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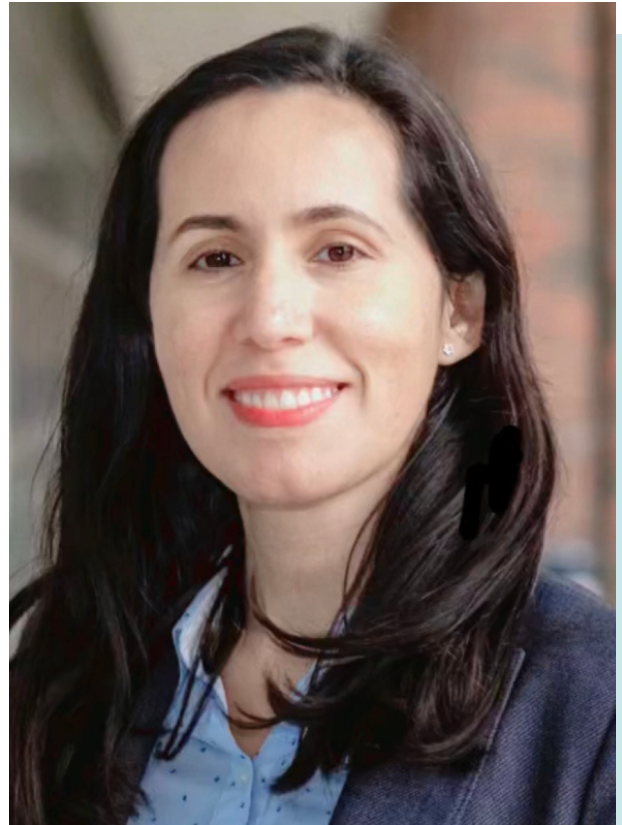
Valesca Lima

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Dr Valesca Lima is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the School of Law and Government in Dublin City University. She researches policymaking and governance with three main areas of interest: citizen participation, housing policy and social mobilization. Her examined recent housing mobilization for housing justice in Ireland and Portugal was funded by the Irish Research Council. We spoke about Valesca's latest book, her role at Women in Research Ireland, upcoming plans, and cats!

In 2022, your book *The Consequences of Brazilian Social Movements in Historical Perspective* (Routledge) was published. Why did you choose Brazil as a case study, and what do you hope readers will take away from your analysis of the impact of social movements on Brazilian society and politics?

There is a popular saying attributed to the musician Tom Jobim: 'Brazil is not for beginners.' People often use that to refer to the country's volatile political and economic environment, with no shortage of ups and downs and domestic crises. In a complex political space like this one, diverse political actors play important roles. Coming from an academic background in social sciences, my attention since my undergraduate studies has focused on social movements and citizen engagement in politics. I wrote my PhD thesis on the inclusion of housing movements in local decision-making structures, analyzing how institutionalization affected social movements' goals and strategies. I published several papers from this work, culminating in the book *Participatory Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazil*. This book analyses the



challenges of participatory democracy and the decline of citizen participation in Brazil's six years of conservative governments. In 2020, I got together with two other colleagues – Rafaela Pannain and Gabriela Martins – at a conference, and we started to design a new book project centred on the impact of social movements on politics and politics in Brazil. This edited volume – *The Consequences of Brazilian Social Movements in Historical Perspective* – centers on the premise that social movements produce direct and indirect results across different periods of Brazilian history. We place social movements as powerful actors in defence of democracy, the right to housing, human rights, participatory politics and much more.

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You are a co-director of Women in Research Ireland, a charity working for better representation of women and underrepresented groups in academia. What inspired you to start working there, and what are the main goals for this organization?

I was inspired by the serious job insecurity that affects academics at higher institutions. Women in Research Ireland (WIRI) is a registered charity based in Dublin. It was founded in 2017, and since then, we have been striving to build a community of women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups in academia. Our mission is to achieve equal representation for vulnerable groups in Irish higher education. WIRI's activities focus on training events that address issues faced by women in Irish academia, such as job insecurity, sexual harassment, mental health issues, and leadership challenges. We also work to give visibility to research carried out by women and minorities at higher education institutions.

Besides your book, what works do you have coming up in 2023?

I'm already planning my next book, but it's still in the proposal stage. In the meantime, I have some upcoming publications that focus on housing policy and homelessness and others that look at citizen participation at the local level. I am also working on research focusing on migrants' challenges in accessing housing in Dublin. I hope to be able to share the results of this research soon.

Changing topics for this last question: I know you are a big fan of cats. What is it about cats that you find so fascinating, and can you share a funny or heart-warming story about one of your feline friends?

I'm a big fan of cats, a shameless cat lady. It's funny because I grew up in a household where one of my parents was not fond of animals, so I only started interacting with pets as an adult. Cats captivate me with their wild behavior while being smart, warm, and fluffy at the same time. I have lived with three cats to date, and all of them have had very strong personalities and tastes. It makes me happy to have such companions in my life. I no longer volunteer in cat shelters, but I do encourage everyone to adopt (not buy) a cat and add some happiness to your days. I once travelled for over a year, and a friend cared for my cat at her house. When I returned, I was afraid that my cat wouldn't recognize me or simply ignore me. I couldn't be more wrong. He was hiding at the beginning, but then he ran to me and wrapped himself around my legs and even let me pick him up, which he never allowed. All this while meowing non-stop. It was a very warm welcome that I have never forgotten!

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