



THE EFFECTS OF ASSOCIATIVISM ON FEMALES' PARLIAMENTARY PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: The article analyzes the relationship between representation and political participation based on the study on the influence that associative bonds exert on the performance and parliamentary activity of female federal deputies who served in the 2003-2007, 2007-2011, 2011-2015 legislatures. The theoretical framework presents the study by M. Warren that deals with the relationship between democracy and associations. Data were collected on the Chamber of Deputies' Portal. We investigated the number of bills proposed by female deputies and their presence in leadership positions. Based on those data, we sought to relate them to female deputies' associative bonds and evaluate whether such bonds established prior to entering parliament could influence females' parliamentary performance and thus contribute to the debate on the relationship between participation and representation for democratic legitimacy.

Keywords: Associativism and democracy; Brazilian federal deputies; Political participation and representation.

1 Introduction

This goal in this study is to analyze the relation between representation and political participation based on the study on the influence that associative bonds have on the performance and parliamentary activity of underrepresented groups in Brazil, taking as reference the female federal deputies that held offices in legislatures 52, 53 and 54. The hypothesis in this study is that associative bonds are important for female deputies' performance; therefore, that influence can be identified in their parliamentary activities. This hypothesis was built on the basis of a bibliographical debate that proposes to consider, on one hand, the relations between representation and political participation, and on the other, the relations between democracy and associations, for a better understanding of representative action in contemporary democracies and its legitimacy conditions, based on the relation between associativism and democracy.

Grounded on a bibliography that highlights the relationship between democracy and associativism, the main question that permeates this study is: what is the impact of associative bonds on the parliamentary performance of the female federal deputies considered, through the proposition of bills and leadership positions occupied by such women? Therefore, the purpose in this study is to find out whether associative bonds established prior to entering the parliament

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can influence women's parliamentary performance in this institution, in the case of female congresswomen, thus seeking to contribute to the debate on the relationship between participation and representation for democratic legitimacy.

2 Democracy, associativism and political representation

Associations can produce democratic effects on individuals in the public and institutional spheres (WARREN, 2001). We chose to analyze such effects in an underrepresented group, namely women, by taking as reference the case of the female federal deputies present in the last three legislatures, since those effects can be even more relevant for democracy when they provide greater inclusion and efficacy to minority groups in politics. In this context, this article was inspired by theoretical propositions that conceive political representation in a dynamic manner, having the studies by Hanna F. Pitkin (1972), Iris Marion Young (2006) and Nádia Urbinati (2006) as references, and based on the work by Mark Warren (2001) to build its hypotheses.

For Pitkin (1972), the representation test does not consist strictly of an elected leader, but how he or she will act by being responsive to his or her voters. The author highlights the expression "acting for" to explain the theoretical concept of substantive representation. That is, when the elected leader acts for voters, we can assume that such voters are elements of political representation. Meanwhile, the philosopher points out that the representative process requires a correspondence representation between those elected and voters. There are differences between them that are important, but this relationship must establish equality. Therefore, the concept of representation proposed by her considers representation a substantive activity and an ongoing process.

Young (2006) states that representation involves a relationship between representatives and those represented that is dispersed in time and space. For the author, representation must relate people's and institutions' actions in a given place to processes that occur in many other places and institutions. This happens based on the connections between the State and society. Thus, representation and participation seek each other in order for democratic politics to occur. But, when representation is restricted only to the moment of the election, the relations between representatives and those represented tend to weaken because the State and society itself are not participating in the representative process. As a consequence, the interests of individuals are not represented, and representatives act according to their own interests.

Urbinati (2006) developed an important theoretical analysis about the conditions that can make democratic representation a form of political participation. According to the author, representation is a "circular process between state institutions and social practices" (URBINATI, 2006, p. 192), that is, representation provides links between the State and society that strengthen the democratization of representation. Thus, social actors are represented in the

public sphere and participate in the political process to the extent that they are involved in debates, decision-making, and accountability. In short, for the author, political representation is the link that connects the State and society. Therefore, the social relations established by the actors that circulate between those spheres influence the political process. Representative practices require that individuals formulate heterogeneous interests to be included in the public sphere.

This theoretical framework is in line with other studies that seek to understand which means can contribute to the interaction between the State and society through representative and participatory practices. Warren (2001) is concerned with showing how associations can have an impact on representative practice by introducing new groups in politics and making resources and abilities available to their members. The author states that associations are not politically sufficient, but they can contribute to making spaces for political inclusion thrive.

2.1 Democratic effects generated by associations

Some studies are concerned with analyzing the impact of political participation on democracy, with emphasis on associativism (BAGGETA, 2009; LÜCHMANN, 2011; WARREN, 2001). In this regard, Corole Pateman (1992) argues that participation is built on the encouragement of social subjects' political capacities. Thus, the democratic process must involve all spheres, so that individuals become involved in a process that awakens interest and the development of characteristics necessary for democracy. This happens through the connection between the State and society. Therefore, "the main function of participation in the theory of participatory democracy is, therefore, educational" (PATEMAN, 1992, p. 61). In effect, the more an individual participates, the greater his or her political skills are.

Warren (2001) proposes three types of democratic effects that are generated by associations: effects on individuals' development, effects on public spheres, and institutional effects. According to the author's words,

These effects are, of course, distinguishable from individual and public sphere effects only for analytic purposes; in reality, the institutional effects are intertwined with others. Political representation and democratic legitimacy, for example, both depend on public judgment subsidiarity - when associations function as devolved venues members (WARREN, 2001, p. 181).

Warren (2001) reports the following capacities as examples of the effects on individuals' development: efficacy, information, political skills, civic virtues, and critical qualities. According to the author, "efficacy is the feelings that one could have on impact on collective actions if one so chooses to do" (WARREN, 2001, p. 71). Thus, an individual tends to develop the feeling of political efficacy and self-confidence by participating in collective actions. In part, this feeling promotes social actors' chances to make a difference in their

political relations, and this will depend on resources, institutional settings, and opportunities, as circumstances permit.

According to Warren (2001), participation in associations can disseminate information about the institutional process among social actors. Thus, associations empower citizens by making demands more transparent and promoting more accountability. The author analyzes that this effect is present mainly in groups that defend public interests, which have the infrastructure and resources to disseminate information, but it can occur in other groups, as for example, the religious leaders of some associations can also develop political skills. Therefore, associations contribute to the development of political skills in individuals, such as public speaking, negotiating, and creating solutions for problems.

Associations tend to provide alternative structures of government, resulting in more opportunities for participation and responsiveness, and promoting more efficient and democratic spaces. The State creates a complex incentives and monitoring system to evaluate results that keep it at a distance from social actors, unlike associations, which can establish their social resources as a regulation and monitoring means based on the trust and reciprocity of their members. According to the author, “subsidiarity suggests that units of collective action should be matched to the scale and nature of the problem” (WARREN, 2001, p. 87). The different effects of political development on the associative environment, and the associations’ capacity to resolve conflicts can be partly explained by its capacity for coordination and cooperation, as they can act as democratic agents in a context of vulnerability based on the reduction of competitive interests.

3 Methodological aspects of the study

Quantitative methodology was used to develop this study. The topic was motivated by the article “Associativism and female political representation in Brazil”, written by Almeida, Lüchmann and Ribeiro (2012). These authors built a database with the associative profile of female federal deputies for the last three legislatures. The database was complemented with the insertion of new variables referring to the topic and the number of bills proposed by congresswomen in leadership positions that were approved. For the variable: leadership position, we analyzed the presence of female deputies as caucus leaders, party leaders, presidents/rapporteurs of committees, work fronts and working groups and the Directing Committee.

Data were collected from the Chamber of Deputies’ Portal, specifically from the Members’ of Parliament biography tabs, and they concern the associations that the deputies declared to have participated in on their websites before taking office. All associative bonds and social movements mentioned by the female federal deputies present in the last three legislatures were considered. These data were statistically tested by means of Pearson’s R correlation test, a

bivariate association test that measures the strength of the relationship between two variables, and is applied to continuous variables. To determine whether there was thematic affinity between the congresswomen's associative bonds and the bills in which they participated in congress, the symmetrical association Tau b test was used and carried out by crossing variables with equal numbers of response categories, whose range was between -1 and 1. For this study, we considered a census group of congresswomen present in the last three legislatures. For the statistical tests, a total of 157 congresswomen were considered.

Therefore, during data collection, it was found that the women deputies proposed bills in several fields, such as health care, education, social assistance, labor, and government oversight, among others. Given this context, there was an interest in identifying whether the deputies maintained thematic affinity between proposing bills and associative bonds (trade unions, professional, women's and students' associations, human rights organizations, community groups, welfare institutions, group-defense, religious and government-oversight entities. The institutional effects of associations can be observed in that relationship.

Table 1 shows the associativism index of the female deputies under study. Authors Almeida, Lüchmann and Ribeiro (2012) developed the associativism index (sum of the female deputies' associative bonds). This index took into account a scale from 0 to 4. The scale indicates that the female deputies had up to four bonds with different types of associations. According to the data shown in Table 1:

Table 1 – Index of associativism among female Federal Deputies, by legislature:

AI	2003-2007		2007-2011		2011-2015		Aggregate	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	16	30.8	18	34.6	22	41.5	56	35.7
1	19	36.5	18	34.6	18	34.0	55	35
2	10	19.2	11	21.2	9	17.0	30	19.1
3	5	9.6	5	9.6	3	5.7	13	8,3
4	2	3.8	-	-	1	1.9	3	1.9
Total	52	100	52	100	53	100	157	100

Source: Adapted from the article "Associativism and Women's Political Representation in Brazil", (ALMEIDA, LÜCHMANN and RIBEIRO, 2012).

Table 1 illustrates the associativism index of the women deputies considered in this study. It shows that more than 50% of the congresswomen had at least one associative bond, which can be observed for each of the legislatures studied. Table 2 shows the distribution of the frequency of associative modalities among female federal deputies in the legislatures considered. Authors Almeida, Lüchmann and Ribeiro (2012) classified the associative bonds found in the biographies of female congresswomen into ten categories, according to the data in Table 2:

Table 2 – Associativism modalities among female deputies, by legislature (%)

Associativism modalities	2003-2007	2007-2011	2011-2015
Unions	36.5	32.7	22.6
Professional	25	9.6	5.7
Women's organization	13.5	13.5	17
Student	13.5	15.4	9.4
Human rights	11.5	9.6	9.4
Community	9.6	9.6	9.4
Welfare	5.8	5.8	3.8
Group Defense	0	3.8	5.7
Religious	1.9	3.8	9.4
Government Oversight	1.9	0	0
N	52	52	53

Source: Adapted from the article “Associativism and Women's Political Representation in Brazil”, (ALMEIDA, LÜCHMANN and RIBEIRO, 2012).

Table 2 shows a frequency distribution of the associativism modalities found among the female deputies in the legislatures considered. Authors Almeida, Lüchmann and Ribeiro (2012) show that the associative bonds most often found among the congresswomen studied were related to the world of work, such as unions and professional organizations. Also, the statistical tests carried out showed an increase in those female deputies' participation in religious associations combined with an engagement in women's organizations. From this approach, the researchers mention that women deputies may have more than one type of associative bonds. These results were obtained statistically by means of a factor analysis of the associativism modalities.

This article was theoretically based on Warren's (2001) study to observe the relationship between women's parliamentary activities and the associativism index. Thus, the author presents us with the effects of associativism in three dimensions: individual, public sphere and institutional. Therefore, for this study we sought to delve into two of these effects: individual and institutional. To complement this investigation, the effectiveness index was developed. This index results from the ratio between bills passed and proposed by the congresswomen. Through the relationship between the associativism index and the effectiveness index, it is possible to identify whether participation in associations influences these women's parliamentary effectiveness.

4 The individual and institutional effects of associativism on women's parliamentary performance

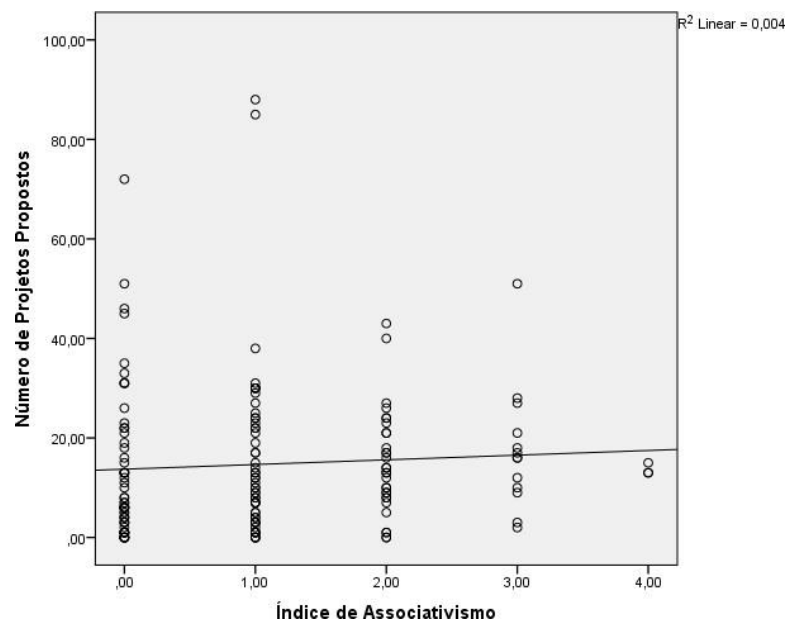
The topic concerning the relationship between associativism and democracy is important to understand the relationship between participation in associations and its effects on the individual and institutional development of the female federal deputies considered in this

study. The results show the intensity of the correlation between women's parliamentary activities (proposition of bills, passed bills and leadership positions) and those women's associativism index for the last three legislatures.

4.1 Are the most participative female deputies also the most active in congress?

This section presents graphs showing the relationship between parliamentary activism and the female deputies' associative bonds. The intention was to identify if there was a correlation between the number of proposed bills and the female deputies' associative index in order to evaluate if the most participative congresswomen were also the most active in congress.

Graph 1 – Correlation between number of proposed bills and the associativism index



Source: The article “The effects of associativism on women’s parliamentary performance, 2015”.

Número de Projetos Propostos = Number of Proposed Bills
 Índice de Associativismo = Associativism Index

Graph 1 shows how the female deputies considered in this study stand in relation to the proposition of bills and the associativism index. Each of the points included in the graph represents one of the deputies studied, and her location depends on the values that she has for each variable. It can be seen, in the graph, that there are outliers: three congresswomen proposed more than 70 bills, while the other congresswomen presented up to 51 bills.

As for the graph visualization, the straight line indicates linearity, and its slight ascending slope shows its positive character and a weak correlation between the variables analyzed. The statistical test shows a null correlation between the associative bond and the

proposition of bills. Therefore, we can conclude that the women deputies who were more participative in associations were not, in this case, the most active in parliament.

4.2 Are the most participative female deputies also the most effective in performing their parliamentary activities?

Democratic skills can be developed by participating in associations. According to Warren (2001), members of associations can develop communication, political and conflict-resolution skills, among others that contribute to political practice and approximation with the public sphere. The table below shows the results regarding the investigated deputies' participation and effectiveness in performing their parliamentary activities, with the purpose of identifying if the most participative deputies were also the most effective ones in performing their parliamentary activities.

Table 3 – Correlation between number of passed bills and the female deputies' associativism index

Number of Bills Passed	Associativism Index					Total
	,00	1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	
.00	37	36	17	6	2	98
1.00	15	12	9	5	1	42
2.00	3	7	3	1	0	14
3.00	1	0	1	1	0	3
n = 157		Pearson's R = .105				

Source: The article "The effects of associativism on women's parliamentary performance, 2015".

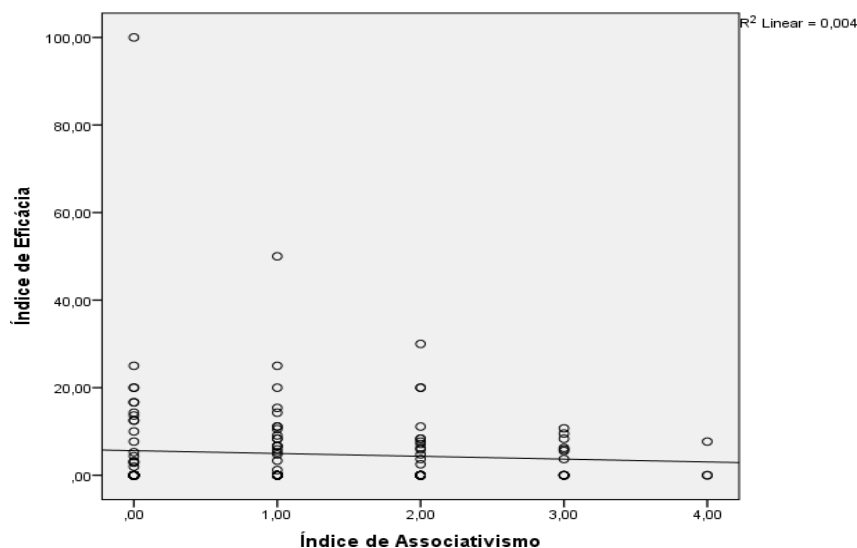
The data in Table 3 show that 98 women deputies had not passed any bills; 42 deputies had passed 1 bill; 14 deputies had passed 2 bills, and 3 deputies had passed 3 bills. Thus, 62.4% of the women deputies analyzed did not pass any bills, while 37.6% passed 1 to 3 bills. Women deputies, in general, pass a mean of 0.50 bills. In this regard, the Pearson's R test was performed, which showed a weak correlation between the number of passed bills and the associativism index of female deputies. Thus, our hypothesis was not confirmed: the most participative women deputies were not necessarily the most effective ones, considering as such those who managed to pass bills.

We point out that the female deputies proposed a mean of 14 bills, while they had a mean of 0.50 bills approved, that is, a proportion of 3.6% of approved bills in relation to the mean number of bills proposed. This implies a low index of effectiveness for the analyzed women deputies. Given these data, it is noteworthy that drafting a bill and its respective approval depends on several factors related to parliamentary dynamics, such as influence from the Executive Branch and the difficulties in composing the parliamentary agenda. According to the words by Cruz:

The creation of a law goes through several paths. When introduced as bills, the propositions may be initially examined by the Chamber of Deputies or by the Federal Senate, as appropriate. However, the bills must always be considered by both houses of Congress and, subsequently, sent to the President of the Republic for a sanction or a veto, as provided for in the Federal Constitution (CRUZ, 2009, p. 17).

It should be added that bills of laws can be supplementary or ordinary, both of which are intended to alter federal laws or create completely new ones. The main difference between them is that, in the case of a supplementary bill, its approval depends on an absolute majority vote (CRUZ, 2009). This information can imply the number of bills approved by female deputies and interfere in the relationship between the number of proposed and approved bills (female parliamentary effectiveness), which is why it is important to mention them in this study. Graph 2 shows the correlation between the effectiveness index and the associativism index of the analyzed female deputies. According to the following data:

Graph 2 – Correlation between the associativism index and deputies' effectiveness index



Source: The article “The effects of associativism on women’s parliamentary performance, 2015”.

Índice de Eficácia = Effectiveness Index Índice de Associativismo = Associativism Index
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Graph 2 shows the effectiveness index, which was obtained through the ratio between approved and proposed bills ($AB/PB \cdot 100\%$). This index measures how effective the women deputies are in relation to the percentage of the number of bills approved and proposed by such women. The straight line indicates linearity, and its slight descending slope shows its negative character among the observed variables. In this case, it can be observed that the increase in the associativism index variable decreases the effectiveness index variable. Pearson’s R correlation

test resulted in a value of $-.062$, which shows a negative correlation between the variables considered. This suggests that female deputies have a low political efficacy index. This occurs mainly in relation to the small number of bills approved by the congresswomen.

Table 4 shows the relationship between the leadership positions held by the female deputies in the last three legislatures analyzed and their associativism index:

Table 4 – Correlation between the number of leadership positions and the associativism index.

Number of Leadership Positions	Associativism Index					Total
	.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
.00	41	30	12	6	2	91
1.00	11	17	11	4	1	44
2.00	2	6	5	2	0	15
3.00	2	1	1	1	0	5
4.00	0	0	1	0	0	1
6.00	0	1	0	0	0	1
n = 157 Pearson's R= 0.174						

Source: The article “The effects of associativism on women’s parliamentary performance, 2015”.

Table 4 shows a weak correlation between leadership positions and the associativism index, as the Pearson’s R test results in a value of $.174$. The data shows that 42% of the female deputies held 1 to 6 leadership positions. This result is important because it reveals a positive correlation between the variables observed. Thus, it can be suggested that, for the case of leadership positions, our hypothesis is confirmed: the most participative women deputies in associations are also the most effective ones in terms of holding leadership positions in Congress.

4.3 Is there thematic affinity between female’s associative bonds and the bill proposals in which they participate in congress?

The next table shows the affinity between the thematic areas of the bill proposals in which the congresswomen were active during their terms for the legislatures analyzed and their associative bonds. Here, we seek to identify the effect of participation in associations in the institution, that is, how much participation in associations influences the topics under debate in the institutional realm.

Table 5 shows the percentage of affinity between the topics of the bills proposed by the women deputies and their associative bonds. It is noteworthy that more than 50% of the total number of women deputies considered in this study had at least one type of associative relationship, according to the data presented in Table 1 in this study.

Table 5 – Percentage of thematic affinity of the female deputies with their associative bonds and proposed bills.

Associative Group	Thematic Affinity	N	Valid N	TAU (Tb)
Group Defense	100.00%	99	5	.364
Government Oversight	100.00%	98	1	.154
Professional Association	85.00%	99	20	.840
Student	85.00%	99	20	.618
Human Rights	68.80%	99	16	.485
Unions	58.30%	98	48	.331
Women's organization	56.50%	99	23	.310
Welfare organization	50.00%	99	8	.272
Community	43.80%	99	8	.451
Religious	14.30%	99	7	.185

Source: The article "The effects of associativism on women's parliamentary performance, 2015".

We investigated the topics of the proposed bills in which the congresswomen considered in this study participated during the last three legislatures and sought to relate the thematic affinity of such activity with their associative bonds. By means of frequency tables and the statistical TAU test (Tb), we observed the percentage of bills that showed affinity with the deputies' associative bonds and the intensity of such association. In this regard, we identified, for example, if the deputies with participation in trade unions proposed bills with thematic affinity to that associative bond. Thus, Table 5 shows that all the female deputies with associative bonds for group defense and government oversight proposed bills in the thematic field in question, which is why the percentage of thematic affinity with the associative bond is 100%. For the associative bonds regarding professional and student association, of the 20 female deputies found in that associative group, 85.00% showed thematic affinities between the proposed bills and their bonds, respectively.

Concerning the group of female deputies with bonds related to human rights, 68.80% of such women showed affinity between the proposed bills and their bonds. As for the group of female deputies with union bonds, 58.30% of the deputies in this group proposed bills in the same thematic field as that of the associative bond, while in the welfare organization group, 50.00% of the deputies proposed bills with a welfare-related topic. For the associative group with community bonds, 43.80% of the congresswomen in this group showed thematic affinity between the proposed bills and the welfare bond. Finally, in the associative group with religious bonds, 14.30% of the women deputies analyzed introduced bills in the religious thematic field.

In the case of female deputies with associative union bonds, of the 48 women found in this associative group, approximately 28 showed thematic affinity between the proposed bills

and the associative union bond. Only the community and religious associative groups showed a percentage below 50% of proposed bills with affinity to the group's thematic field. It is noteworthy that the female deputies did not show thematic affinities between the proposition of bills and the associative bond referring to the environment.

The TAU (Tb) association test was performed for each thematic field, which showed a strong association referring to the affinity between the topic of the proposed bill and the associative bond with the following fields: professional association (.840) and student association (.618). For the thematic fields: human rights (.485), community (.451) group defense (.364), unions (.331), women's organization (.310) and welfare organization (.272), the test showed a moderate association, and for the thematic field government oversight (.154) and religious (.185), the test resulted in a weak association between the topics of those bills and the associative bonds.

Strong affinity was found between the topics of the proposed bills and bonds to professional and student-movement associations. Thus, it is evident that female deputies' participation in union, professional and student associations contribute to increase women's presence in parliamentary activities related to the world of work, as is the case of the activity of proposing bills.

The statistical test showed a moderate association concerning the affinity between proposed bills related to social-welfare organizations and the female deputies' bonds. However, the group of female deputies with social-welfare bonds is consisted of only 8 congresswomen, which suggests a reduced presence of women in this associative group. This relationship shows that there are deputies responding to these associations' demands, but not all have associative bonds with them, which may explain the reduced presence of women deputies in the welfare association group. Finally, the association test showed a weak association between the affinity between the bills presented in the fields of government oversight and religion and the associative bonds in this field.

Conclusion

The results in this study sought to test the hypothesis that associative bonds matter for female deputies' parliamentary performance, which can be identified in the parliamentary activities that were considered, as follows: proposition and approval of bills, and presence in leadership positions. Thus, the main question that permeated this study was "what is the impact of these associative bonds on women's parliamentary performance?".

Based on the studies by Almeida, Lüchmann and Ribeiro (2012), it was possible to identify the associative bonds of the female deputies considered in this study, that is, the number of bonds and the types of associations shown by each of these women. Based on that information, this study mapped the proposed bills authored by women, and classified the

thematic fields of such propositions according to the classification of the associative bonds found for the congresswomen in question, in addition to identifying the number of approved propositions and their thematic fields, and the presence of women in leadership positions.

Firstly, we sought to find out if the female deputies with the most associative bonds were the most active ones, that is, the most participative in parliamentary activities. The findings for bill proposition activities show that there is almost no correlation between the investigated parliamentary activities and the associativism index observed for the analyzed female deputies. In this case, the hypothesis that associative bonds matter for the performance of female parliamentary activities can be rejected, since the most participative female deputies in associations are not necessarily the most active in congress.

Secondly, we analyzed how important the associative effect was on the individual development of female deputies. According to Warren (2001), members of these groups tend to develop skills and thus achieve greater political effectiveness in processes of negotiation and conflict resolution, as well as knowledge of laws and labor issues. Thus, our hypothesis is that the development of these skills contributes to women's parliamentary performance, making female representatives more effective.

In this regard, we observed the relationship between the associativism index and the number of approved bills, female parliamentary effectiveness index, and the presence of female deputies in leadership positions. Regarding the approval of bills and the parliamentary effectiveness index, those activities showed a weak correlation with the associativism index. In that case, the effectiveness index showed a negative correlation. As for the presence of female deputies in leadership positions, it showed a weak correlation with the associativism index. This leads us to conclude that participation in associations contributes to the development of individual skills and to the presence of female deputies in leadership positions in parliament, and it is noteworthy that women are part of a minority group in the Chamber of Deputies.

Thirdly, we analyzed the presence of associative effects in the institutional realm by associating the thematic affinity between the proposed bills and the deputies' associative bonds. As regards the proposal of bills, more than 50% of the deputies showed thematic affinity between bill proposals and their associative bonds. This implies that there is a considerable presence of deputies' associative bonds in the performance of their parliamentary activities. Thus, participation in associations can be a mechanism that contributes to representative purposes by defining a decisive role in the representation of their members' interests.

These results highlight the importance of investigating the representative practices of underrepresented groups in politics, as is the case of females. However, we found that there are other factors that interfere in the connection between participation and representative practice, and these may be related to the dynamics of the Chamber of Deputies, which results from a highly centralized legislative system. Hence, the skills acquired through participation in

associations are not enough to overcome the reduced presence of female deputies in leadership positions and bill approval.

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