



## WHERE ARE THEY? THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GENDER QUOTA IN THE ELECTIONS FOR CITY COUNCILOR FROM 2000 TO 2016 IN BRAZIL<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Are gender quotas being effective in securing a greater number of women candidates and elected in municipal elections for city councilor? This paper seeks to verify the effectiveness of the gender quotas policy, the participation, and representation of women in the local power arenas using the elections for city councilor from 2000 to 2016 in Brazil. Methodologically, I use descriptive statistics and t-tests to compare the averages of the percentage of female candidates before and after the change in the gender quota by a state as well as the success rate in the elections. The results of the study show that the gender quotas were effective in increasing the number of women candidates, but that these applications were not translated into elected women. In addition, the success rate of women in the elections fell after the obligation to fill vacancies in the candidacies.

**Keywords:** Gender; Inequality; Municipal Elections; City Councilor; Gender Quotas.

### 1 Introduction

What is the proportion of women candidates for councilor in municipal elections in the period from 2000 to 2016? The purpose of this paper is to empirically verify the effectiveness of the gender quota in reducing the gender disparities present in the power spaces at the municipal level. The hypothesis is that, based on the existing literature (PEIXOTO, GOULART; SILVA, 2016; MARTINS, 2007), quotas did not modify the scenario of female participation in the arenas of political power. I seek with this article to contribute to the discussion involving the need for a greater insertion of women in power spaces, still predominantly masculine (MATOS, 2011).

According to the IBGE, the Brazilian population is composed of female majority, being these 51.4% of the total. In the electoral sphere, in the 2014 elections, women represented 53% of the total voters in the country, based on data from the TSE. Although they are populational and electoral majority, under-representation in the arenas of power remains. According to the project "Inspiring Women"<sup>3</sup>, Brazil occupies position 115 of 138 countries analyzed in the world ranking of female presence in the parliament<sup>4</sup>, being only 9.9% in the Brazilian Federal Parliament. This

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<sup>1</sup> The text translated here consists of an extract summarized from the original manuscript published in Portuguese.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <http://www.marlenecamposmachado.com.br/documentos/pequisa-presenca-feminina-no-parlamento.pdf>. Accessed 17/06/2017.

<sup>4</sup> More information, access <http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2017-03/brasil-ocupa-115o-lugar-em-ranking-de-mulheres-na-politica>. Accessed 17/06/2017.

percentage of participation reaches below the average of countries of the Middle East, that owns 16% of feminine participation<sup>5</sup>.

Much of the work involving female representation addresses the federal sphere (DIAZ, 2003; NEIVA, 2008; CAUL, 1999). This article presents a new vision for the debate about female participation, analyzing the municipal level, seeking to verify the persistence of gender inequality in politics in the municipal councils. In addition, it is necessary to verify if the results related to the quota policy at the federal and state levels are confirmed at the municipal level.

The paper is structured as follows: I present a brief theoretical discussion about the relationship between gender, quotas and politics, followed by data and methods, results, conclusion and references.

## **2 Gender, Quotas and Politics**

The struggle for greater participation of women in politics began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the search for female suffrage (VAZ, 2008). New Zealand was the first country to allow women to vote in 1893. In Brazil, the vote "without distinction of sex" came only in 1932, through Decree No. 21,076, dated February 24, 1932 (BRAZIL, 1932).

Despite the conquest of the vote, power relations between the sexes remained the same, being, according to Miguel and Biroli (2014), perfectly possible for women to have won the right to vote and the permanence of a political elite formed by a majority male. In this case, the conquest of the vote had a much more symbolic effect, stating that women also have the ability to decide the course of society in the same way as men.

Only the right to vote is not enough. The insertion of women in politics involves the transition from the private to the public space (COELHO; BAPTISTA, 2009). With the various demands of the feminist movement in the 1970s, the women presented their guidelines and showed that they had a voice to gain their rights. It was during this period that a broad field emerged for women's struggle for civil rights, political freedom and improved living conditions (VAZ, 2008).

In the 1980s, in a more democratic environment, women began to struggle for space in the institutional setting, having won various rights such as women's police stations, state women's rights councils, and a timid presence in elected positions (VAZ, 2008).

According to Pinto (2003), the relationship between feminism and politics must be seen in three aspects: the conquest of institutional spaces, the presence of women in elected positions and alternative forms of political participation. Even with the achievements of feminist movements throughout the twentieth century, female participation in elective positions remained

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<sup>5</sup>More information, access <http://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/noticias/brasil-fica-atras-ate-do-oriente-medio-em-participacao-feminina-na-politica/>. Accessed 06/17/2017.

low. The Constituent Assembly was formed by only 5.7% of women (VAZ, 2008). Despite the low representation, feminist groups exerted strong pressure on the constituents, obtaining the conquest of several rights, for example, the equality of rights between men and women elucidated in the charter.

At the end of the twentieth century, the focus of the feminist agenda was related to the low representation of women in power spaces (MIGUEL; BIROLI, 2014). In 1995, the 4th National Conference on Women's Policies, promoted by the UN, consolidated the debate about the need for greater representation of women in politics, contributing to the adoption of gender quotas in several parliaments around the world. Since then, female participation has increased in these instances, but still presents a huge disparity compared to men.

In Brazil, a quota policy was established by Law 9,100/95 (BRAZIL, 1995), stipulating the reservation of 20% of female candidates in parties and coalitions. In 1997, under Law No. 9,504/97, the quota policy changed, and its article 10 stipulated a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% for the reservation of candidacies for each sex. However, the reservation of places was not mandatory.

Only in 2009, under Law No. 12.034/09<sup>6</sup>, a reservation of vacancies was established, with a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% of the candidacies of each sex. In addition, Law 9,096/1995 deals with the application of 5% of the resources of the party fund and the allocation of 10% of the radio and television time of the parties to promote the participation of women in politics. According to Araújo (2001), as quoted by Peixoto, Goulart e Silva (2016), among the two objectives of the quota, "the first one would be to increase the presence of women in political representation as candidates and especially as elected".

### 3 Data and Methods

The data and methods section presents the methodological procedures used in the work. All elections to the city council since 2000 were selected, until the last election held in 2016. Data were collected directly from the website of the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE), and the numbers of candidates and elected representatives were mobilized in all municipalities of the federation units, with the exception of the Federal District, because it does not have municipalities. It is sought to verify if the gender quotas increased the number of elected in the municipal arena in the analyzed period. The hypothesis is that gender quotas did not significantly change the number of elected members. To ensure replicability (KING, 1995), data is available on the OSF platform<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Also known as the 'electoral mini-reform', having amended several provisions of Law 9,504 / 1997. Among the altered devices, is art. 10, regarding the reservation of vacancies for applications. Art. 10 § 3<sup>rd</sup> "Of the number of vacancies resulting from the rules set forth in this article, each party or coalition shall meet a minimum of 30% (thirty percent) and a maximum of 70% (seventy percent) for applications of each sex".

<sup>7</sup> <https://osf.io/vp2um/>

The chart below presents the analysis information:

**Chart 1 – Analysis information**

Population	Candidates (and) elected to council by UF
Temporary Clipping	Municipal elections from 2000 to 2016
Statistical techniques used	Descriptive statistics; Test T.

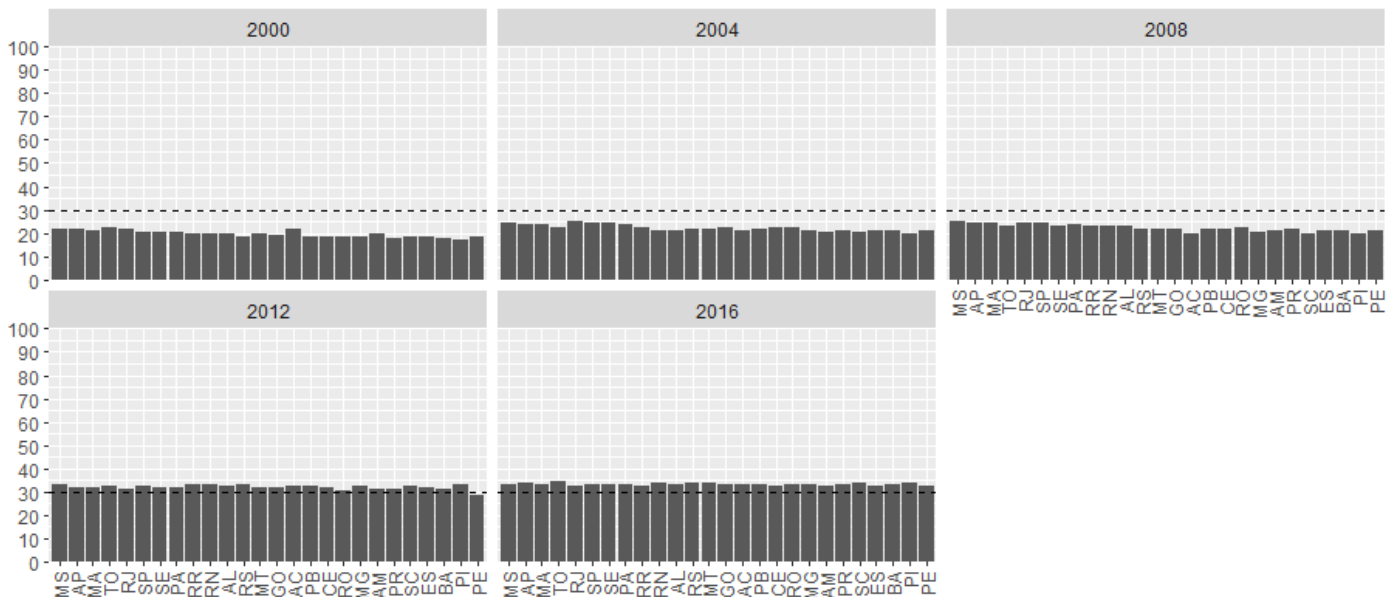
Source: elaborated by the author

For the analysis of the data, we used descriptive statistics and Welch t test to verify if the differences in the mean of the percentage of applications and success rate before and after the change in gender quota is statistically significant.

#### 4 Results

The graph below shows the evolution of the female candidates for councilwoman in the period analyzed by UF.

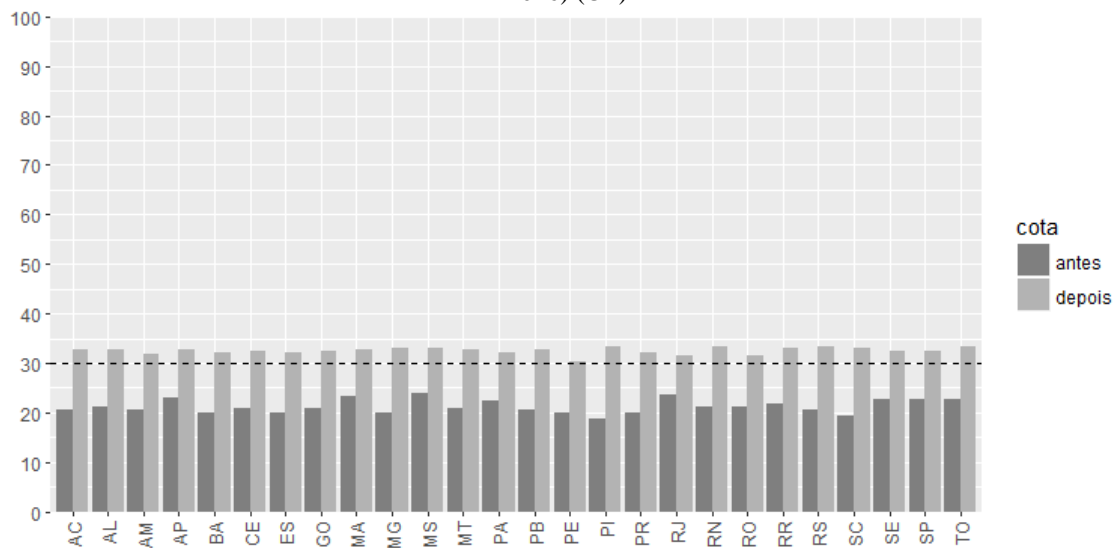
**Graph 1 – (%) Female candidates for councilor by UF (2000-2016)**



Source: elaborated by the author

As shown in figure 1, female candidates for the position of councilwoman exceeded 30% of the total number of candidates only in the 2012 elections, when filling vacancies became mandatory by parties and coalitions. In the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections, the percentage of female candidates for councilwoman reached a maximum of 20% per UF. Graph 2 presents the percentage of female candidates for the position of council member before and after the minimum percentage of candidates for each sex was established. The percentage of the 'before' period is the average percentage of female candidates in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections, while the 'after' percentage is the average percentage of candidatures in the 2012 and 2016 elections.

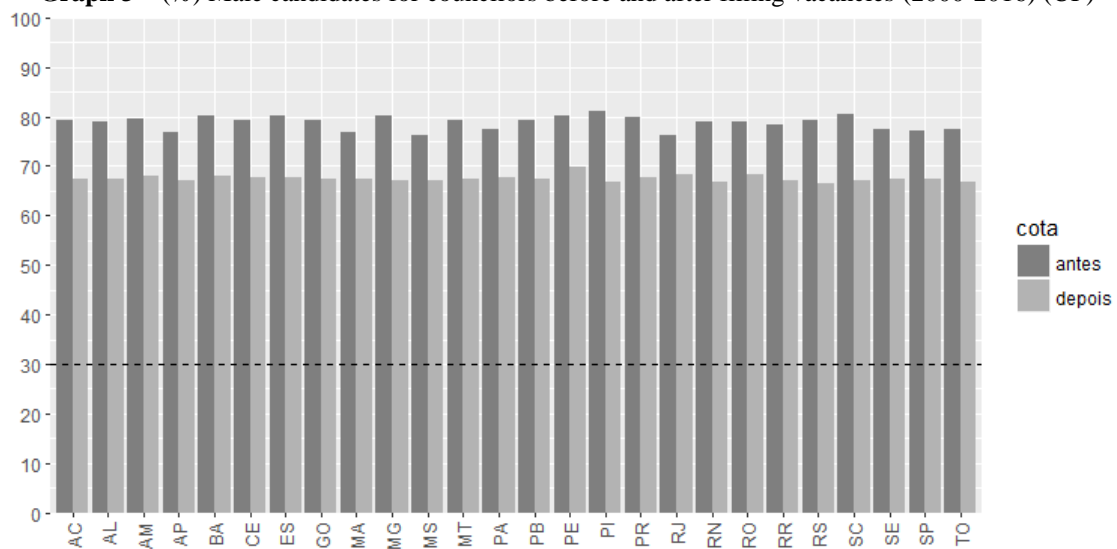
**Graph 2 – (%) Female applications for councilwoman before and after the filling of vacancies (2000-2016) (UF)**



Source: elaborated by the author

As it can be seen in figure 2, all the units of the federation, after the law n° 12.034/09, present an average of female applications above 30%. Pernambuco is the state with the lowest percentage of female candidates after the 2008 elections, with only 30.02%. Prior to 2010, when it was not mandatory to fill at least 30% of women's applications, all states were below this threshold. Graph 3 shows the male candidates for councilor before and after the change in the quotas.

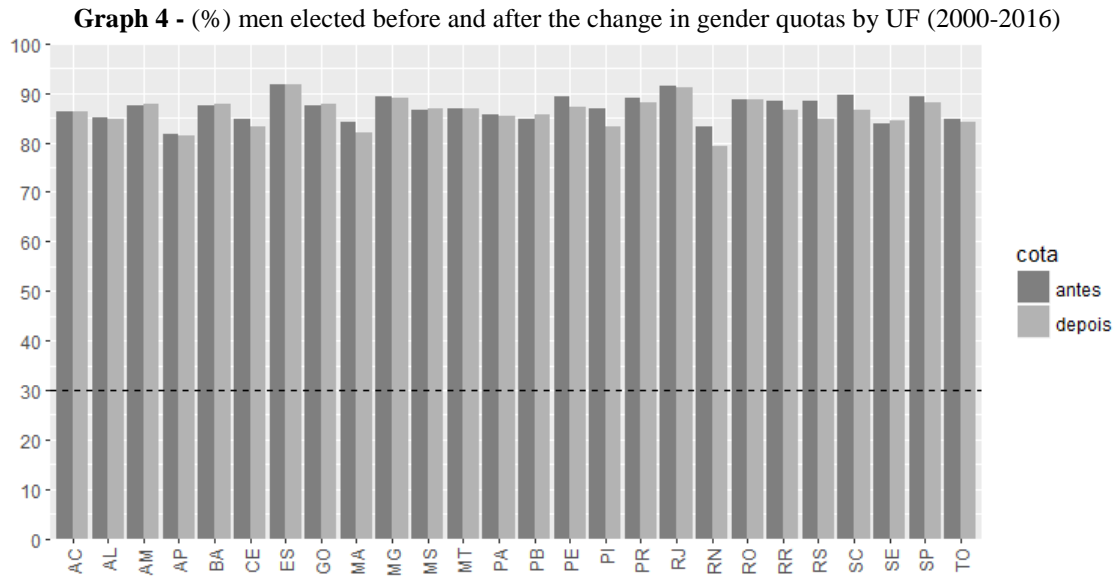
**Graph 3 – (%) Male candidates for councilors before and after filling vacancies (2000-2016) (UF)**



Source: elaborated by the author

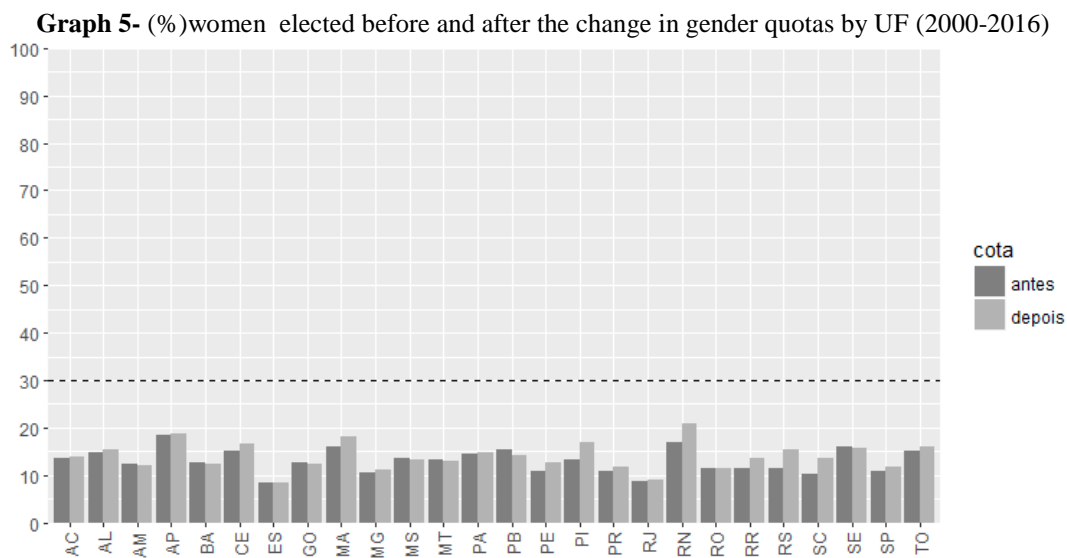
Graph 3 shows that, after the change in the obligatory filling of vacancies, the male applications show a decrease compared to the previous period. The dotted line shows the percentage of application slots that should be assigned to one of the sexes. The men are well above

this level. Graph 4 shows the percentage of men candidates elected before and after the change in the application.



Source: elaborated by the author

Chart 4 makes it clear that, for men, Law 12,034/09 did not represent any change in the percentage of elected. Basically there is no change in the percentage of male candidates elected before and after the requirement to fill 30% of applications for another gender. Graph 5 shows the percentage of women candidates elected before and after law n° 12.034/09.



Source: elaborated by the author

The results in Graph 5 also show little variation for women, despite Law No. 12.034/09. Most of the states remained with the same average of the percentage of women elected to the municipal chambers even after the increase in the average percentage of candidates, as shown in

chart 2. The table below presents the results to verify if the difference in the average of the percentages of female applications before and after the quota is statistically significant.

The Welch t test is used to test the hypothesis that two populations have the same mean. It is used when the variance of the two populations is not equal. The purpose is to reject the null hypothesis (H0) that the difference between the means is equal to 0, that is, that the difference between the means is not statistically significant.

**Table 1** – Welch Test T to compare the averages of percentages of female applications (before and after)<sup>8</sup>

t	-37.478	
df	36.29	
p-value	<0.001	
95% confidence interval	-11.86	-10.64
Group average 'before '	21.25	
Group average 'after '	32.5	

**Source:** elaborated by the author

Analyzing the p-value, it is possible to verify that the difference between means is statistically significant, rejecting the null hypothesis. The difference in the average percentage of female applications is 11.25%. Table 2 presents the results of the Welch t test to verify if the mean difference of the women elected is statistically significant.

**Table 2** – Welch's Test T to compare the means of elected percentages (before and after)<sup>9</sup>

t	-1.2374	
df	49.111	
p-value	0.2218	
95% confidence interval	-2.44	0.58
Group average 'before '	13.01	
Group average 'after '	13.94	

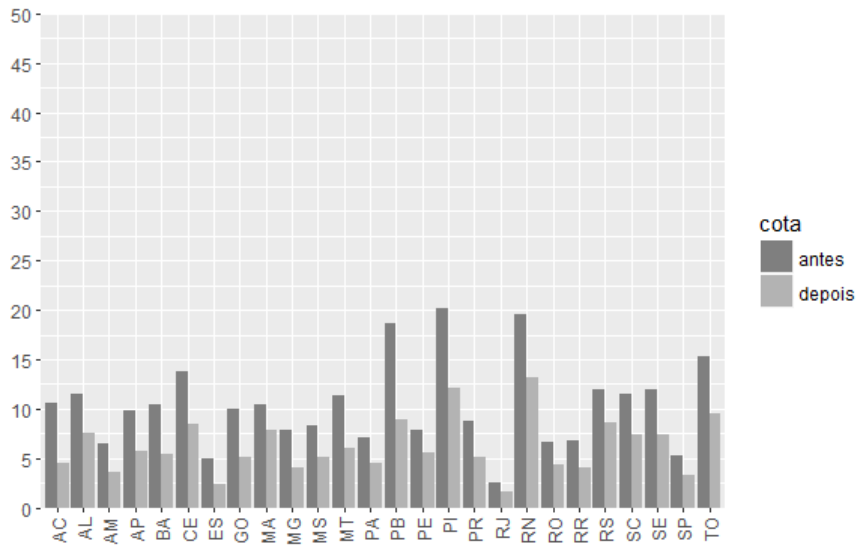
**Source:** elaborated by the author

Different from Table 1, the results in Table 2 show that the difference between the averages of the percentage of elect before and after Law 12,034/09 is not statistically significant. That is, it was not possible to reject the null hypothesis (p-value of 0.22). Thus, it is possible to affirm that the obligation to fill 30% of places for candidacy by women did not lead to a change in the average percentage of elected to the municipal councils. Although the quota allowed an increase in the percentage of female candidates, these applications were not transformed into seats. Graph 6 shows the success rate for female candidates before and after law n° 12.034/09.

<sup>8</sup> Before 2009 (2000, 2004 and 2008) and after (2012, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Before 2009 (2000, 2004 and 2008) and after (2012, 2016).

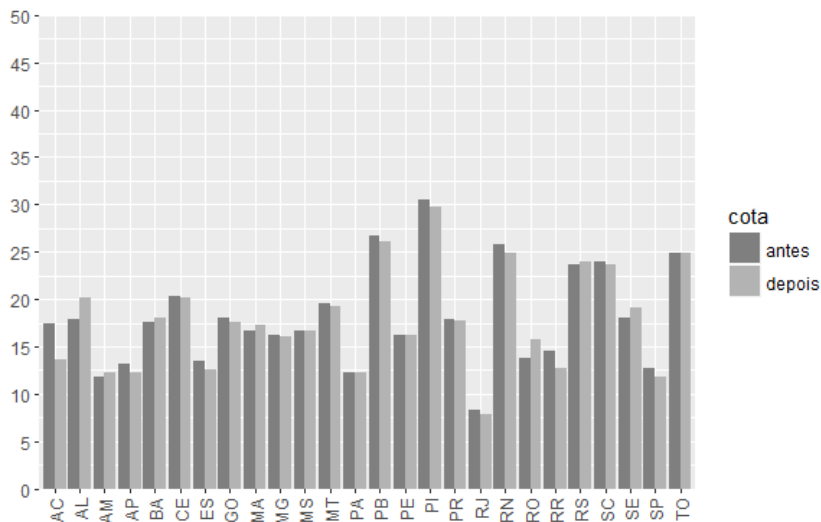
**Graph 6 – (%) Success rate of female candidates before and after the law 12.034/09 (2000-2016)**



Source: elaborated by the author

According to Chart 6, the success rate of women fell substantially after the requirement to fill vacancies. This is due to the fact that the number of candidates has increased significantly without being accompanied by an increase of the elect. Some states, such as Piauí and Rio Grande do Norte, had a success rate of approximately 20% before filling vacancies. After Law 12,034 09, this rate fell to approximately 12.5% in both states. Rio de Janeiro has the lowest success rate for women, both before and after the law (2.5% before and 1.65% afterwards). Graph 7 presents the results of the success rate of men for the municipal councils.

**Graph 7 – (%) Success rate of male candidates before and after the law 12.034/09 (2000-2016)**



Source: elaborated by the author



Graph 7 shows that there were no major differences in the success rate of male candidates before or after law 12,034/09. Although Rio de Janeiro is the state with the lowest success rate for the female candidates, the state also has a low success rate in relation to the male candidates. The table below presents the t-test results to analyze whether the difference in women's success rate in the dispute for city councils is statistically significant.

**Tabela 3** – Test T de Welch to compare women's success rate averages (before and after)<sup>10</sup>

t	6.5096	
df	127.45	
p- value	<0.001	
95% confidence interval	2.89	5.42
Group average 'before '	10.37	
Group average 'after '	6.20	

**Source:** elaborated by the author

The results in table 3 show that the difference in the success rate of women before and after the law 12,034 09 is statistically significant. Before the law, the success rate of women was 10.4%. After the law, the success rate drops to 6.20%. The increase in the number of applications is fundamental to explain the fall in success rate. Table 4 shows whether the difference in means of the success rate of the male candidates is statistically significant.

**Tabela 4** – Test T of Welch to compare the means of success rate of men (before and after)

t	0.23	
df	109.27	
p- value	0.817	
95% confidence interval	-1.66	2.10
Group average 'before '	18.00	
Group average 'after '	17.78	

**Source:** elaborated by the author

Table 4 shows that the difference in the means of the success rate of men before and after the law nº 12.034/09 is not statistically significant. The p-value of the test was 0.817, and it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis that the difference between means is not significant. The difference between the means was only 0,22%.

## 5 Conclusion

Although the quota policy for applications was amended in 2009, ensuring a reserve requirement, it has not yet been possible to see a conversion of the largest number of applications

<sup>10</sup> Before 2009 (2000, 2004 and 2008) and after (2012, 2016).

into a greater presence of women in power spaces. Basically, there was a significant increase in the number of applications (first purpose of the quota) that was not converted into a larger number of women in the municipal councils (final purpose of the quota). That is, women continue to be a minority in municipal councils throughout Brazil.

The results of this work are in line with the findings already obtained about the non-effectiveness of quotas at the federal level. Another point to be observed is that in this study it is not possible to elaborate a causal connection involving the increase of applications and the gender quotas, and more robust statistical tests are necessary in order to achieve this objective. However, it is possible to state emphatically that there was no statistically significant increase in the number of city councils and that the success rate of the candidates showed a decrease in the period analyzed. It is also important to check if the application quota is really the best way to ensure greater female representation. Martins (2007) states that candidacy quotas do not work well in open list electoral systems. Another point to consider is that women have less political and financial capital (Martins, 2007). In this case, it seems that deep structural changes are also necessary to ensure a greater insertion of women in politics.

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