuguese case of the left-wing parties, only the PCP does not have this clause in its statute, despite having an electoral list composed of many women and referring to them, both in the composition of the party and in its objectives. This can be explained by the focus on the fundamental discussion of economic and social inequalities which the party has. Gender issues, in this case, became secondary to the greater objective of class struggle (Teixeira 2016).

The analyzed party commissions are bodies that represent the center of the party's decision-making power and are central to the policies that will be adopted by the parties (Kittilson 2006). The entry of women into these spaces has been much more difficult than the adoption of affirmative action measures on party platforms. It is easier for parties to absorb these demands than to reorganize the distribution of power internally (Rohrschneider 1993).

In general, we can see that left-wing political parties have a similar performance in the two countries under analysis, appearing as the greatest promoters of women's political participation when compared to parties from other ideological spectrums. In the five points analyzed, left-wing parties in Brazil and Portugal performed better; that is, they adopted more inclusive measures analyzed. This fact supports our hypothesis that, despite attitudes in favor of women's political participation, originating in left-wing parties, having been propagated to the other party ideological spectrums, left-wing parties remain the main promoters of this participation, at least concerning its statutory rules.

It should be noted that even though many Brazilian parties, especially left-wing parties, have inclusive statutes, which note the importance of and encourage women's participation in the party text, it does not seem to have any influence or relationship with the number of women elected by them.

Regarding the groups of factors that influence the women's electoral process, we note that, in the comparison between Brazil and Portugal, what most explains the difference in the percentage of female deputies elected are the institutional arrangements. Both countries have electoral quotas for women but in different percentages. While Brazil defines a minimum of 30 percent for one of the genders on the party list (Law No. 9504/1997),

Portugal now defines 40 percent (Organic Law No. 1/2019, of March 29). In addition, although both countries operate in a proportional electoral system, in Brazil, a highly fragmented party system prevails, along with an open-list electoral system and personalized vote (Sacchet 2018). Portugal, on the other hand, is characterized by a party system of moderate pluralism and an electoral system with a closed list and positional mandate, with a highly partisan vote (Leston-Bandeira 2004). Thus, the application of electoral quotas on a closed party list with a positional mandate seems to have more effect on the election of women than more inclusive statutes.

## 5. Limitations, Future Directions, and Conclusions

In this research, we sought to discover how Brazilian and Portuguese political parties present the issue of women's political participation in their statutes, offering a descriptive and comparative analysis of these documents. Our objective was to evaluate if and how women are included in statutory guidelines. We could observe that, in both countries, left-wing parties continue to be the main promoters of women's political participation, at least in their statutory rules. In the five points analyzed, these parties performed better than others, which confirmed our hypothesis that left-wing parties continue to be more inclusive and advocates of the issue of women's political participation.

The analysis of party statutes presented can be considered a good starting point for observing the performance of political parties in favor of women's political participation since it focuses on the text that guides the actions of these actors. Since party dynamics involve aspects that go beyond formal norms, the combination of this study with an investigation that can capture informal processes in these spaces would be of great value for the discussion.

Another point that would enrich the debate would be a longitudinal analysis of the statutes to note to what extent the political parties adapt their documents to new social demands (or not) since this paper only analyzed the most recent versions of these documents.

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