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Communication and Media

Black Women in Parliament and on Social Media: Link Visibility as an Intersectional and Solidarity-Building Tool

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This article tackles the multiple facets of visibility, ranging from invisibility, a lack of recognition in society, to hypervisibility, when bodies are hyperexposed for commodification or criminalization purposes. We analyze the specific implications of achieving media visibility for one Black Brazilian woman in politics: Renata Souza, a Rio de Janeiro state legislator. Souza's campaign and mandate have drawn inspiration from the legacy of Marielle Franco, a Black lesbian favela-born city councillor and human rights advocate who was murdered in March 2018. Our theoretical framework consists of three strands of research: visibility studies, intersectional feminism, and intersectional work on technologies and surveillance. We draw from autoethnographic approaches with the use of field notes, audio diaries, and interviews with members of Souza's staff. We complement these with digital ethnographic observations of Souza's and her allies' social media profiles. We ask: If visibility is a goal for groups that are marginalized and silenced, what happens when they achieve it? When does visibility help to protect Black women? And when does visibility bring even greater vulnerability? In this article, we propose and define the concept of "link visibility" as a process led by women of color who need a high degree of social media publicness but are affected disproportionately by visibility-induced high levels of vulnerability. We argue that link visibility represents an intersectional feminist approach as well as a tool for solidarity building, and that both—intersectionality and link visibility—help bind oppressed realities in Brazil and elsewhere. Finally, we interrogate what can be done to protect women of color online, stopping the violence, threats, and fear.

INTRODUCTION

Marielle Franco was leaving a meeting with Black feminists entitled "Black Women Moving Structures" on March 14, 2018, when her car was ambushed. Franco and her driver, Anderson, were shot and killed. The meeting had just been transmitted live on her Facebook page. The murder, which remains unsolved, sent shock waves across Brazil and around the world. Franco was the only Black female city councillor in the city of Rio de Janeiro at the time. The killing also sent a brutal message: people who experience marginalization should not have high dreams and hopes. Women who grew up in the favelas should never dare become powerful in politics, as Franco had attempted. Franco's party, the left-wing Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL), decided to lead efforts in launching Black women, mostly from working-class backgrounds, to occupy seats in state councils and in Congress. They referred to these women as the "seeds of Marielle." Renata Souza, one of the authors of this article, decided to overcome her fear and move from backstage to the forefront of politics, putting her name forward in June 2018. She was elected in October 2018, becoming a state legislator for Rio de Janeiro.

In this article, we use these experiences to delve into issues of social media intersectional visibility for Black female politicians (like Souza) in a tense political context.[1] Brazil represents an interesting case for analysis of the multiple positive and negative facets of visibility. Since the election of President Jair Bolsonaro, many fundamental rights have been under attack with an increasing persecution of social movement leaders, alternative journalists, and left-leaning politicians. Additionally, members of the Bolsonaro government have adopted a racist and misogynistic rhetoric,[2] demeaning women and people of color. At the same time, a progressive wave of women—and, particularly,

1 The analysis includes trans women as women. The PSOL elected Black trans women in the states of Pernambuco and São Paulo. However, this article focuses on the Rio de Janeiro case.

2 Some of the widely publicized comments include Bolsonaro stating that he would not rape a colleague (a federal deputy) because she did

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Black women—in politics has been building strength. Here, we draw from autoethnographic approaches with the use of data from field notes, audio diaries, and interviews with members of Souza's staff. We complement these with digital ethnographic observations of Souza's and her allies' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter profiles. We ask: as a Black female politician, what are Souza's strategies for achieving visibility for her work on traditional and social media? What does she do when her visibility translates into vulnerability?

Our theoretical framework consists of three interconnected strands of research: intersectional feminism (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1986), visibility studies (Brighenti 2010; Uldam 2017), and intersectional studies of digital technologies and surveillance (Benjamin 2019; Browne 2015; Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020). Analyzing Souza's navigation through the spectrum of visibility online, we suggest that intersectionality, as a theoretical framework and political stance, represents a protective, connective force. We shed light on instances when intersectional perspectives represent tools for building bridges between Souza, Black women online, and other social actors, feeding into wider struggles against oppression and inequality. We argue that intersectional lenses can be adopted for protective and connective purposes because they prompt us to acquire a deeper understanding of the complexities entailed in multiple layers of oppression, such as sexism, racism, and elitism, among others. Djamila Ribeiro's (2017) thoughts on "lugar de fala," or "locus of enunciation," are useful because they acknowledge the importance of opening up opportunities for marginalized groups to speak. When they speak, they create collective "lugares de fala," or "loci of enunciation," which then lead to solidarity building among them, particularly when under attack in toxic digital environments. Based on Souza's and our own experiences of using social media for political causes, we refer to this phenomenon as *link visibility*. Drawing on Sasha Costanza-Chock's (Costanza-Chock 2020, 25) work on the importance of community control over design justice processes, we define *link visibility* as a process led by women of color who need a high degree of social media publicness but are affected disproportionately by visibility-induced high levels of vulnerability. As we will demonstrate, this process creates a connection of the reembodied Black experience (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020) of vulnerability online. Such connection can then be utilized as a survival strategy to ensure that Black women's existence and resistance can remain strong in online spaces.

USING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY TO ANALYZE THE LINK VISIBILITY PROCESSES OF A BLACK WOMAN IN POLITICS

We have chosen a collaborative autoethnographic approach. This is key in guiding how we develop our theoretical perspectives, present our evidence, and build our arguments. It also allows us to write about our own narratives from our classed, raced, gendered, and sexed positionalities, identifying how and why we view the world from our lenses. This is also an attempt to offer an alternative to what often feels like predominantly white male gazes and interpretations (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, 13). The term *autoethnography* refers to both the method and the product of researching and writing about personal lived experiences and their relationships to the cultural, social, and political (Ellis 2004). It involves turning the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto) and at the same time keeping an outward gaze, examining the larger context wherein self-experiences take place (Boylorn and Orbe 2014).

The aim of a collaborative autoethnography is to engage multiple authors and perspectives. This requires us to listen to each other's voices, delving into our own assumptions and sharpening our collective interpretations. In this way, all authors become accountable for the autoethnographic process and product (Chang 2013, 111-112). Here, we use our personal experiences as primary data, engaging in emotional recall to understand the experiences we have lived through (Ellis 1999, 671). Such data consists of ethnographic audio diaries recorded by Renata Souza; field notes written by Andrea Medrado; field notes written by Monique Paulla; one in-depth interview conducted with Souza by Medrado and Paulla; one in-depth interview with Souza's lawyer, Evelyn Melo Silva; and one in-depth interview with Marina Iris, Souza's social media manager. The aim was to include Souza's and her staff's views on how female politicians can instrumentalize visibility for female tech empowerment. Research ethics approval was granted by the Ethics Committee at the Federal Fluminense University (via a submission to the federal government's Plataforma Brasil). This approval required obtaining informed consent from the respondents to use their real names. Whenever we use images captured from social media, these come from public profiles. The names of people making comments or reacting to the posts are omitted.

Because our research involved collecting data online, it also connects to digital ethnographic approaches. Following Christine Hine (2015), we highlight the close integration of digital technologies within our lives. This research tradition also acknowledges that anthropological concepts and procedures such as "dense description" and "participant observation" can be successfully applied to studies of media consumption and media use by online communities. For this article, the data collected included digital ethnographic observations (carried out by Medrado and Paulla) of Souza's Instagram and Twitter profiles (@renatasouzario), with 82,600 and 51,100 followers, respectively,[3] for one month (from 7 May until 7 June 2019). On the first date, Renata denounced the governor of Rio, Wilson Witzel, for human rights abuses to the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN), achieving significant media visibility in both Brazil and abroad.

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not deserve it. During Dilma Rousseff's impeachment session, he also paid his respects to a military officer who had tortured her in the dictatorship period.

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We wish to tell this story with our own voices and to have control over how we as authors are represented (Alexander 2014, 111). As two Black and one white[4] antiracist Brazilian women, we cannot accept our silencing and erasure from history, politics, and academia. We are aware that telling our story will make us vulnerable to criticism but, as Carolyn Ellis (1999) puts it, the vulnerability of revealing oneself is an integral part of doing an autoethnography. Questions might arise about how we can protect ourselves against our own biases interfering with our observations; to respond, we are not claiming neutrality as we embrace (auto)ethnography as a situated approach. To quote Ellis, we present "one selective story about what happened written from a particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose" (1999, 673). We will now discuss the positionality and role of each author in this article in alphabetical order by surname.

Andrea Medrado was born and raised in a middle-class background in Brazil but has lived in countries of the Global North, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. When this research was conducted, she was based at the Federal Fluminense University, in the city of Niterói, Brazil. These experiences have shaped the way in which she sees her social world. As a white Brazilian, she has been deeply touched by the realities of Black women in favela communities since the beginning of her research career. She became committed to research that can bring positive social change in a context of stark social inequalities. At the same time, particularly after spending many years outside Brazil, she experienced the challenges of being a Latina, racialized as a woman of color in the United Kingdom. She is well aware of how media and academic environments can be hostile and unfavorable to women of her background. In Rio, Medrado met Souza by interviewing her while doing fieldwork in 2013. At that time, Souza was a PhD student at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Having ice-cold beer on the roof of Souza's house, the two talked about music and sounds, the beauty of favela pride, and wearing red lipstick. The interview was so moving that Medrado felt uncomfortable about using Souza's quotes as those of a research participant. Instead, she decided that Souza should become a coauthor of their writings. In 2018, having completed her PhD, Souza decided to pursue a postdoc position. Around the same time, the PSOL proposed that Souza should run as a candidate for the state council after Marielle Franco was murdered. Medrado still remembers when Souza met her at a corner restaurant to communicate these plans. Thinking that she wanted her friend alive, Medrado could not help it: she advised Souza not to run for political office, but Souza did not follow her advice.

Monique Paulla is a dark-skinned Black woman, born and raised in the favela Morro da Mangueira in Rio de Janeiro. Her mother was fourteen when she was born. Her biological father only recognized her as his daughter when Paulla was twelve and he lost a lawsuit. Her student life resembles that of Souza. After completing secondary school, she joined a community course to prepare for university admission. In 2006, as part of the University for All (PROUNI) Programme,[5] she obtained a full scholarship to study public relations at Faculdades Integradas Helio Alonso, a private university in Rio. In 2019 she started a master's degree in media and everyday life at the publicly funded Federal Fluminense University. Her research focuses on the seeds of Marielle Franco and their uses of social media in the political landscape. The data gathered for this article is thus part of Paulla's broader research on Black women politicians in Brazil.

Renata Souza was also born in a Rio de Janeiro favela—Complexo da Maré. Her father worked as a turner in a factory, and her mother was a seamstress in a leather factory. After completing secondary school, in 2000, she joined a course sponsored by the local NGO CEASM (Centro de Ações Solidárias da Maré) to prepare for the university entrance exam. Three years later, she was admitted into Rio's prestigious private university PUC (Pontifícia Universidade Católica) with a full scholarship. Later, she earned a master's and a doctoral degree, both at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She juggled her postgraduate studies with work at the Human Rights Commission and as a member of the communication team for state councillor Marcelo Freixo (PSOL) for ten years. In 2016, when Marielle Franco was elected as a city councillor, Souza was chosen as her chief of staff. Franco's murder in 2018 drastically changed the course of her life: both women were born in Favela da Maré and were long-time colleagues and friends. Although the fear was overwhelming, with family and friends pleading for Souza to stay out of politics, she decided to run for office. She was elected with 63,937 votes, making her the left-wing politician who received the most votes for this post in the state. Having grown up surrounded by fear in the favelas, she knew that she had to transform *luto* ("grieving," in Portuguese) into *luta* ("struggle").

The need to protect Black women in politics and on social media drives our research questions. If visibility is a goal for groups that are marginalized and silenced, what happens when they achieve it? When does visibility help to protect Black women? And when does visibility bring even greater vulnerability? In this article, we demonstrate how intersectional perspectives permeate Souza's (and indeed other Black women politicians') communication efforts on social media. A key element refers to what we are describing as link visibility, which functions as a tool for solidarity building and protection. Link visibility is a bottom-up process to "resist the resurgent extreme right, and also to advance concrete proposals for a more just and sustainable world" (Costanza-Chock 2020, 23). Here, the concept of link

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3 As of the time of writing in April 2021.

4 The first author is considered white by Brazilian standards. However, she is racialized as a woman of color in countries of the Global North, such as the United Kingdom, where she currently lives.

5 A public policy developed to increase access to higher education, offering scholarships to private institutions for low-income youth.

visibility fits the wider framework of design justice because it entails protection measures led by intersectional feminist networked movements that are increasingly engaged in debates on the relationships between technology, surveillance, and social justice (Costanza-Chock 2020, 23). In this way, we position Black Brazilian female politicians as being part of a local and global digitally connected Black experience. As in many parts of the world, when Black women in Brazil do become visible in mainstream media and public arenas, they become prime targets for hate attacks. A study suggests that Black women are 84 percent more likely than white women to be mentioned in abusive comments on Twitter (Amnesty International 2018). Consequently, Black women gather in online networks of link visibility, creating coping mechanisms, digitally reembodied and resistant practices (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020, 422).

A caveat is that we are writing about Black women in the plural even though we are referring mostly to the political career and social media use of one woman, Souza. We are inspired by the Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo. Writing essays, poems, short stories, and novels, Evaristo refers to her writing as "escrevivência," mixing the Portuguese verb *escrever* ("to write") with the noun *vivência* ("lived experience"). For Black women, personal narratives are central to a collective cultural memory that draws from ancestral struggles and legacies. In this way, it is essential to shift the role of Brazilian Black women in literature from "representation to self-presentation" (Evaristo 2005), reaffirming Black women's central role in shaping culture and society. Here, we establish parallels between Evaristo's "escrevivência" and autoethnographic approaches to writing and researching. Both are predicated on the ability to invite readers into the lived experience of the protagonist(s) and to experience it viscerally (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, 15).

Moreover, we stress the linkages between intersectional and autoethnographic perspectives. By embracing positionality, we acknowledge the privileges that we experience "alongside marginalisation and take responsibility for our subjective lenses through reflexivity" (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, 15). To achieve this, we engage "the complex ways in which our own identities are best understood through explorations of intersectionality—the cultural synergy that is created through interactions of race/ethnicity, gender/sex, socioeconomic status, sexuality, nationality, age, spirituality, and/or abilities" (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, 6). In other words, as autoethnographers, we identify and use multiple standpoints to situate stories and lives, calling out positions of privilege and exposing moments of vulnerability (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, 18).

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM: BINDING OPPRESSED REALITIES

Intersectionality is related but not restricted to third-wave feminism, when women of color, LGBTQ+, disabled, and working-class pointed out the urgent need for a more inclusive feminism. bell hooks (2000, 5), for instance, suggested that the feminist movement needed to engage in self-criticism to ensure that its discourses did not remain restricted to highly literate, well-educated, and materially privileged circles of white women. Because of this, feminist activists recognized that the movement should urgently address the multiple layers of intra-group oppression that women face. This should include class and race, among many other aspects. Although these discussions had been taking place among Black feminists for many years and in many different contexts (see Gonzalez and Hasenbalg 1982 in Brazil, for example), the law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw is credited with coining the term:

> By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable. While the primary intersections that I explore here are between race and gender, the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color. (Crenshaw 1991, 1244-1245)

Adopted earlier by scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (1986), perspectives on standpoint feminism focused on the unique position occupied by Black women to understand social oppression. Black feminist thought emphasizes three elements: self-definition and self-valuation; the interlocking nature of oppression; and the importance of African American women's culture (Collins 1986, 514). Thus, as agents of knowledge, Black women generate a distinctive standpoint on existing sociological paradigms. Echoing these ideas in Brazil, Djamila Ribeiro (2017) argues that Black women need to be attentive to their unique perspectives on what marginality means. She demonstrates the ways in which these perspectives can be used in the fight against racist, classist, and sexist domination (Ribeiro 2017). Ribeiro (2017) has proposed the expression "lugar de fala," which has reached beyond academic circles, having been adopted by groups of people interested in the power relations involved in discourse. "Lugar de fala" can be literally translated as "place of speech" because it has been used to acknowledge the origin/locus of the enunciator. The expression refers to the enunciator's identity in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class—among other elements—and how such identity elements inform and shape that person's experiences and worldviews. In this way, one can understand the subtleties and complexities entailed in experiencing racism and sexism, for instance, and how these experiences might vary from the perspective of a white male, a white female, or a man or a woman of color. One classic example refers to the issue of women in the job market. While white women were concerned about their struggles to "enter the job market," Black women have always been dehumanized in the workplace. Unlike white women, Black women were never perceived as delicate or lacking physical strength. Therefore, while white women were competing with white men for white-collar positions, Black women were working exhausting hours in fields and factories (Souza, autoethnographic audio diary, May 21, 2020).

In addition to drawing inspiration from standpoint feminism, Ribeiro's notions of "lugar de fala" share common traits with Donna Haraway's conceptualization of "situated knowledges" (1988). Both notions, "situated knowledges" and "lugares de fala," acknowledge that bodies are located

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within and voices emerge from specific places and sociohistoric times. What Ribeiro's (2017) perspectives on "lugar de fala" add is a call for socially privileged groups to play an active role in providing spaces for marginalized groups. This can help ensure that marginalized peoples can occupy their places when speaking out about their own experiences of marginalization and with their own voices.

However, the concept of "lugar de fala" has been interpreted in an overly literal manner, which limits its socially transformative potential. According to this interpretation, people would not be allowed to speak about an issue unless they belonged to that specific identity group. For example, a man should not speak about sexism, and a white person should not discuss racism. Following this logic, people would become isolated in identity bubbles because the expressions that stem from outside the authorized "loci of enunciations" must be silenced. This interpretation connects to international debates on identity politics. In the United States, for example, and elsewhere, the idea of "identity politics" has been associated with deepening political divisions. Hilary Clinton's loss to Donald Trump in 2016, for instance, has been blamed on her discussion of identity and inequality during the campaign. Some authors worry that people might be reinforcing a social construction by organizing around specific identity issues, such as being Black or female, eroding collective organization and struggle (Haider 2018). However, to acknowledge that race and gender are socially constructed is not a reason to imply that they do not matter. The contrasting of gender and race to class contributes to a false dichotomy. The struggles of raced, gendered, and sexual marginalities are not situated in opposition to economic dispossession. In fact, they intersect, and this is precisely what intersectional theories propose. In other words, there are no inherent struggles between anticapitalism, antiracism, and feminist struggles. Therefore, the link visibility strategies used by Black female politicians like Renata Souza are connected to the creation of anticapitalism, antiracism, and feminist solidarities.

Drawing from the work of Djamila Ribeiro (2017) on "lugar de fala," we argue that intersectionality represents a call for a sweeping solidarity. Feelings of solidarity, and the resulting mobilization power that emerges from it, can occur only if people acquire a deeper understanding of the different layers of oppression that various identity groups are subjected to. The first step needed to gain this understanding is listening and recognizing their own different "loci of enunciations" ("lugares de fala"). Based on these reflections, we suggest that intersectional feminism is not divisive. As Ribeiro puts it, its aims are not to create hierarchies between worse or better forms of oppression; rather, intersectional feminism is about breaking away from an unequal society by developing new social projects and models (2017, 9). Additionally, intersectionality manifests itself as something that goes beyond an academic concept, representing a methodological approach and a political stance. This involves amplifying the intellectual production of women of color, considering their active and pivotal role in resisting and marginalization.

We want to stress an understanding of intersectionality as a call for recognizing privileges, which can be uncomfortable and painful. Just like autoethnography, recognizing

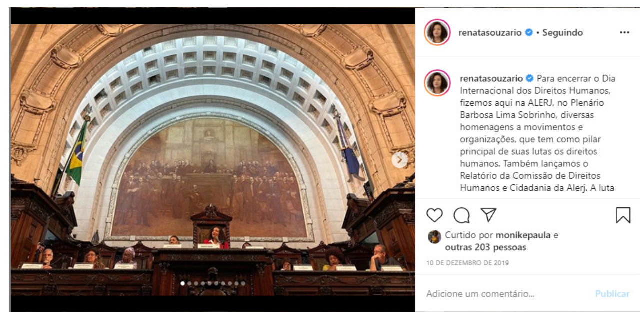

Figure 1. Instagram post by Renata Souza (public profile) on December 10, 2019, which shows her standing in front of ALERJ's painting.

privileges exposes vulnerabilities. This process requires asking: from our lived experiences, are we in a position to tell this story? Ribeiro (2017) asks that people who experience raced and gendered privileges to open up and indeed create opportunities for the marginalized to speak for themselves. This, in turn, can help pave the way for collective places of speech (Ribeiro 2017). In what follows, we apply these ideas, which relate to giving "voice" to notions of visibility. As voices become louder, marginalized perspectives also become more visibly linked and, as we will demonstrate, link visibility reduces the chances of visibility turning into vulnerability.

THE MULTIPLE FACETS OF VISIBILITY

> When I took office, it was very symbolic to enter the plenary and to look at a huge painting with the faces of men, many men. There are no women, no Black persons, only white men. This painting is going to complete one hundred years and, unfortunately, little has changed. But it's powerful and symbolic to be there in that space and to be able to fight to change the faces of this painting. (Souza, autoethnographic audio diary, May 21, 2020)

The concept of "visibility," which was adapted from gender and minority studies for the social sciences, has been associated with people who have been neglected, ignored, or rendered invisible in society (Brighenti 2010). Here, visibility features as an essential tool for empowerment, recognition, and acknowledgment in society. Issues such as identity politics, class, and poverty rely on visibility to be addressed, while social movements rely on having injustices made visible in their struggles. Invisibility, on the other hand, creates exclusion and marginalization (Uldam 2017, 44). In this context, new technologies, and particularly social media, can allegedly provide more diverse representation and voice a greater plurality of perspectives. Some of their advantages include helping marginalized groups (such as women of color) manage their own social image, tell their own stories in their own terms, and create linkages between their thoughts and their lived experiences (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020, 422).

However, visibility is a double-edged sword. The visibility that the internet technologies confer on marginalized

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groups can easily result in surveillance. For instance, the efficiency of the panopticon prison model, a metaphor used by Foucault (1977), depends upon the invisibility of the watcher. At the same time, the role of invisibility is not simply to highlight the power of the authorities who watch but also to render the panopticon efficient via uncertainty. Relying upon a technology of invisibility with the panopticon, a spectacle of surveillance (the tower) can be accomplished. Moreover, it is worth noting that, in itself, surveillance does not instill discipline as there also has to be the threat (and presumably, at some point, the actuality) of punishment. This means that surveillance must be backed up by power. It can amplify power but cannot serve as the basis of power itself. According to Andrea Brighenti, we are faced with "regimes of visibility," which are highly dependent upon contexts and complex social, technical, and political arrangements, making visibility an ambiguous phenomenon (2010, 3).

Having addressed the sociological perspectives on visibility, we move to specific elements of visibility online—namely, visibility on social media in a context of activism. According to Julie Uldam, on the one hand, social media enables activists to gain visibility for their campaigns; on the other hand, social media also make activists more vulnerable by enabling companies that wish to contain the visibility of their critics to do so (2017, 55). Discussing the Russian context, Tatiana Lokot examines how activists adopt strategies for being seen without being in danger, such as engaging in reverse surveillance of law enforcement and providing photographic and video evidence of police surveillance (2018, 142). Although these two perspectives are certainly useful, they do not incorporate issues of gender and race in their analyses. Based on our own experiences as politically active women, we suggest that achieving visibility might have a unique set of implications for women of color.

Here, we turn to the intersectional work of women of color on visibility, surveillance, and digital technologies. Safiya Noble's (2013, 2018) research on racist and sexist Google search results unveils important insights. She demonstrates how "the commodification of women as pornographic objects taken together articulate the disturbing commercial viability of Black women as web commodities" (Noble 2013, 14). Therefore, by providing little reliable and historically contextualized information about women and people of color, particularly Black women and girls, commercial internet searches serve "as a means for silencing black women and girls as social and political agents" (Noble 2013, 17). Additionally, one must question the idea of technology as being value free or neutral. To cite Noble:

> the dominant notion of search results as being objective and popular makes it seem as if misogynist or racist search results are a simple mirror of the collective. Not only do problematic search results seem normal, but they seem completely unavoidable as well, even though these ideas have been thoroughly debunked by scholars. (2018, 36)

In *Dark Matters*, Simone Browne criticizes the ways in which the surveillance of blackness is often unperceivable within the study of surveillance. She identifies blackness as "the non-nameable matter that matters the racialized disciplinary society" (2015, 9). Therefore, it is essential to locate blackness as a "key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated and enacted" (Browne 2015, 9). Also referring to the surveillance of blackness, Ruha Benjamin (2019) uses the expression "the new Jim Code"—in a reference to the Jim Crow laws that enforced racial discrimination in the southern United States. She shares memories of growing up with a sense of being constantly watched in a "carceral web in which other people's safety and freedom are predicated on our [Black people's] containment" (2019, vii). She then defines the new Jim Code as a hostile form of systemic bias against Black women and men as "we continue to be monitored and measured," but without the audible rumble of helicopters to which we can point" (Benjamin 2019, vii).

Thus, in the age of big data, Black men and women remain trapped in media *in*visibility or *hyper* (sexualized, criminalized) media visibility. The former leads to exclusion and marginalization. The latter leads to surveillance and vulnerability. In the Brazilian context, as one would expect, reaching media visibility in more nuanced ways remains challenging. Renata Souza's work as a state deputy illustrates this. As women and politically active researchers, we are disheartened by the level of misogynist and racist abuse targeted at women of color in politics on social media. Medrado and Paulla have both felt uncomfortable reading some of the comments that Souza receives on her posts on Twitter and Instagram. Such hatred manifests in references to the politician's gender, race, and physical appearance but also in serious incidents that involve rape and death threats (interview with Evelyn Melo, May 22, 2020). Unfortunately, Marielle Franco's murder demonstrates how being in the spotlight brings dangers that go beyond online attacks to concrete real-life violence. Indeed, the trajectories of Black women in Brazilian politics have been marked by significant hardships, as we demonstrate in the next section.

BLACK WOMEN IN BRAZILIAN POLITICS

Brazil was the last American nation to abolish slavery; it did so on May 13, 1888. Although the country has projected an image of cordial relations, practices of racial discrimination have helped perpetuate the social and political invisibility of Black women, rendering many of them de facto noncitizens. Since the country's redemocratization, with the 1989 direct presidential elections, the myth of racial democracy[6]

6 This myth originated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a comparison with the racial situation in the United States at the time. It was advocated by Freyre (1936), whose defense was that Brazil's inequality was created by economic differences rather than by race. Since then, these ideas have always been very strong in the Brazilian collective imagination.

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has started to be challenged and rejected (Caldeira 2000). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, programs of affirmative action in universities and public service jobs started to gain momentum. As public debates about racial identity and racism took place through the mass media, geographers noted a gradual "browning" and "blackening" of the population. By comparing the 2000 and the 2010 censuses, we can see that there was an increase in people who declared themselves Black (from 6.2 percent in 2000 to 7.6 percent in 2010) and brown (from 38.5 percent in 2000 to 43.1 percent in 2010). This means that by 2010 Black and brown people represented a statistical majority in Brazil with 50.7 percent of the population. As for Black and brown women, they represented 25.3 percent of the Brazilian population (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2010).[7]

Yet systemic oppression is a common occurrence for Black Brazilian women in multiple ways. Black women are still overrepresented in poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration, and underrepresented in academia and politics (Mowatt, French, and Malebranche 2013, 648). The scarcity of Black female voices also applies to the lack of studies that focus on Black women in politics in Brazil. However, there are exceptions. Sueli Carneiro, a philosopher and writer, has highlighted the need to "blacken" feminism in the country. The expression "blackening feminism" was devised as an attempt to challenge a universalist conception of a woman that is based on Western white women's paradigms. The idea of blackening feminism led to the urgency for Black women to strengthen their roles as political subjects, pushing a political agenda organized around the notion of "nós," which in Portuguese means both "us" and "ties" (2003, 6-7).

Even in the present day, stories of Black women who became successful politicians represent the exception. One of them was Benedita da Silva, born in 1942 in the favela of Chapéu Mangueira in Rio de Janeiro. The highlight of her political career included becoming the first female senator in Brazil. In 2002 Da Silva became the first woman and the first Black person to assume a state governorship in the country (Da Silva, Mendonça, and Benjamin 1997). Fourteen years later, in 2016, Marielle Franco was elected with 46,505 votes for Rio's city council. As was the case with Da Silva, this was a remarkable achievement for a working-class, Black, and lesbian woman like Franco. Sadly, her first political term was cut short by her assassination.

Franco's skin color, social class, gender, and sexual orientation illustrate what it means to be marginalized in Brazilian society on many intersectional levels. In what follows, we provide a table that summarizes how this marginalization of women and particularly Black women translates into

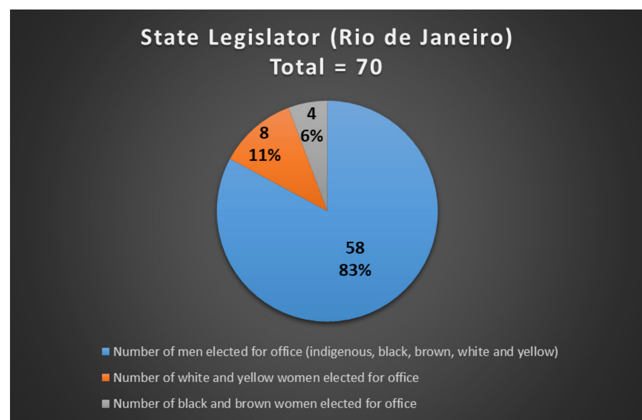

Figure 2. Representation of women of color as state legislators in Rio in the 2018 elections.

Source: the authors (based on information from the ALERJ website; see http://www.alerj.rj.gov.br/Deputados/QuemSao?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1).

* Although twelve women were elected, eleven women currently work as state legislators in Rio de Janeiro. One of the twelve resigned to work at a social assistance and human rights city secretariat. A man replaced her.

low numbers of female candidates elected for office in 2018. The elections that year comprised voting for state and federal legislator, senator, state governor, and president. It is worth noting that we include self-declared trans women under the category of women.[8] The table below, however, does not include trans women as there were no trans women elected for the state legislature of Rio de Janeiro (the focus or our research). Black and brown women were placed under the same category because this was the way the federal and state legislative chambers identified elected politicians. We also follow a logic of self-declaration for the racial categories of elected politicians.

If we draw a comparison to 2014, when Brazil held the previous election for the same political posts, we can find a few achievements for female politicians and for Black and brown women. The number of women who were elected for the Federal Chamber of Deputies increased from fifty-one in 2014 to seventy-seven in 2018 (from 10 percent to 15 percent). In Rio de Janeiro, Renata Souza and three other Black women were elected for the State Chamber of Deputies (ALERJ) in 2018, which corresponds to over 36 percent of the women elected. This represents an increase compared to 2014, when only eight women were elected for ALERJ. However, the female Black and brown representation in higher-ranking political posts is still extremely low: 1.8 percent in the Senate and 3.7 percent in state government. This is problematic if we consider that Black and brown women comprise over 25 percent of the population.

7 The national census in Brazil is carried out every ten years, but the 2020 census has been postponed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

8 As of the time of writing, two state legislators—Robeyoncé de Lima (PSOL, Pernambuco) and Erica Malunguinho (PSOL, São Paulo)—were elected, and they identify as women. Erika Hilton, also elected as a state legislator for São Paulo, identifies as "transvestigender," rejecting binary gender definitions. In 2018 Brazil's Election Supreme Court ruled that trans people could register their candidacies according to their gender identifications.

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RENATA SOUZA'S VISIBILITY IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

As soon as he took office, in February 2019, Wilson Witzel, Rio's elected governor, led violent police operations in the Fallet Fogueteiro favela, which resulted in thirteen deaths. A few months later, on May 5, 2019, he posted a video on his Twitter account. The scene was shocking: Witzel appeared in a helicopter, flying over impoverished communities in the city of Angra dos Reis, accompanied by the city's mayor and by police officers. Rifles were sticking out from the helicopter as the police shot down at tents on a hill. Acting as the leader of the Human Rights Commission, Renata Souza denounced the governor's actions to the Organization of American States (OAS) and to the United Nations on May 7, 2019. In a formal document, Souza requested that international entities made a recommendation to reduce police lethality in Rio. She informed her constituents of her request by posting a tweet that said, "we denounced the Brazilian government to the OAS. We won't tolerate that serious violations to life become naturalized. Declarations by the president and the governor stimulate violence. These policies are based on crimes against humanity, on torture, and they go against our constitution."

Interviews with Souza's staff revealed that a common strategy was to communicate new political facts via Twitter. Following her tweet, Souza's social media team posted a screen capture of the same tweet on Instagram, which gathered 1,153 likes and 50 comments (as of the time of writing). Souza's social media manager Marina Iris noted that the team uses Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp, considering that all platforms integrate as one "unified social network." However, she believed (and our digital ethnographic observations confirmed) that Instagram provided them with a "friendlier environment" than Twitter and Facebook. "Because it's image-driven and more personal, we can use personalized images without the need to depoliticize them. In fact, it's easy to turn personal photos into political messages" (personal communication/interview, June 5, 2020). Here, the right to be seen on her own terms for her own audiences and using her own aesthetics emerged as a key aspect of Renata Souza's link visibility strategies (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020), particularly on her Instagram profile.

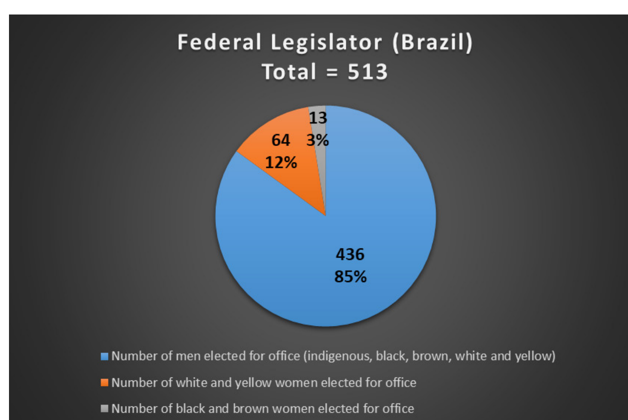

Figure 3. Representation of women of color as federal legislators in Brazil in the 2018 elections.

Source: the authors. See http://www.generonumero.media/camara-dos-deputados-tera-mais-mulheres-brancas-negras-e-indigena-e-menos-homens-brancos-em-2019/.

* The category "yellow" in Brazil refers to people of Asian descent, particularly Japanese Brazilians.

In what follows, we provide examples of how Souza's formal complaint against the governor to the OAS and the United Nations generated visibility in traditional and social media.

LOCAL TV NEWS

- The program RJ 2 ran a five-minute story about the incident on May 7, 2019.[9] The program is broadcast by the local branch of the Globo Network every day at 7:10 p.m. in Rio de Janeiro and the greater Rio region.
- The program SBT Rio, broadcast by the local broadcaster SBT (Sistema Brasileiro de Telecomunicações), ran a four-minute story on May 7, 2019, in the noon edition.[10]

NATIONAL TV NEWS

- A two-minute story ran on the national morning program *Bom Dia Brasil* (Good Morning Brazil), broadcast daily at 8 a.m. by TV Globo, on May 8, 2019.[11]

9 Available at https://globoplay.globo.com/v/7597924/.

10 Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6KVxJDsGBc.

11 Available at https://globoplay.globo.com/v/7598930/.

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- A story ran on the national morning news program by the Broadcaster Band News on May 8, 2019.[12]

NATIONAL NEWS

- Stories appeared on G1 (online news portal) on May 7, 2019,[13] and UOL (online news portal) on May 11, 2019.[14]

INTERNATIONAL NEWS OUTLETS

- Fox News published a story on the Americas section of their website on May 8, 2019.[15]
- Souza gave an interview for Deutsche Welle Brasil on May 22, 2019 (in Portuguese).[16]

Drawing from our empirical research on Souza's media visibility strategies, we briefly compare the affordances of traditional and social media in the context of visibility and vulnerability. We ask: does visibility in traditional media come with the same vulnerability as in social media? The first important point is that women politicians tend to be less visible in traditional media coverage than male politicians (Van der Pas and Aaldering 2020, 124). In this context, it is suggested that gaining more visibility in traditional media can aid female politicians. Kruikemeier, Gattermann, and Vliegenthart, for instance, acknowledge that visibility can help political actors achieve electoral success during campaign periods, convey their political viewpoints, and acquire recognition and credibility (2018, 215). Traditional—and particularly mainstream—media are perceived as being professional among the public. Therefore, it is expected that "traditional news coverage of politicians would have a positive effect on the social media agenda in terms of attentiveness" (Kruikemeier, Gattermann, and Vliegenthart 2018, 216). These observations were confirmed in our research. In Souza's case, it is remarkable that a newly elected state legislator appeared on national television news. Her appeal to the United Nations and the OAS created a "political fact," which she identified as an effective "link visibility strategy" (Souza, interview, May 21, 2020). In our interviews, Marina Iris (Souza's communication manager) confirmed that they were pleased to see that the mainstream media, such as TV news and newspapers, had picked up Souza's complaints about human rights abuses because "this conferred credibility and legitimacy to her claims and led to a formal investigation by international organizations, such as the OAS and the UN" (Iris, personal communication/interview, August 3, 2020).

At the same time, traditional media visibility often comes at the cost of problematic media representations.

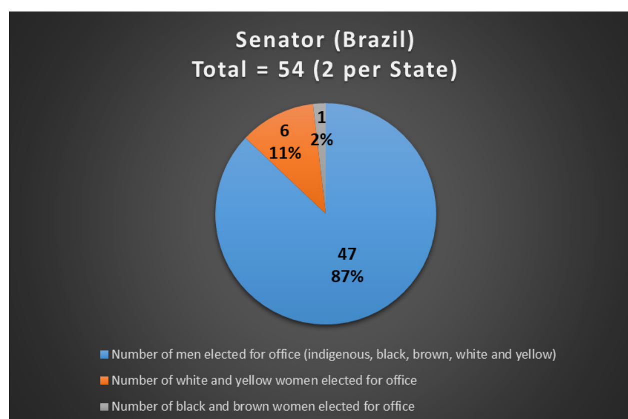

Figure 4. Representation of women of color as senators in Brazil in the 2018 elections.

Source: the authors (based on information from the Senate website; see https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/senadores/em-exercicio).
* Each state elects two senators. The two senators elected for Rio de Janeiro were white men.

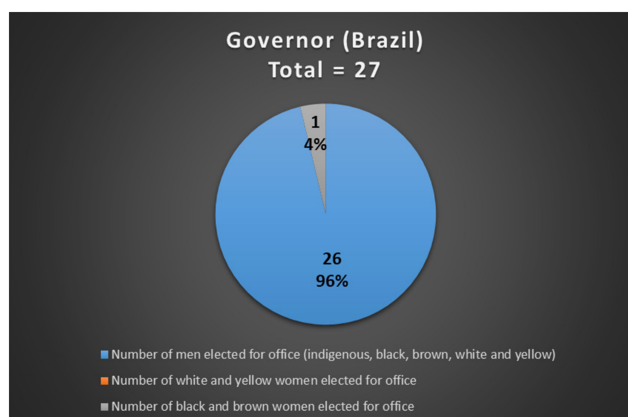

Figure 5. Representation of women of color as state governors in Brazil in the 2018 elections.

Source: the authors. See https://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2018/eleicao-em-numeros/noticia/2018/10/28/apenas-um-estado-do-pais-sera-comandado-por-uma-mulher.ghtml.

Daphne Van der Pas and Loes Aaldering suggest that gender stereotypes can lead to differences in types of traditional media coverage of male and female politicians; women are typically associated with private life and men with public life, and political leadership is associated with masculinity (2020, 117). This has implications for women in politics: by not adhering to the stereotypes, they are more likely to receive negative reporting and evaluations (Van der Pas

12 Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFg4y1aLDJU.

13 See https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2019/05/07/witzel-e-denunciado-a-onu-por-presidente-da-comissao-de-direitos-humanos-da-alerj.ghtml.

14 See https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2019/05/11/deputada-do-psol-fara-denuncia-a-onu-contra-witzel-por-perseguicao-politica.htm.

15 See https://www.foxnews.com/world/human-rights-commission-condemns-brazilian-governor.

16 See https://www.dw.com/pt-br/sucesso-para-governador-do-rio-é-corpo-espalhado-pelo-chão/a-48825132.

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and Aaldering 2020, 117). Referring to the Brazilian context, Luís Miguel and Flávia Biroli add a layer of complexity to the issues of visibility for female politicians in traditional media. In addition to being less visible in quantitative terms, women's political agendas are associated with less prestigious issues, such as family and childhood. This results in a lower symbolic capital compared to men (2009, 67-69).

With social media, on the surface, the greater one's visibility, the better. For female politicians whose careers demand a high degree of social media publicness, the logics of attention and reputation matter. In this way, female politicians are prompted to pursue markets of visibility in the form of likes, comments, and retweets, which can advance their careers, forge new social connections, and offer opportunities for status (Duffy and Hund 2019, 4983). At the same time, "the act of communicating in public is fraught with risk and includes the potential for criticism, hate, and harassment. Unsurprisingly, experiences of online harassment often map onto axes of social identity, including gender, sexuality, race, age, and class" (Duffy and Hund 2019, 4984). A report published by Amnesty International in 2018 looked at 778 women journalists and politicians in the United States and the United Kingdom and found that women of color were 34 percent more likely to be the targets of harassment than white women. Black women were targeted most of all: one in every ten tweets sent to them was abusive or problematic (Dreyfuss 2018, 2). In this context, social media could potentially offer alternative possibilities for connection and professional success (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020). At the same time, social media represent toxic environments for women (Duffy and Hund 2019; Dreyfuss 2018). As a response to this challenging scenario, Souza's team decided to develop online communication strategies based on social media "echo chambers and reflection schemes." To cite Souza:

> We notice that our pages boost and confer visibility on other pages that address themes of global oppression and discuss issues of gender, race, class, disability. Then, these other pages also boost our content and give visibility to our actions. I was one of the first politicians to give an interview to a digital platform called Notícia Preta (Black News). We got good visibility, they got good visibility, so this is like a two-way street. We do this to become less exposed to political and digital violence. We create a network of mutual protection. The more I achieve visibility, the more I am attacked and the more my network of solidarity grows. This represents a kind of link visibility. (Souza, autoethnographic audio diary, May 21, 2020)

In our interview with Marina Iris, she elaborated on what Souza's team meant by link visibility as a tool for intersectional resistance, existence, and reexistence/reembodiment online (Sobande, Fearfull, and Brownlie 2020). She emphasized that Souza's social media pages often post content that mirrors or is connected to content posted by alternative media outlets such as Mídia Ninja (@midianija, which has 2.4 million followers on Instagram and 672,300 followers on Twitter) and Notícia Preta (@noticiapretabr, which has 210,000 followers on Instagram, and @NoticiaPreta, which has 9,116 followers on Twitter) (Iris, personal communication/interview, August 3, 2020). Such outlets embrace intersectional agendas, such as the antiracist, antisexist, pro-LGBTQIA+, and pro-working-class struggles. Our digital ethnographic observations confirmed the ways in which notions of intersectionality fed into Souza's link visibility strategies and vice versa. Additionally, link visibility provided Souza with the tools not only to get attention for her political agenda but also to obtain self- and collective protection.

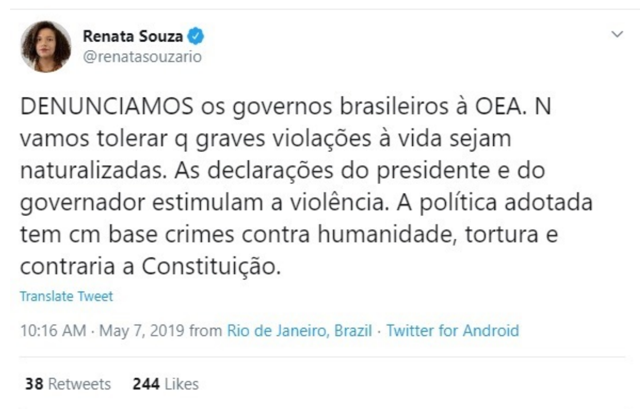

Figure 6. Renata Souza's (public profile) tweet on May 7, 2019.

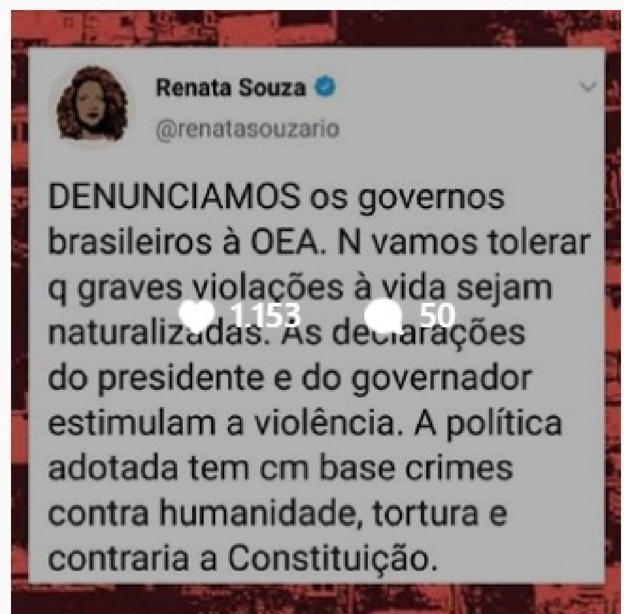

Figure 7. Renata Souza's Instagram post (with a screenshot of her original tweet of May 7, 2019).

Furthermore, we observed how such strategies worked in terms of social media metrics. We compared Souza's number of followers on Instagram with that of other state legislators (affiliated with different political parties) in Rio de Janeiro. Her number of followers (88,200 on Instagram and 57,000 on Twitter) is much smaller than that of state deputy Bebeto (@bebeto7/PODE Party, who has 483,000 followers

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on Instagram and 566,700 followers on Twitter). However, this is explained by the fact that Bebeto was a celebrity soccer player before he got into politics. If compared to other noncelebrity state deputies, such as Alana Passos (PSL, Bolsonaro's former party), who has a slightly higher number of followers on Instagram and Twitter (58,100 and 32,900, respectively), and Rio's most voted-for state deputy Rodrigo Amorim (PSL), who has 34,100 Instagram and 2,659 Twitter followers, Souza fares well on social media.

At the same time, as researchers and politically active women, but also as Souza's personal friends, we were worried to observe how her stark opposition to Rio's governor placed her simultaneously in a position of visibility and vulnerability. A former judge, Witzel (Social Christian Party, or PSC) was elected after presenting himself as an ally of Bolsonaro. He has made public statements that legitimize police killings in the favelas. According to this perspective, not uncommon among conservative politicians, police are told to do whatever it takes to fight crime, such as "aiming and shooting in the little head" (an expression that became associated with Witzel's rhetoric). Security protocols, which included using helicopters as platforms for sharpshooters, have also been criticized by opposition politicians, favela collectives, and civil society organizations (see below).

Therefore, in a context of violent and racist political rhetoric, it was not surprising that the governor and his allies tried to silence Souza. As close observers (Medrado and Paulla) and protagonists (Souza herself) of the incident, we were shocked by the virulence of the attacks. After denouncing the governor, Souza's visibility generated what we have referred to elsewhere as a "visibility crisis" (Medrado and Rega, forthcoming). Legislators from Witzel's party, PSC, made a formal request to the presidency of the State Legislative Chamber (ALERJ) to remove her from office. Souza's adversaries claimed that she made the complaint on behalf of the entire Human Rights Commission, which has members who are government allies (and thus would not endorse the complaint), rather than under her individual name. This could technically make her complaint invalid. We found it disconcerting that white male colleagues from a right-wing party attempted to simply remove a Black female representative from office only three months after starting her mandate. Fortunately, the attempt was unsuccessful: ALERJ's president, André Ceciliano (Workers' Party), closed the case against Souza. He emphasized that she made the complaint under her own name and that she was simply doing her job as a legislator, which entailed acting as a watchdog of the executive power.

Once again, the incident reminded us of the dangers entailed in women of color's finding of and use of their voice. To cite bell hooks, "for us, speaking is not solely an expression of creative power, it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges the politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless. As such it is a courageous act; as such it represents a threat" (2019, 37). During our digital ethnographic observations, we found several offensive comments in Souza's profile, such as the ones posted in response to her tweet on May 7, 2019. Here, we provide a translation of some of them: "you defend criminals, this party is trash"; "you need a detox treatment. You must be on drugs"; "what's up criminal defenders @psol50,

Figure 8. School, don't shoot. Souza's Instagram post on May 9, 2019.

it's over for you! Now it's all about 'head shot'!" [a reference to the governor's comment about shooting people in the head]; "did you denounce Maduro? You are trash!"

Although some of the comments were not race or gender specific, targeting all politicians aligned with left-wing parties, some contained racist messages, such as implying that Souza was a drug addict or telling her to "get busy with work" (as a response to a tweet in which she is communicating her work). A few comments contained death threats, such as the one that implied that the fate of PSOL politicians was to be "shot in the head." This caused us repulsion: Marielle Franco was killed by four shots to the head. Additionally, working as a female politician brought additional layers of abuse, as Evelyn Mello exemplified when comparing the online offenses targeted at the PSOL female politicians in comparison to male politicians:

> The women, they are attacked with sexist, misogynous comments. We need to remember than when Dilma was impeached, they made a sticker to be attached to cars' fuel fillers. The sticker was a photomontage, and Dilma had her legs spread open so that one would insert the fuel hose into the private parts of an elected president. And all the adjectives used against her referred to her "unsatisfactory love life." (Mello, personal communication/interview, May 22, 2020)

As one would expect, during the period when opponents attacked her, Souza achieved an even higher degree of online and traditional media visibility. This manifested in several expressions of support, such as a story in the newspaper *O Globo*[17]; a story in the broadsheet newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*[18]; and Twitter and Instagram posts by media platforms and influencers with a large follower base, such as Notícia Preta, Mídia Ninja, the singer Caetano Veloso,

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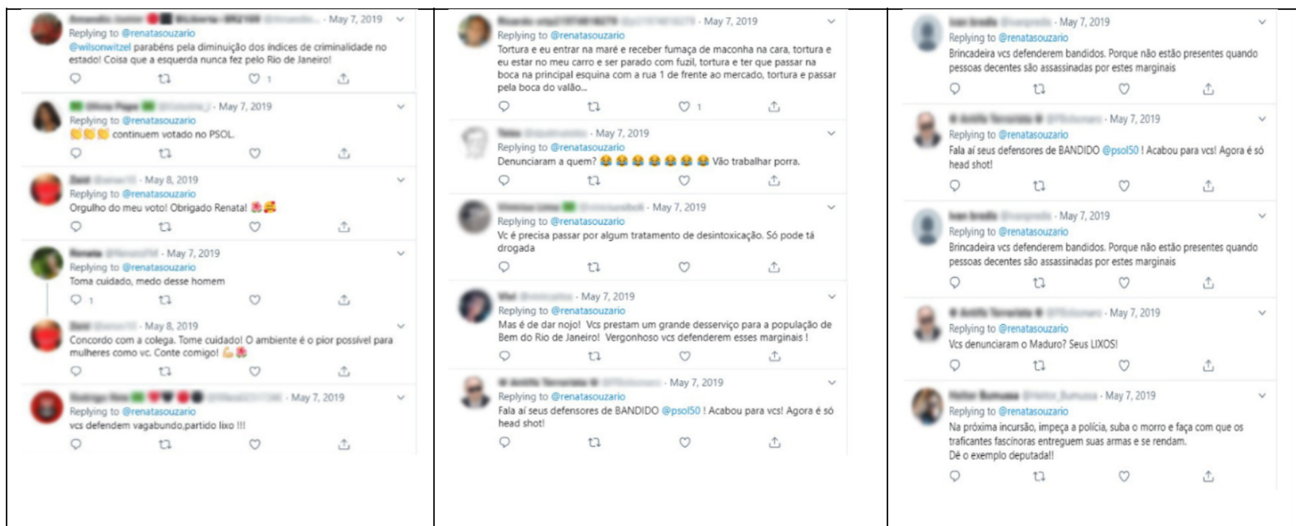

Figure 9a, figure 9b, and figure 9c. Screen captures with a compilation of offensive comments to Souza's tweet on May 7, 2019.

the comedian Gregório Duvivier, and the journalist Flávia Oliveira. Additionally, Souza's team started an online petition in support of democracy and her mandate, which gathered more than eleven thousand signatures.[19]

Drawing from these observations, Souza's case revealed the multiple facets of visibility that emerged during her visibility journey. This journey moved from (a) a position of *invisibility*, as we can infer from her earlier quote on the absolute lack of Black female faces among the faces of politicians; to (b) a position of *hypervisibility*, with her complaints against the governor's "shooting in the head" policies in the spotlight, leading her to a *visibility crisis*; to (c) her link visibility strategies as ways to protect herself and her allies.

In this article, we have explored Renata Souza's multiple facets of visibility, which entailed dealing with the complexities of being trapped between invisibility, hypervisibility, and surveillance (Noble 2013; Browne 2015; Benjamin 2019). In the early stages of her mandate, when she obtained visibility for her stance against the governor's human rights abuses, Souza faced a critical visibility moment. To protect herself, she had to resort to more intense dynamics of establishing networks of solidarity. We have referred to this as link visibility, defining the term as a tool to strengthen Black women's existence, resistance, and reexistence and reembodiment online, which can be used in the fight for a more just world. We have also identified the ways in which link visibility is connected to intersectional conceptual and methodological approaches. By drawing from our own reflections and focusing on the lived experiences of a Black female politician (who is also an author of this article), we hope to have demonstrated that intersectional feminism can provide a useful contextual framework for studies of visibility. If Black female politicians, such as Souza, rely on connection for protection, speaking out against oppression represents the binding force that enables this connection. To cite bell hooks: "when we end our silence, we speak in a liberating voice, our words connect us with anyone, anywhere who lives in silence" (2019, 55).

HOW CAN WE PROTECT WOMEN OF COLOR ONLINE?

As a collective reflection from us, this question raises concerns. These start with the loose definitions of different forms of online aggression, which include internet defamation, fake news, and hate speech. Evelyn Mello highlights this problem: "people always talk about fake news, but the term does not encompass all the issues. Yes, people send false information, but they also spread messages that are out of context, and even true information, like publicizing someone's home address for intimidation, or simply hate speech" (personal communication/interview, May 22, 2020). The task of defining hate speech is beyond the scope of this article. Here, we will just briefly mention that hate speech refers to expressing opinions and ideas in any form (such as written, visual, or artistic) and disseminating them through any media. Such expressions carry "intense and irrational emotion of opprobrium, enmity and detestation to-

17 See https://blogs.oglobo.globo.com/ancelmo/post/partido-de-witzel-pede-cassacao-de-deputada-que-denunciou-o-governador-onu.html.

18 See https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/06/ex-assessora-de-marielle-vira-dor-de-cabeca-para-governo-witzel-na-assembleia-do-rio.shtml.

19 See http://abaixoassinado.renatasouzapsol.com.br/.

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Figure 10a, figure 10b, figure 10c and figure 10d. Twitter and Instagram posts in support of Souza.

Clockwise from top left: Gregorio Duvivier, Flávia Oliveira, Mídia Ninja, and Caetano Veloso. All are public profiles.

wards an individual or group, targeted because of their having certain—actual or perceived—protected characteristics" (ARTICLE 19 2015, 10). ARTICLE 19 has published reports with recommendations for state governments to tackle the issue, to invest in digital literacy skills, and to promote media pluralism. The organization also recognizes that "dominant social media companies hold considerable power over the flow of information" and that the way these companies have dealt with hate speech "has been of particular concern to stakeholders." At the same time, deciding whether a specific message can be identified as unlawful hate speech represents a complex task, and "any restriction on freedom of expression, whatever the objective it seeks to achieve, necessarily raises a series of legal questions." Taking into consideration discussions about combating free speech *versus* protecting freedom of expression, ARTICLE 19 recommends a new model of "effective self-regulation for social media, which we will cite in full:

> This model could take the form of a dedicated "social media council"—inspired by the self-regulation created to support and promote journalistic ethics and high standards in print media. We believe that effective self-regulation could offer an appropriate framework through which to address the current problems with content moderation by social media companies, including "hate speech" on their platforms. (2018, 4-5)

In this article, we focused on our perspectives as women, women of color, citizens, voters, researchers, and politicians (in Souza's case). We addressed the reduced representation of Black women in Brazilian politics and analyzed the complexities entailed in their achieving media visibility. The article deliberately focused on Souza's story. Obtaining further data about Black women politicians and analyzing the data in cross-cultural contexts could provide an interesting future avenue. Additionally, further research needs to be conducted with social media companies, media regulators, and members of the judicial system.

In the current Brazilian legal and political contexts, the president has become known for making public statements that offend and demean women and people of color. The governor has loudly voiced that public safety issues in Rio have a simple solution: shooting people in the head. Additionally, as we observed in comments to Souza's tweet, defending human rights has become synonymous with defending criminals. Therefore, is it realistic to expect state-driven initiatives for promoting diversity and digital literacy? It is not surprising to conclude that regulation via an authoritarian state or internet companies is unlikely to offer protection to women of color. Here, we identify link visibility as a protection mechanism that stems from Black women who are disproportionately affected by hatred and violence online. We suggest that link visibility, in the Brazilian context, can become part of a wider global abolitionist movement in the age of big data. We echo Benjamin's views on the urgency for

> a growing movement toward divesting resources from policing and prisons and reinvesting in education, employment, mental health, and a broader support system needed to cultivate safe and thriving communities. Calls for abolition are never simply about bringing harmful systems to an end but also about envisioning new ones. After all, the etymology of "abolition" includes Latin root words for "destroy" (*abolere*) and "grow" (*olere*). (2019, 111)

In this way, link visibility derives from the creation of collective "lugares de fala," or loci of enunciation (Ribeiro

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2017), with Black women connecting their visibilities online for protection and emancipation purposes. Here, as we suggested, processes of link visibility can build bridges between Black women online and other social actors, in Brazil and elsewhere, strengthening collective efforts to fight misogyny, racism, and the surveillance of Blackness (Browne 2015). To engage in link visibility, Black women and their allies adopt intersectional lenses that enable them to see the complexities entailed in multiple layers of oppression. We argue that link visibility processes represent steps toward futures of solidarity. We have shared experiences of how Black female politicians can manage their visibility crises (Medrado and Rega, forthcoming), engaging with traditional media and with intersectional feminist networked movements on social media. Hopefully, this framework can help others who find themselves equally vulnerable online. In this way, connecting this framework to Costanza-Chock's work on "design justice," we take an ethical stand in systematically advancing "the participation of marginalized communities in all stages of the technology design process; through this process, resources and power can be more equitably distributed" (2020, 117).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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Monique Paulla was born and raised in the favela Morro da Mangueira in Rio de Janeiro. After completing secondary school, she joined a community course to prepare for university admission. In 2006 she obtained a full scholarship to study public relations at Faculdades Integradas Helio Alonso. In 2019 she started a master's degree in media and everyday life at the Federal Fluminense University (UFF) in Brazil. Her research focuses on Black women politicians and their uses of social media in the political landscape. Currently, she works at ABRAMUS (the Brazilian Association of Music and Arts).

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