

**MEDIA, GENDER AND CONSERVATISM: HOW THE WOMEN ELECTED IN 2020
IN THE HISTORICAL CIRCUIT OF MINAS GERAIS BUILD THEIR
REPRESENTATIONS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA**

***MÍDIA, GÊNERO E CONSERVADORISMO: COMO AS MULHERES ELEITAS EM
2020 NO CIRCUITO HISTÓRICO DE MINAS GERAIS CONSTROEM SUAS
REPRESENTAÇÕES NAS REDES SOCIAIS DIGITAIS***

***MEDIOS, GÉNERO Y CONSERVADURISMO: CÓMO LAS MUJERES ELEGIDAS EN
2020 EN EL CIRCUITO HISTÓRICO DE MINAS GERAIS CONSTRUYEN SUS
REPRESENTACIONES EN LAS REDES SOCIALES DIGITALES***



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ABSTRACT: The objective of this article is to analyze how elected female mayors in municipalities along the historical route of Estrada Real in Minas Gerais, Brazil, constructed their political representations in the connected public sphere of social media during the 2020 electoral campaign and how they maintained them in their first year of office, considering the increasing use of the permanent campaign strategy characterized by the intensification of the mediatization process. To conduct this research, a brief theoretical review was carried out on the dialectical relationship between feminism as a mass movement (FRASER, 2019) and the emergence of neoconservatism (BIROLI; MACHADO, VAGGIONE, 2020), establishing the conceptual notions of the connected public sphere (BENKLER, 2020), mediatization (HJARVARD, 2012), permanent campaign (LILLEKER, 2006), and the archetypes of female candidates (PANKE, 2016). The hybrid methodology used combines bibliographic research, documentary research, and content analysis. Preliminary results indicate no ready-made formula to ensure women's victory at the polls. Candidates with different backgrounds, political parties, and municipality sizes adopted electoral strategies that sometimes approached and sometimes distanced themselves. They all exercised caution when dealing with controversial issues related to contemporary feminism during the campaign. In the exercise of their mandate, it was the mayor of the largest city and the most left-wing party who demonstrated a greater commitment to women's historical and urgent agendas.

KEYWORDS: Political communication. Permanent campaign. Mediatization. Connected public sphere. Feminisms.

RESUMO: *O objetivo deste artigo é analisar como as prefeitas eleitas em municípios do circuito histórico da Estrada Real, em Minas Gerais, Brasil, construíram suas representações políticas na esfera pública conectada das redes sociais durante a campanha eleitoral de 2020 e como elas as mantiveram no primeiro ano de mandato, considerando a crescente utilização da estratégia de campanha permanente, caracterizada pela intensificação do processo de midiatização. Para elaborar essa pesquisa, foi realizada uma breve revisão teórica sobre a relação dialética entre o feminismo como movimento de massa (FRASER, 2019) e o surgimento do neoconservadorismo (BIROLI; MACHADO, VAGGIONE, 2020), estabelecendo as noções conceituais de esfera pública conectada (BENKLER, 2020), midiatização (HJARVARD, 2012), campanha permanente (LILLEKER, 2006) e os arquétipos das mulheres candidatas (PANKE, 2016). A metodologia utilizada foi híbrida, combinando pesquisa bibliográfica, pesquisa documental e análise de conteúdo. Os resultados preliminares indicam que não há uma fórmula pronta para garantir a vitória das mulheres nas urnas. Candidatas com diferentes trajetórias, partidos políticos e tamanhos de municípios adotaram estratégias eleitorais que ora se aproximaram, ora se distanciaram. Todas elas apresentaram cautela ao lidar com questões polêmicas relacionadas ao feminismo contemporâneo durante a campanha. No exercício do mandato, foi a prefeita da cidade de maior porte e do partido mais à esquerda que demonstrou um maior compromisso com as pautas históricas e urgentes das mulheres.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Comunicação política. Campanha permanente. Midiatização. Esfera pública conectada. Feminismos.*

RESUMEN: El objetivo de este artículo es verificar cómo las alcaldesas electas en los municipios del circuito histórico de Estrada Real, en Minas Gerais, en lo Brasil, construyeron sus representaciones políticas en la esfera pública conectada de las redes sociales durante la campaña electoral de 2020 y cómo las mantuvieron en el primer año de mandato, considerando el creciente uso de la estrategia de campaña permanente, caracterizada por la intensificación del proceso de mediatización. Para llevar a cabo la investigación se realizó una breve revisión teórica de la relación dialéctica entre el feminismo como movimiento de masas (FRASER, 2019) y el surgimiento del neoconservadurismo (BIROLO; MACHADO, VAGGIONE, 2020), estableciendo las nociones conceptuales de esfera pública conectada (BENKLER, 2020), mediatización (HJARVARD, 2012), campaña permanente (LILLEKER, 2006) y los arquetipos de candidatas (PANKE, 2016). La metodología utilizada fue híbrida, conciliando la investigación bibliográfica con la investigación documental y el análisis de contenido. Los primeros resultados muestran que no existe una fórmula preparada para asegurar la victoria de las mujeres en las urnas. Candidatas con distintas biografías, desde el espectro de sus partidos hasta el tamaño de los municipios, utilizan estrategias para ser elegidas que a veces se acercan ya veces se alejan. Todas ellas mostraron reservas a tratar temas controvertidos de los feminismos contemporáneos durante la campaña. En el ejercicio de su mandato, fue la alcaldesa de la ciudad más grande y del partido más de izquierda quien incrementó su compromiso con las agendas históricas y urgentes de las mujeres.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Comunicación política. Campaña permanente. Mediatización. Esfera pública conectada. Feminismos.

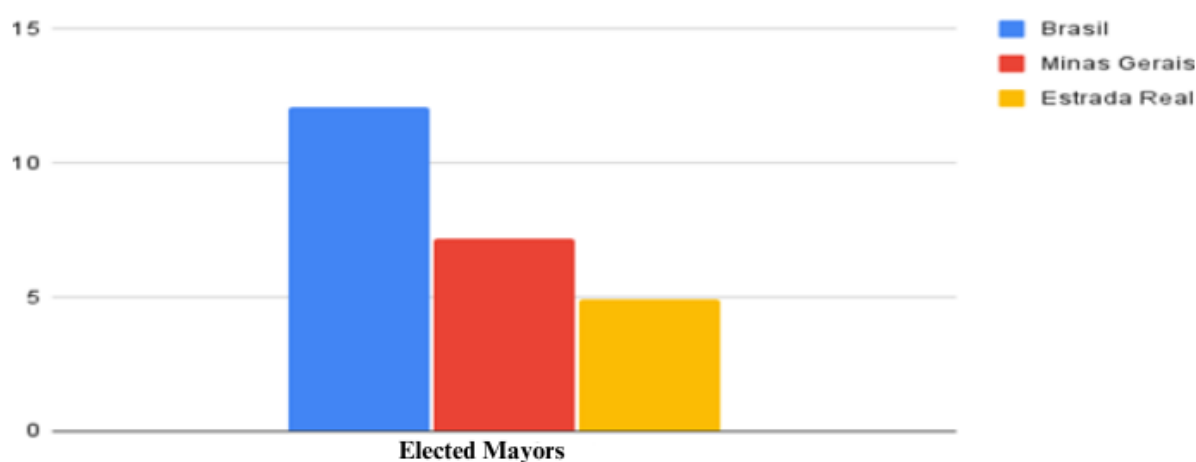
1. Introduction

The Brazilian municipal elections of 2020 took place under exceptionally challenging circumstances due to the social isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. With physical distancing and the predominance of virtual exposure, the electoral rules established for that campaign were modified, favoring paid online advertising over free advertising in traditional media such as radio and television. According to Panke (2021, p. 462, our translation), "The airing time of the Free Electoral Propaganda Schedule decreased in 2020, following the logic that the population would have access to the digital environments of the dispute." For the first time in history, electoral legislation allowed for the boosting of content on the internet, that is, the dissemination of paid advertising on digital social networks by candidates, political parties, or coalitions (Ferreira, 2021).

Expectations for the connected public sphere to provide new opportunities for groups excluded from the traditional public sphere, such as women, were unmet. The election results showed that Brazil remains far from correcting gender disparities, placing it the second-worst

country in Latin America regarding female representation in elected public positions, behind only Haiti. Despite being the majority in the population and the electorate, women accounted for only 12.1% of elected mayors in the country, according to data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). This number was even lower in Minas Gerais, reaching only 7.2% of municipal executive positions. In relation to the Estrada Real trail, the largest tourist circuit in the country, which includes the historic cities of Minas Gerais, female representation in mayoral positions was only 4.9%.

Graph 1 - Percentage of elected female mayors



Source: Own authorship

This article aims to investigate how female mayors in three municipalities located along the Estrada Real (Royal Road) constructed their political representations on social media to connect with voters and address their demands, even in an environment that is adverse to female political participation. The Estrada Real stretches over 1,630 kilometers and encompasses 177 municipalities, with 162 in Minas Gerais, 8 in Rio de Janeiro, and 7 in São Paulo. Out of the 162 municipalities in Minas Gerais located along the Estrada Real trails, 128 (or 79.01%) elected at least one woman in the 2020 elections. Eight women were elected as mayors, 17 as vice-mayors, and 209 as councilwomen.

In this article, we intend to address the following questions concerning the construction of political image on Facebook by the women elected as mayors in 2020 within the historical circuit of the Estrada Real: how does contemporary feminism permeate the representations constructed by the women elected in 2020, both during the electoral campaign and in the exercise of their mandates, considering the paradox of the acceptance of feminism as a mass movement and the growth of conservatism? Do these representations established during the

electoral campaign remain the same during the exercise of mandates within the logic of the perpetual campaign? What archetypes of female candidates prevail in movements and in fulfilling their mandates?

This article is structured in three parts. In the first part, we provide a brief theoretical overview, discussing the dialectical relationship between feminism as a mass movement (FRASER, 2019) and the rise of neoconservatism (BIROLÍ; MACHADO; VAGGIONE, 2020), introducing concepts such as the connected public sphere (BENKLER, 2006), mediatization (HJARVARD, 2012), and the perpetual campaign (LILLEKER, 2006), as well as presenting archetypes of female candidates (PANKE, 2016).

In the second part of this study, we will present the hybrid methodology adopted, which includes a literature review based on the works of the authors mentioned earlier, documentary research conducted using the databases of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), occasional newspaper articles, and the candidates' websites. Additionally, content analysis will be carried out following the proposal by Bardin (2010). By constructing intersectional profiles, we will present the three selected mayors for analysis in the corpus: Cleidileny Chaves (PP), mayor of Itambé do Mato Dentro; Jussara Menicucci (PSB), mayor of Lavras; and Margarida Salomão (PT), mayor of Juiz de Fora.

In the third and final part, we will analyze the construction of political representations on the candidates' and, subsequently, the mayors' Facebook pages. The analyses aim to investigate how contemporary feminism is reflected in their images. Furthermore, we will examine whether these representations change between the electoral campaign and the exercise of their mandates. Finally, we will identify the archetypes these women assume during each period.

2. Theoretical Foundations

Tiburi (2019) argues that the purpose of feminism is to "help people question the power dynamics involved in their own lives" (TIBURI, 2019, p. 29, our translation). Therefore, feminism is intrinsically linked to politics in a broader and narrower sense.

The main demand of feminism was the right to vote for women, as it was believed that this would ensure adequate representation of women in political decision-making. "From the mid-19th century to the first decades of the 20th century, suffrage was the public face of

feminist demands" (MIGUEL, 2014, p. 93, our translation). However, achieving the right to vote did not alter the reality for women, still underrepresented in politics today.

In the 1960s, during the so-called second wave of feminism, the feminist movement also began addressing cultural issues with an emphasis on what is known as identity politics. During this period, according to Nancy Fraser (2019), the feminist movement incorporated the "spirit of capitalism" it had previously fought against, even if unconsciously. "The cultural changes driven by the second wave, which were in themselves healthy, served to legitimize a structural transformation in a capitalist society that directly undermines feminist visions of a just society" (FRASER, 2019, p. 27, our translation).

Hollanda (2019) defines Fraser's theoretical premise as follows:

Nancy Fraser extensively demonstrates how feminism, which initially exposed capitalism's strong androcentrism and proposed capitalist society's transformation at its deepest roots, gradually unfolded into struggles for identity recognition, representation, and participation. Gender justice moved, in line with neoliberal economics, towards the recognition of difference, the axis of feminist grammar in the turn of the 20th to the 21st century (HOLLANDA, 2019, p.10, our translation).

Fraser (2019) refers to the "wiles of history"² that led feminism to inadvertently strengthen the very capitalism it fought against, as capitalism adapted to prevent feminism from becoming a potentially more radical social process: "As uncomfortable as it may be, I believe that the second wave of feminism inadvertently strengthened a key ingredient of the new spirit of neoliberalism" (FRASER, 2019, p. 39, our translation).

For this reason, in a manifesto co-written with Cinzia Arruzza and Tithi Bhattacharya, Fraser (2019) advocates not for the feminism adopted by transnational corporations that promote gender quotas as a way to build an image of supporting diversity but for more radical and transformative feminism that has an impact on the lives of the 99%, those who are excluded from global wealth production. This includes women and those who are expropriated by patriarchy and capitalism, social and economic systems that are highly exclusive and generate inequalities.

Radical feminism directly opposes the new form of conservatism that has grown in the last decade. This neoconservatism, based on solid Christian values, is transnational, allied with neoliberalism, and its main banner is the fight against the so-called "gender ideology" (BIROLÍ; MACHADO; VAGGIONE, 2020). An example of its growth is the shift of central political

² The text was originally published under "Feminism, Capitalism, and the Gunning of History" in the *New Left Review* in 2009.

power in Brazil from the hands of the group represented by the first and only woman-elected President, former President Dilma Rousseff (PT), to the hands of the most ultraconservative group since the military dictatorship, represented by President Jair Bolsonaro (PL), in a questionable impeachment process that was also facilitated by the media. This latter group is committed to a regressive and exclusionary sexual morality centered on a singular family model that assigns women the role of being "beautiful, modest, and confined to the home" (QUINALHA, 2016, p. 131).

Indeed, it is essential to highlight that neoconservatism attacks the most fundamental principles of feminism but, as Fraser (2019) exposes, it also incorporates identity and representational issues, such as the implementation of policies aimed at increasing women's presence through quotas in politics and the labor market.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the paradox between feminism as a mass movement and neoconservatism is a social phenomenon that permeates public discourse in both the traditional public sphere and the contemporary connected public sphere. The connected public sphere offers new opportunities and, at the same time, presents unique challenges for actors who have been excluded from formal political processes, such as women. However, one of the main criticisms of feminist theory against anthropocentric science is the division of everyday life between the public sphere (political space) and the private sphere (domestic and family room). According to feminist theory, this premise "corresponds to a restricted understanding of politics, which, in the name of universality in the public sphere, defines a series of topics and experiences as private and, as such, non-political" (BIROLI, 2014, p. 31, our translation).

The understanding that what happens in the domestic sphere is solely the concern of the individuals within it has served to block the protection of the most vulnerable in current power relations. It has also obscured the connections between roles and positions of power in the private and public spheres (BIROLI, 2014, p. 32, our translation).

The duality between public and private spheres is primarily grounded in "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere," published in 1962 by Jürgen Habermas. In this work, the author asserts that with the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the bourgeoisie experienced a new relationship between the public and the private, which allowed for the emergence of modern democracies. According to Habermas, this relationship established the bourgeois public sphere, a space for debate and deliberation among heads of households who owned the means of production. He states, "The developed bourgeois public sphere is based on the fictitious identity of private individuals gathered into a public in their double role as owners and mere

human beings" (HABERMAS, 2014, p. 182, our translation). In this space, these owners discussed the direction of society based on rational arguments, that is, grounded in reason.

In Habermas's framework, early capitalism's private sphere consisted of the sphere of intimate family life and the exchange of commodities for labor. On the other hand, the public sphere was divided into two instances: the literary and the political. The former allowed for women's participation, while the latter was in the hands of male owners and mediated the relations between the state and society. However, the emergence of mass media in the early 20th century brought significant changes to the essence of this bourgeois public sphere, according to Habermas's perspective. He argues that radio, television, and cinema expanded the so-called "public opinion" beyond the predominantly literate male owners.

Habermas states, "The public sphere expanded informally through the dissemination of the press and propaganda" (HABERMAS, 2014, p. 309, our translation). This resulted in mediating conflicts previously confined to the bourgeois public sphere by the State. The public sphere began to mediate the interests of different classes and groups, including those of women. Laws started to be passed under popular pressure, which the author does not see as a positive development (HABERMAS, 2014, p. 309).

Fraser (1990) first criticizes Habermas' proposition that in the public sphere idealized by him, interlocutors would debate as equals. According to her, the asymmetries present in contemporary societies are also reproduced in the public sphere, hindering, for example, the legitimate debate between men and women, as the latter still generally have low political representation. The author also contests the idea that there is only one public sphere in contemporary democracies. According to her, there are diverse publics and counter-publics in stratified and multicultural societies, expanding the debate, including in the media. The feminist argues that the public sphere should not exclusively address issues related to the common good but should also tackle private matters, such as domestic violence.

In the preface to a new edition of "Mudança estrutural da esfera pública", published in 1990, Habermas himself acknowledges that feminist intellectual production subsequent to the book's release "sharpened the perception of the patriarchal character of the public sphere itself - a public sphere that soon extended to the reading public, also composed of women, and assumed political functions" (HABERMAS, 2014, p. 44-5, our translation).

The internet highlights the interconnection between the public and private spheres, as pointed out by feminists. According to Leal and Passos (2021), criticism of the dichotomy

between these two spheres deserves special attention in an era of a connected and ever-moving society, where the continuous use of social media further blurs the boundaries between them.

Sold as an extension of the private sphere, where one can connect with friends and deepen relationships, these social networks have become powerful arms of the public sphere, where increasingly discussions take place that affect not only the formation of public opinion but also the electoral behavior of citizens, who use them as an important, if not the main, source of consultation to define their votes (LEAL; PASSOS, 2021, p. 7, our translation).

Aiming at the expansion of the public sphere in the era of the internet, Yochai Benkler (2006), in *The Wealth of Networks*, proposes the concept of the connected public sphere to argue that the internet is more democratic than traditional media (SILVEIRA, 2008, p. 113). According to him, in the past, the cost of having a voice in the public sphere was considerably high, but the internet allowed new agents to enter circulation, increasing the potential for civil society to express itself. Among these voices are those of feminist and anti-patriarchal movements, which have gained more visibility and mobilization capacity in the political struggle in networked society (CASTELLS, 1999).

Martino (2014) warns that the internet is not a perfect public sphere because it depends on people. He states, "The internet creates possibilities for participation in a Public Sphere, but it does not immediately turn all citizens into individuals interested in collective issues" (MARTINO, 2014, p. 113, our translation). However, he sees advantages in using the internet for this purpose, highlighting that "The possibility of political participation created by digital networks opens up avenues for thinking about the notion of democracy and its relationship with the circulation of information and the production of knowledge" (MARTINO, 2014, p. 114, our translation).

This is because communication, including social media, centralizes social processes in the historical context known as mediatization, which encompasses the idea that society is increasingly subjected to and dependent on the media and its logic in postmodernity.

This process is characterized by a duality in which the means has become integrated into the operations of other social institutions while also acquiring the status of full-fledged social institutions themselves. Consequently, social interaction – within respective institutions, between institutions, and in society – occurs through the communication (HJARVARD, 2012, p.64, our translation).

In political communication, this process can be easily identified through the proposition of the concept of a permanent campaign. In this new³ (SODRÉ, 2011) even more, fragmented and complex media environment (MARTINS, 2020), where old and new media converge (JENKINS, 2013), the restrictive periods of official electoral campaigns are no longer sufficient for candidates to capture the attention of the electorate, especially undecided voters (LILLEKER, 2006). In contemporary times, the voter is contested daily, throughout all times, in what is called the permanent campaign (LILLEKER, 2006; MARTINS, 2020; FERNANDES *et al.*, 2016).

Lilleker (2006) argues that this concept is validated by the growing practice of politicians and political organizations in maintaining the strategies used during the limited period of the electoral campaign even after the elections are over: "*Permanent campaigning refers to the use of office by elected individuals and organizations (governments, parties of government, members of parliament, congress or similar elected houses) to build and maintain popular support*" (LILLEKER, 2006, p. 143, our translation).

The author argues that the increased use of permanent campaign strategies is due to what he calls the "nature of the modern or postmodern voter." According to him, campaigns no longer mobilize voters from one party or another during specific electoral periods, as they did in the past. On the contrary, they now aim to win the votes of undecided voters, which the author considers to be the most valuable asset in an election. These voters need to be contested daily, minute by minute. Lilleker (2006) noted that contemporary voters are no longer persuaded to vote for a particular candidate based on short-term strategies employed during electoral campaigns.

Ormstein e Mann (2000 apud LILLEKER, 2006, p. 144) argue that several changes in the political environment justify the introduction of permanent campaigns. These include the weakening of party organizations, the involvement of non-electoral political actors competing for voter attention, and technological advancements in communications that facilitate 24/7 news gathering. The authors also maintain that, with the decline in public participation in electoral processes, voters increasingly believe that politicians are all the same and mistrust actors from different political spectrums.

³ According to Sodré (2006), the media bios is a way of life in the media, a different aspect from the other three bios that compose Aristotle's existential spheres. In an interview with the TV show "Trilha das Letras" on TV Brasil, aired on 08/29/2017, the author explains that the term refers to the existential sphere dependent on commerce and technology and "seeks to integrate the individual into society through financial capital". Available at: <https://tvbrasil.ebc.com.br/trilha-de-letras/2017/09/mitos>. Access in: 13 sep. 2021.

Lilleker (2006) adds that voters condemn both the message and the messenger in the current state of politics as a spectacle (DEBORD, 1997), especially in what we now refer to as the misinformation environment. The author compares the political arena to a theatrical performance, characterized by the dominance of characters and their roles, dramatization, the breaking of regularities, and entertainment.

An essential concept in this spectacularization of politics is stereotypes, which, according to Panke (2016), are "mental images about certain aspects or cognitive structures that bring expectations about a group or category" (PANKE, 2016, p. 116, our translation). It is precisely to align with the positive expectations of the electorate that female candidates employ archetypes directly related to the social understanding of the role of women and their feminine nature (PANKE, 2021, p. 460).

According to Panke, there are three main archetypes for Latin American female candidates: the warrior, the maternal, and the professional. She clarifies that during an electoral campaign, all these archetypes are present to a greater or lesser degree, but there is always one that prevails (PANKE, 2016). The profile of the warrior woman encompasses "the leaders, those who fight, and often those who break social rules" (PANKE, 2016, p. 122, our translation). An example is the case of councilwoman Marielle Franco (PSOL), a black woman, lesbian, and coming from a favela who was assassinated in a misogynistic and macho country like Brazil.

Panke, in countries like most of those in Latin America, "all women who enter predominantly male spaces, such as politics, can be considered warriors to some extent" (PANKE, 2016, p. 122, our translation). The researcher emphasizes that in the struggle for change, female candidates should not adopt characteristics attributed to men, such as aggressiveness and courage, as the electorate may not well receive this. "Various experiences have shown that women seen as masculine receive negative evaluations, even if they possess the same leadership qualities applauded in a man" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 290 apud PANKE, 2016, p. 130, our translation).

The maternal typology appropriates the social construction that motherhood is the central value of women's existence. "The overvaluation of motherhood may explain why several candidates for public office end up mentioning this fact at the expense of their

professional achievements" (PANKE, 2016, p. 135, our translation). A classic example is the case of Evita Perón from Argentina, known as the "madonna of the descamisados"⁴.

In her research with 21 political leaders in Latin America, Panke (2016) found that the maternal archetype is the most used in constructing political images. However, being maternal does not necessarily imply that a woman needs to be a mother in the literal sense. She can adopt the role of defender of the city's people or a specific group of constituents. The characteristics of this archetype include sensitivity, attention, and care. "Being attentive is also related to listening, which theoretically constitutes one of the qualities of the feminine universe" (PANKE, 2016, p. 141, our translation).

Finally, the professional typology is the least common in Latin America. "Professional success is not part of the feminine identity: the fulfilled woman is the one who gets married and has children, not the one who rises to a leadership position in her profession" (CASTAÑEDA, 2013, p. 289 apud PANKE, 2016, p. 148, our translation). An example of a woman who built her political image based on the professional archetype is former President Dilma Rousseff (PT). Panke (2016) explains that at the beginning and end of a campaign, advertising spots highlight the candidate's professional qualifications along with their biographies, aiming to prove their managerial abilities. According to the author, the professional typology exhibits two tendencies: campaigns that emphasize the success of the candidates and those that depict women as subordinate to a male political sponsor.

At first, discussing independent professional candidates and those subordinate to others within the same analytical category may seem contradictory. However, what is being shown here are women who, despite their professional success, also stand out due to a strong relationship with a male figure in politics that propels them forward (PANKE, 2016, p. 150, our translation).

To analyze the archetype of each candidate, Panke (2021) suggests observing the following aspects: 1) the iconic code, which encompasses non-verbal elements; 2) the linguistic code, which includes verbal elements; and 3) the sound code, which encompasses both verbal and non-verbal elements. In the table below, the author illustrates how each of these elements contributes to composing the observed archetypes of women:

⁴ "Descamisados" was the term used to refer to the poor and working-class individuals who supported Evita and her husband.

Table 1 - Characteristics of the visual codes of the archetypes of the candidates

	WARRIOR	MATERNAL	PROFESSIONAL
Iconic Code	Intense colors, supporters nearby, flags, and other signs of support. Pointing fingers, serious and victorious facial expressions, raised and moving arms. The editing can include sharp cuts and shorter takes. Scenes with dramatic settings.	Neutral and pink-colored clothing, delicate accessories, and use of stereotypical symbols of femininity such as "heart," "flowers," and "children." Scenes in domestic settings, gardens, schools, and environments recognized as "for women," scenes with family or rooted in household chores.	Attire related to executive roles, such as suits and more formal clothing. Pearl necklaces and similar accessories. Use of shirts. Organized work location and office related to management and leadership. Alongside works, in the position of meeting leaders or exercising their original profession.
Linguistic Code	Propositive, attacking and denouncing speeches. Problem <i>versus</i> solution. Disqualifying arguments.	References to caring for people and biological children. More conciliatory speech. Conveys attentive listening.	Emphasizes professional preparation and experience, career, and background. Demonstration of capability. Accountability.
Sound Code	Energetic soundtrack and assertive voice. Ambientation can be either silent (drama) or noisy (action).	Soft soundtrack, reconciling and welcoming voice.	The soundtrack of overcoming, victory, and assertive voice.

Source: Table with elements for the application of female typologies (PANKE, 2021, p. 455)

3. Building intersectional profiles

To construct the profiles of the analyzed mayors, we utilized the theoretical concept of intersectionality, derived from Feminist Theory, as an analytical tool. According to Patrícia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2021), intersectionality recognizes that categories such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity, and age range - among others - are interconnected and mutually influence each other. According to the authors, "intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations in diverse societies, as well as individual experiences in everyday life" (COLLINS; BILGE, 2021, p. 244, our translation).

Cleidileny Chaves (PP) is the mayor of Itambé do Mato Dentro, a small municipality with 1,949 inhabitants⁵. She is white, unmarried, holds a complete degree in Administration, and was 30 years old at the time of the election. As emphasized during the campaign, Cleidileny is a simple person and a native of the rural area. She did not possess sufficient political capital to seek the position, with her only political experience until then being elected as a substitute councilwoman in 2012. However, she received support from the then-mayor of Itambé, José

⁵ There was no population census in Brazil in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so this research is based on the population projection estimated by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) for 2021.

Elisio de Oliveira Duarte, known as Zelisio, who was approved by 80% of the population, according to a survey conducted by the Tiradentes Institute and published on the Itambé News website. Therefore, Cleidileny was elected under the Partido Progressista (PP), which occupies the political spectrum ranging from center-right to the right in Brazil. She obtained 1,143 votes, corresponding to 53.96% of the total, defeating Matheus Perdigão da Silva (AVANTE). Her vice-mayor is Niltinho, from the Patriota Party, who is 50 years old. Both are part of the "Itambé Moving Forward" coalition formed by the PP and PATRIOTA parties.

Cleidileny declared to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) a personal net worth of \$ 32.536,61 (R\$156,000,00). She reported spending \$9.510,00 (R\$ 45.600,00) on the electoral campaign. During the campaign, she adopted two different slogans: Initially, she used the motto "It's people like us," referring to her humble origins, and later she adopted the slogan "To do much more," highlighting the commitment to continue her administration, endorsed by the then-mayor.

Jussara Menicutti (PSB) was elected mayor of Lavras, a medium-sized municipality with 104,783 inhabitants. She received 17,637 votes, corresponding to 37.27% of the total, defeating Dâmina Pereira (PODE), the second-place candidate among the five candidates. Jussara had already served as mayor of the municipality for three previous terms. She is white, married, holds a complete degree in Law, and was 70 years old at the time of the elections. She declared a net worth of \$12.514,08 (R\$60.000,00) to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). According to information provided to the TSE, the expenses of her electoral campaign reached \$51.683,15 (R\$247.800,00).

As a member of a traditional political family in the region and a former mayor of Lavras for three terms, Jussara demonstrated having sufficient political capital to achieve her fourth victory in the local executive. Despite her extensive political experience, she chose the paradoxical slogan "Experience and innovation to do much more" as her campaign motto, betting on voters' preference for novelties in politics. Despite being affiliated with a party with social-democratic aspirations, the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB), Jussara, presented a neoliberal platform in the economy and neoconservative positions on social issues. She emphasized the importance of minimal state intervention and entrepreneurship to drive growth, while her campaign jingle positioned her as a defender of life and family, a neoconservative theme. Her vice-mayor is the accountant Rodolpho Crepaldi, who was affiliated with MDB at 47 in 2020. Both were part of the coalition "Work and experience to resume development,"

which brought together, in addition to PSB and MDB, the parties REPUBLICANOS, PTB, PL, and PSDB.

Margarida Salomão (PT) is the mayor of Juiz de Fora, a city with 573,285 inhabitants. Like Jussara, Margarida was 70 years old during the elections. She is single and also white, like the two previous mayors. Margarida has a higher education level than the other two mayors, holding a post-doctorate degree in Linguistics from the University of California. She is a tenured professor at UFJF (Federal University of Juiz de Fora) and served as the institution's rector for two terms, following in the footsteps of her father, Gilberto Salomão, who was also a professor and former rector of UFJF. Additionally, Margarida was elected as a federal deputy twice. She did not complete her last term due to her victory in the municipal elections. Margarida declared a net worth of \$109.915,34 (R\$ 527.000,00) to the TSE. Her announced campaign expenses reached \$377,555,00 (R\$ 1.810,226,00). She competed against ten other candidates, including four women. She was elected under the coalition "Juiz de Fora is worth it," which brought together the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) and the Partido Verde (PV). Her vice-mayor, João Kennedy Ribeiro, is affiliated with the latter.

Margarida Salomão is a historical figure of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) in Minas Gerais, possessing extensive political capital. She is well-known and respected by party leaders, with whom she has interacted throughout her activism, particularly in Brasília during her term in the Chamber of Deputies. Margarida also has close ties to historic women activists, such as former President Dilma Rousseff, and has been accused of imitating her during the 2012⁶ campaign. She has a good understanding of her electorate: she has run for mayor of Juiz de Fora on three previous occasions, reaching the second round in all of them, although she did not secure victory. In the 2020 elections, she adopted a different strategy, seeking to distance herself a little from the PT and the figure of Dilma while presenting herself as more empathetic, proactive, and competent. Panke (2016, p. 80, our translation) stated, "As one can perceive, women are evaluated more rigorously, they must be better prepared and demonstrate it".

⁶ The newspaper "Hoje em Dia," from the state of Minas Gerais, published an article accusing Margarida Salomão of imitating Dilma Rousseff. Under the title "Candidate for mayor of Juiz de Fora copies Dilma to gain votes," the article was published on July 13, 2012, and is available at: <https://www.hojeemdia.com.br/acervo/2.704/candidata-%C3%A0-prefeitura-de-juiz-de-fora-copia-dilma-para-conseguir-votos-1.12435>. Access in 12 sep 2021.

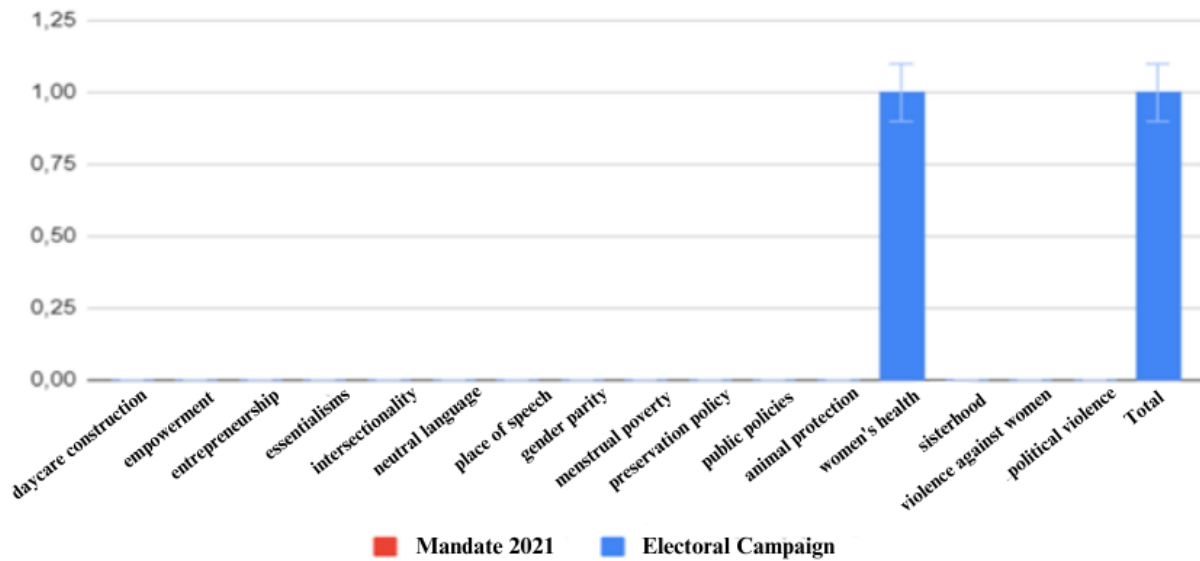
4. Análise da construção da imagem política

The construction of the political image was analyzed through manual extraction of the posts made by the candidates and later mayors on their Facebook accounts. The period established for the analysis of the posts encompassed the entire 2020 electoral campaign: from September 27th to November 15th for the candidates Cleidileny Chaves and Jussara Menicucci, who were elected in the first round, and from September 27th to November 29th for Margarida Salomão, who was elected in the second round. In addition, the periods from November 1st to December 31st, 2021, corresponding to the first year in office, were also analyzed for all mayors. Facebook was selected as the digital social network for the extraction and analysis of the posts due to its widespread use among Brazilians and because it was the platform chosen by the three candidates and, subsequently, mayors.

The methodology adopted for content analysis (BARDIN, 2010) identified 17 categories of words and proposals related to contemporary feminism. These categories include themes such as abortion, construction of daycare centers, women's empowerment, women's entrepreneurship, essentialisms (such as maternal instinct and care), intersectionality, gender-neutral language, voice and representation, gender parity, menstrual poverty, presence politics (such as electoral quotas and representation), LGBTQIA+ public policies (such as social name and transgender process), animal protection, women's health, sisterhood, violence against women, and gender-based political violence. The posts were then analyzed regarding the predominant representation of the candidate woman archetype, as Panke (2016) described.

Cleidileny Chaves (PP) conducted the most modest campaign among the three elected female mayors. Her presence on social media was almost amateurish. Only nine posts were made throughout the campaign, and during her term, only 11, maintaining a low average. The candidate chose to avoid controversial topics, both progressive and conservative. The only reference made to contemporary feminism was a post related to women's health during the campaign, addressing the importance of breast cancer prevention.

Graph 2 - Influences of feminism on the construction of Cleidileny Chaves' (PP) political image

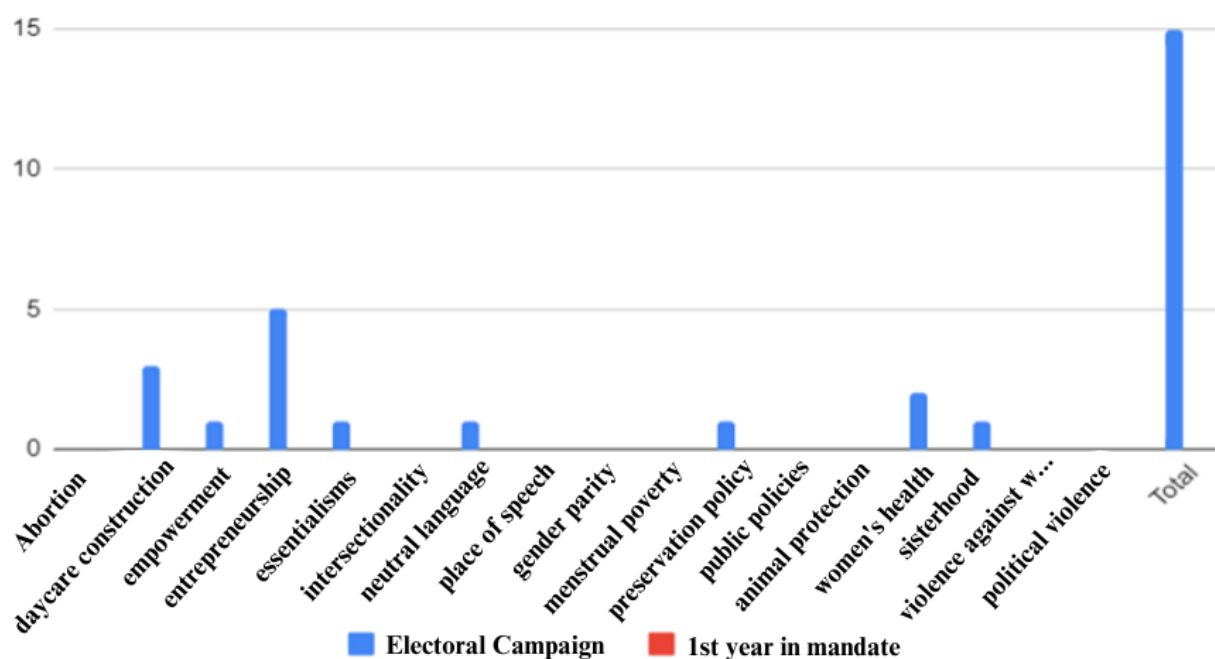


Source: Own authorship

From the perspective of the archetypes used, Cleidileny alternated between the warrior archetype and the professional archetype. The maternal archetype did not stand out in her virtual image. The warrior archetype was more evident when she mentioned her humble origin, simple family, and trajectory in the rural area. The original slogan of her campaign well represents this: "É gente da gente" (It's people from the people). However, when she adopted the slogan "Para fazer muito mais" (To do much more), another archetype gained prominence and became predominant: the professional archetype, evidenced by the clothing, posture, and especially the observed political sponsorship.

Jussara Menicucci (PSB), the mayor of Lavras, was the candidate who made the most posts during the campaign, with 153 different contents, 13 of which were related to contemporary feminism. The posts covered many topics, focusing on traditional campaign videos, live broadcasts, and question clarification programs. Her forays into modern feminism mainly addressed issues related to neoliberal feminism, emphasizing entrepreneurship, which was the most addressed topic by her during the campaign. In the first year of her term, she made 42 posts, but none related to contemporary feminism. This represents a significant setback in her role as a representative of women.

Graph 3 - Influences of feminism on the construction of Jussara Menicucci's (PSB) political image



Source: Own authorship

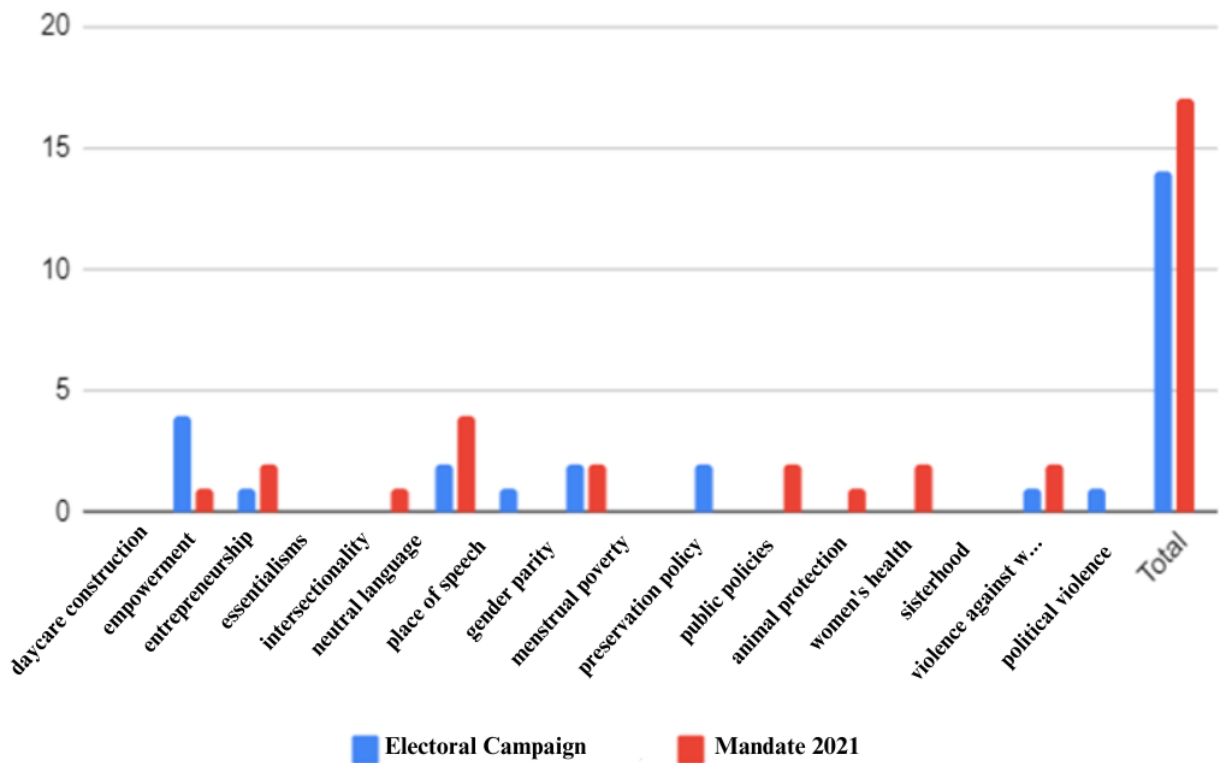
Menicucci competently utilized all the archetypes. In her campaign videos on the streets, she adopted the maternal archetype, walking alongside her husband and children, promising to care for everyone in the city. In conversations with voters, she portrayed herself as a warrior capable of tirelessly fighting to solve all problems. In live broadcasts and question-answering videos, she presented herself as a professional living up to her three-term mayor experience. The predominant archetype was the professional one, evident in the chosen attire, posture, and discourse.

Regarding the number of posts, Margarida Salomão falls in the middle. Despite having the most expensive campaign, she made 79 Facebook posts, representing an 87.7% increase compared to Cleidileny and a 93.6% reduction compared to Jussara. After being elected, the mayor of Juiz de Fora demonstrated significant activity on digital platforms, with 139 posts in the analyzed period. Among the three women, Salomão addressed the widest range of feminist-related topics. During the campaign, the focus was on empowerment, and in exercising her mandate, she adopted gender-neutral language. While during the campaign, Margarida's motto was "Everything is for everyone", at the end of their first year in office, it changed to "Everything is for everyone and all".

In the analysis of the candidate's campaign, it is noticeable that she consistently addressed relevant feminist issues but in a more general manner, privileging non-controversial topics. In the exercise of her mandate, Salomão delved deeply into the historical commitment of the center-left to identity issues, tackling controversial matters such as implementing public policies for transgender individuals, adopting social names, and ensuring access to medical care for gender transition.

Regarding the archetypes of the female candidates, Margarida adopted the maternal archetype during the campaign, presenting herself as more affectionate, empathetic, and nurturing. She even created a specific video about the importance of attentive listening, a characteristic of this archetype. However, in exercising her mandate, she returned to emphasizing the professional archetype, which has always distinguished her.

Graph 4 - Influences of feminism on constructing Margarida Salomão's (PT) political image



Source: Own authorship

5. Final Considerations

The analysis of the construction of the political images of three out of the eight female mayors in the municipalities along the Estrada Real in Minas Gerais reveals that there is no ready-made formula to guarantee women's electoral success. Candidates with distinct biographies, belonging to different political parties, and running in municipalities of varied sizes adopt strategies that sometimes converge and sometimes diverge entirely.

It is interesting to observe that all of them showed caution in dealing with controversial issues related to contemporary feminism during their campaigns, probably due to the influence of traditionalism and conservatism present in the history of Minas Gerais. However, in the exercise of their mandates, it was Margarida Salomão, the mayor of the largest city and representative of the left-wing party, who intensified her commitment to women's historical and urgent demands by addressing contentious issues.

Regarding the adopted archetypes, it is worth noting that all the characters are female, white, have a high level of education, and hold successful professions. These attributes allow them to adopt the professional typology. Cleidileny Chaves, with her political support, and Jussara Menicucci, with her long-standing political family, adopted it as the predominant archetype. On the other hand, Margarida Salomão, who had unsuccessfully run for mayor of Juiz de Fora three times before, opted for the maternal typology this time, the most commonly used and successful archetype in Latin America, where it is still believed that women's ultimate fulfillment is found in motherhood.

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