

Elections and indigenous insurgency in Brazil: political participation from 2014 to 2022¹

Elecciones e insurgencia indígena en Brasil: participación política de 2014 a 2022.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the Indigenous movement in Brazil has mobilized to contest and occupy institutional spaces of democratic representation, positioning itself as an insurgent force within national politics. This article aims to identify self-declared indigenous candidates in the 2014, 2018, and 2022 general elections and to analyze the underlying factors behind the increase in their candidacies during these electoral cycles. The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory-descriptive methodology and is structured around seven analytical dimensions, using data from the Open Data Portal of the Brazilian Superior Electoral Court (TSE). The findings point to a growing presence of indigenous candidacies, driven by five interrelated factors: the consolidation of the indigenous movement over the past three decades; improved access to public education policies promoting equity and ethno-racial diversity; the political reconfiguration following the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff; strategic co-optation by right-wing parties; and the increasing protagonism of indigenous women, particularly evident in the 2022 elections.

Keywords: Elections, Indigenous Peoples, Insurgencies, Representative Democracy, Rights violations.

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, el movimiento indígena en Brasil se ha movilizó para disputar y ocupar espacios institucionales de representación democrática, posicionándose como una fuerza insurgente dentro de la política nacional. Este artículo tiene como objetivo identificar a los candidatos autodeclarados indígenas en las elecciones generales de 2014, 2018 y 2022 y analizar los factores que explican el aumento de estas candidaturas en dichos procesos electorales. El estudio adopta una metodología cualitativa de carácter exploratorio-descriptivo, estructurada en torno a siete dimensiones analíticas, con base en datos del Portal de Datos Abiertos del Tribunal Superior Electoral (TSE) de Brasil. Los resultados evidencian un crecimiento sostenido de las candidaturas indígenas, impulsado por cinco factores interrelacionados: el fortalecimiento del movimiento indígena en las últimas tres décadas; el acceso ampliado a políticas públicas educativas orientadas a la equidad y la diversidad étnico-racial; el contexto político tras la destitución de la presidenta Dilma Rousseff; la instrumentalización política por partidos de derecha; y el creciente protagonismo de mujeres indígenas, especialmente en las elecciones de 2022.

Palabras Clave: Elecciones, Democracia representativa, Insurgencias, Pueblos indígenas, Violaciones de derechos.



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1.- INTRODUCCIÓN

Indigenous and indigenist movements' participation in the elaboration and approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution was a determining factor for the new relationship between the Brazilian State and indigenous peoples (Baniwa, 2012; Cunha, 2018; Fernandes, 2015). However, some elements in it still evolve slowly and the small presence of elected indigenous candidates at state and federal level is a good example of it (Oliveira & Souza Lima, 2022). The aim of the present research is to address self-declared indigenous candidates' participation in the national politics, mainly in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections, given the aforementioned political background. This timeframe is justified by recent changes in candidates' application process since 2014, when the Electoral Supreme Court (also known as TSE) introduced the "ethnicity/skin color" category in electoral applications (TSE, 2022). Scientific debate based on official data of this category is recent in literature.

In Latin America, the political participation of indigenous people in electoral processes has been receiving attention in the field of Political Science in recent years, with emphasis on the different processes in the countries of the region (Rômulo & Albala, 2023). From a broader perspective, Albala and Natal (2023) provide a comparative analysis of indigenous peoples' struggles for effective representation in Latin American national political systems. In the descriptive analyses of this representation, the authors identify three main groups: a) countries considered to be more inclusive environments, such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Guatemala; b) countries with some representation and/or active indigenous elites, such as Colombia, Mexico and Paraguay; c) countries that present atypical cases with potential indigenous issues, such as Peru and Chile (Albala & Natal, 2023). This analysis shows the progress and challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the field of democratic representation in Latin America.

In the last decade, countries that have been more open to indigenous people in institutional politics have also faced complex challenges in the struggle for effective democratic representation. Research by Cunha Filho (2023) indicates that Bolivia has made progress in the formal recognition of indigenous rights with the Plurinational State. On the one hand, Evo Morales' government has brought material benefits and greater indigenous representation in electoral processes, but on the other, many of the agendas of interest to these groups are still limited by the power of the central state (Cunha Filho, 2023). In Ecuador, Dávila Gordillo (2021) points out that Pachakutik - a party linked to the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) - has combined social mobilization with electoral strategies to demand democratization and plurinationality in electoral politics. Despite occasional victories, the party faces challenges in terms of cohesion and expansion beyond traditional indigenous areas (Dávila Gordillo, 2021). In Guatemalan, as Barragán (2023) indicates, despite being a strongly multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual society, the structural exclusion of indigenous peoples persists, both in society and in the institutional political system. The Guatemalan case contrasts with more inclusive processes observed in Andean countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, and reinforces the importance of analyzing the institutional and social barriers that limit effective indigenous participation in spaces of power (Barragán, 2023).

According to the literature analyzed, the experiences of indigenous people in Bolivia, Ecuador and Guatemala can offer a rich contribution to the Brazilian state in terms of understanding the mechanisms that encourage and obstruct the political representation of indigenous people in electoral processes. Among these obstacles are three common tendencies present in these countries, such as: fragmentation of indigenous movements and tensions between autonomy and party integration; the

importance of institutional reforms such as quotas and reserved seats; and the persistence of structural barriers such as poverty, discrimination and marginalization (Dávila Gordillo, 2021; Barragán, 2023; Cunha Filho, 2023). Some of these tendencies are also present in the Brazilian case, which reveals that the barriers to indigenous representation in electoral processes in Latin America follow a pattern based on exclusion and marginalization in electoral disputes (Codato & Lobato, 2017; Conceição, 2018; De Paula, 2020).

Regarding the participation of indigenous candidates in Brazilian elections, Oliveira and Souza Lima (2022) emphasize that this debate was built on a series of scattered data in specific works; as well as in NGOs and social movements' efforts to map indigenous participation in elections, in previous years. The research "Color of the elected ones: determinants for non-whites' political sub-representation in Brazil", by Campos and Machado (2015, p. 142), highlights a whole series of essential questions that have helped elaborating the present study, namely: a) non-white groups' low representativeness in the national politics; b) scarce literature about this topic - different from topics like gender and politics, which have much more references; c) arguments that non-white candidates' representativeness is linked to the "sociological dynamics of racial discrimination in Brazil". Although these authors mainly approach the black population's low representativeness in politics, their study can provide interpretative lenses to indigenous candidacy cases (Campos & Machado, 2015).

The experience of black, indigenous and afro-indigenous populations is similar when it comes to the Brazilian society's discriminatory profile, which reflects on several sectors, even on electoral policies (Campos & Machado, 2015; Barbieri et al., 2022). Accordingly, referencing studies about race and elections can provide epistemological perspectives at times to think about crossings featuring indigenous candidacies. However, the goal of the current research is not to extrapolate the comparative elements of experiences lived by these social groups. Actually, these experiences will be herein used to show that these groups share a similar political exclusion context, which is perpetrated by a society model substantiated by structural racism used as tool to protect whiteness' privileges. Based on Almeida (2021), the structural racism sets the power and supremacy of one race over the other. Therefore, it establishes categories among social groups as domination, and social, political and economic control instrument.

Structural racism perpetuates ethnic inequalities and marginalization by putting certain groups in a submission position within a society historically forged to put aside indigenous peoples from the social, political and economic system. On the other hand, these structures' strength reflects on statistics, and it points out that "the national politics is mostly white" (Campos & Machado, 2015, p. 150). Yet, this structure highlights indigenous peoples' low representativeness in the Brazilian political composition, since the country lacked indigenous representation at the federal political scope for 30 years. The first indigenous individual to be elected for the federal sphere was Congressman Mário Juruna. He was elected for Rio de Janeiro State, and his office lasted from 1983 to 1987, by the Democratic Labor Party, also known as PDT. From Keyla Pataxó's viewpoint, his election aimed at representing two main agendas: interests of indigenous peoples and environmental agenda issues (Conceição, 2018).

After almost 30 years without any elected indigenous candidacy in federal elections, two phenomena were determining to the present study. The first one regards the election of the first indigenous woman as Federal Congresswoman in 2018, Joênia Wapichana, who was elected for Roraima State through *Rede e Sustentabilidade* Party (Guajajara et al., 2022). According to TSE data, there was increase in self-declared indigenous peoples' participation in state and federal elections, in the last elections. A research question stood out given these two phenomena: what are the likely causes for the

increase in the number of self-declared indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections at state and federal scope?

This research question was also subsidized by the political polarization observed in the 2022 electoral process, when 10 self-declared indigenous candidates were elected (TSE, 2022). Guajajara and Célia Xakriabá stand out in this group; both of them are closely related to the Indigenous Peoples Articulation (APIB) in Brazil. They represented a strong opposition to Former President Jair Bolsonaro's administration. Hamilton Mourão and Silvia Waiãpi were also elected and they defended and supported the office and agenda of Bolsonaro's government. Thus, analyzing indigenous candidacies' profile through the lens of Political Sciences is essential to help better understanding this debate's complexity, mainly when TSE data point towards the growing number of self-declared indigenous candidacies based on the "ethnicity/skin color" criterion. The aim of the present research was to identify self-declared indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections in order to analyze the likely factors boosting the number of these candidates in the three herein assessed electoral processes.

Indigenous political disputes in electoral processes, in the last few years, do not mean a new participation context. The analysis of the municipal elections, as observed by De Paula (2020) in his study on indigenous participation in the 1976 and 2016 municipal elections, allowed identifying that such disputes have been going on for quite a while in the country. However, if one observes the background of the agenda advocated by Indigenous Peoples Articulation in Brazil (APIB), it is possible seeing that its electoral process participation agenda has gained centrality in the last few years. APIB's actions are referenced by the indigenous movement in Brazil, since it gathers regional and national organizations. Thus, APIB also acts in mobilizing the peoples and their representative organizations to avoid threats and aggression to indigenous rights. APIB spread a letter called "For a more indigenous Parliament", in 2017 – the following excerpt must be highlighted:

Indigenous peoples in Brazil have faced strong pressure in the last few years, and it is getting more intense in all the State's power spheres. Interests of groups mostly against indigenous peoples' rights have prevailed at all parliamentary levels. It is so, because the Parliament builds legal provisions to bond society as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary seeing this space as strategic for our peoples' empowerment and for effectively making our agendas and struggles visual, and turned into resistance and power instruments, within this context, which is stressed by power correlations and by permanent attacks to indigenous rights (Excerpt of the letter to indigenous peoples in Brazil: For a more indigenous parliament, APIB, 2017).

APIB launched the "Indigenous Campaign" in 2020, and it has an exclusive website aimed at giving visibility and support to indigenous candidacies. It is important highlighting that the "Indigenous Campaign" initiative was not linked to any party. It did not link participation to any political party, but it sought to support indigenous individuals through struggles and the defense of their peoples' rights. The so-called "relatives vote for relatives" campaign was outspread, and it was done to point out the need of indigenous individuals, from different regions, to vote for, and support, the names of other indigenous individuals. The 2022 electoral process also called for the so-called "*Aldear a Política com a bancada do cocar*", in times of great political polarization. Thus, the "indigenous campaign" website supported Lula's candidacy (PT) and opposed Bolsonaros' (PL); it has highlighted the relevance of the

“*aldear a política*” project in order to help having the significant presence of indigenous people in electoral disputes.

Accordingly, based on Andrade (2023), the indigenous project “*Aldear a Política com a bancada do cocar*” rose from the understanding and realization of indigenous peoples’ lack of physical and ancestral representativeness in the Brazilian politics. Therefore, this movement’s principles shine light on indigenous women’s political strength organization countrywide, as well as on their expectation to speak on behalf of their peoples and territories. However, it is relevant pointing out that self-declared indigenous candidacies not always emerge from movements and territories’ demands. Thus, it is essential understanding these candidacies’ profiles from a historical viewpoint, mainly in a country presenting strong persecution, violence and violations, killing and acts that feature the genocide of original peoples.

The present study was organized as follows in order to meet the research aims. The first section, introduction, addresses the research question and aim, with emphasis on elements describing indigenous peoples’ participation in electoral processes, in Brazil. The second one highlights the historical violence imposed on indigenous peoples, as well as these peoples’ social struggles in the Brazilian scenario. It also pinpoints the indigenous movement’s participation in confrontations against the national politics, besides introducing the methodological elements of the research – with emphasis on the analytical categories, on the accessed databases and on the adopted theoretical framework. The third section discloses the research results and focuses on the association between indigenous candidacies and struggles against the structural racism, as well as on women’s participation in the “*Aldear a política com a bancada do cocar*” project. Section four provides the final considerations and emphasizes five likely causes for the increase in the number of indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections, besides other topics addressed in the current study.

2.- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is not possible talking about indigenous candidacies in Brazil without pointing towards the violation of these peoples’ rights. This scenario has boosted the elaboration of the present study. Thus, from colonization to present times, indigenous peoples developed innovative survival strategies. Social and political mobilizations were important allies in the fight to conquer their rights and to denaturalize violence. The Military Regime had devastating effect on indigenous peoples, in the recent past, from 1964 to 1985. This period stood out for intense violation of human rights, and among these violations one finds murder, decimated villages, indigenous’ forced removal from their territories, intentional disease outbreaks, kidnap of indigenous children, recruiting for forced labor, persecution to indigenous movements, and strong cultural assimilation policy, within a clear genocide and ethnocide process (Calheiros, 2015; Osowski, 2017; Cabral & Morais, 2020).

Acts featuring the crime of genocide against indigenous peoples remained real after the Military Regime, in Brazil. However, the (re)democratization period was a new dawn for these peoples, since they had the possibility of having their constitutional rights guaranteed. According to Baniwa (2012), before approving the 1988 Federal Constitution (FC), indigenous peoples lived under a governmental guardianship regime managed by the Indigenous Protection Service, also known as SPI. Later on, FUNAI developed a “cultural integration and assimilation” program aimed at erasing indigenous

peoples' cultural ethnic profile by using the State's domination and control apparatus (Baniwa, 2012; Fernandes, 2015). In order to face this reality, indigenous peoples included articles in the constitutional text to protect their fundamental rights in the 1988 FC through strong social mobilization.

Art. 231. Indigenous people are acknowledged for their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, and for the original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy; the Union is responsible for demarcating these lands, as well as for protecting and ensuring respect for all their assets.

Art. 232 Indigenous peoples, their communities and organizations are legitimate parties to go to court in defense of their rights and interests, with the Public Prosecutor's Office intervening in all acts of the process (Brasil, 1988).

The 1988 FC is a milestone for the legal enactment of indigenous peoples' rights, including the political ones. Article 231 acknowledges the most central rights of it and article 232 legitimates the struggle and organization to achieve these rights (Brasil, 1988). However, these peoples remain victims of constant threats, violence and violation of human rights, which were not limited to colonization and Military Regime times. Actually, they also feature the current profile of, nowadays, Brazil (Cerqueira et al., 2021; CPT, 2022). The murder of indigenous leaders, territory invasions, land grabbing, illegal mining, threats and lack of assistance are some of the several ways this reality is addressed in surveys (CIMI, 2022). This violence against indigenous peoples was witnessed in all administrations, since they are the very basis supporting political, social and legal associations involving indigenous peoples in Brazil, since America's Colonization (Assirati & Moreira, 2019).

It is important recalling that public policies focused on social rights were broadened from 2003 to 2016, during *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) administration and they comprised the rights of indigenous peoples (Baniwa, 2019; Souza Lima, 2016). However, it does not mean that violence against this population stopped existing. Land demarcation process slowness, murders, territory invasions and the construction of Belo Monte Power Plant are examples of it. Belo Monte Plant boosted huge demonstrations by Indigenous in addition to articulations by the agribusiness group in the National Congress, among other factors (Assirati & Moreira, 2019). Therefore, it is important highlighting that the violence scenario got more intense during former presidents Michel Temer (2016-2018) and Jair Bolsonaro's (2019-2022) administrations, which have broadened the necropolitics at the following spheres of power:

- FUNAI's actions – this indigenist bureau was the target of complaints due to its negligent and missing assistance during Bolsonaro's administration (Veron & Guimarães, 2020).
- Lack of territory demarcations (OSOWSKI, 2017; ARAÚJO SILVA, 2018) and constant invasions of demarcated territories by farmers, land grabbers and miners (Santos, 2020).
- Murder of indigenous leaders, environmentalists and human-rights activists (Cerqueira et al., 2021), among others.

All herein described situations point to what Achille Mbembe (2018) introduced as necropolitics, which is built at the highest spheres of political and economic power, based on different interests. State sovereignty is used to define who lives and who dies. Explicitly, necropolitics is featured by the racialization logics to define “who matters and who does not matter, who is ‘disposable’ and who is not”

(Mbembe, 2018, p. 41). Death and violence prevailed in the history of indigenous peoples from the logics of imposing death and extermination, and from the *invasion* of the Americas to present times.

The violation of indigenous peoples' human rights, mainly in the last few years, led to several complex situations, among them, to actions by the Brazilian State, which has advocated for market interests by promoting violence normalization. It was done by using the State apparatus to reinforce the structural racism (Santos, 2020; Cerqueira et al., 2021). Accordingly, it was systematically reinforced at different spaces in society to stand for the “developmentalist” perspectives – pollution, deforestation, contamination, death of diversity. Silvio Almeida (2021, p. 32) stated that “racism is a systematic form of discrimination that has race as fundamental, it is expressed through aware or unaware practices that end up in disadvantages or privileges for individuals, depending on their racial group”.

Disadvantages created for indigenous peoples at all social segments get more intense in political institutions, since they aim at protecting whites' privileges to the detriment of racialized peoples' violation, violence and death. We agree with Almeida (2021) when it comes to the statement that structural racism “understands that institutions are only the materialization of a social structure or of a socialization model that has racism as one of its organic components. Briefly, institutions are racist because society is racist” (Almeida, 2021, p. 47).

Racism historically posed over indigenous peoples' works to normalize all sorts of violations and violence, and it questions the work of institutions, the applicability of national and international legal frameworks focused on protecting the human rights and the criminalization of genocide acts. The Brazilian indigenous movement has been organized in the last three decades attempt to denaturalize these violations and violence through its strong presence in the 1988 FC elaboration (Fernandes, 2015; Cunha, 2018). Nowadays, this movement has been fighting for democratic representativeness spaces in Brazil (Codato et al., 2017; Chaves, 2021). The concept of insurgency, as highlighted by Francisco and Mayorga (2020, p. 57), “calls out for an organization that goes against a hegemonic movement; it is mainly used in rebellion contexts against a social and political system”.

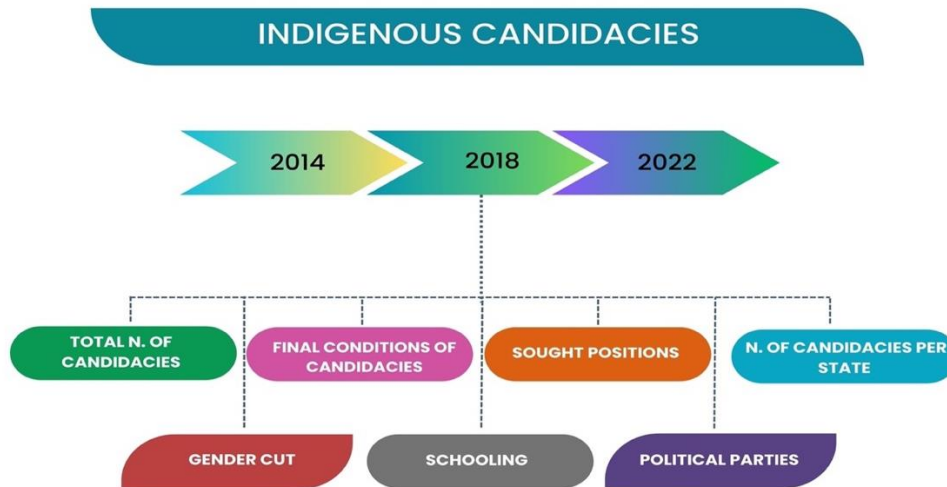
When it comes to indigenous peoples in Brazil, insurgency emerged from political awareness and maturity; in other words, from denying the continuity of a long crimson colonialist tradition. This tradition has posed a subordination condition to indigenous peoples by stealing their rights, their territories and by taking their lives. The insurgent citizenship emerges from this dehumanizing scenario – “a democratic innovation and a gloss of significant citizenship, therefore, it must be taken into account, understood and potentiated” (Silva, 2017, p. 83). The 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections were herein taken as timeframe to help better understanding indigenous movements' political insurgency; i.e., the last three elections for federal and state offices provided official data about candidates' self-declarations.

3.- METHODOLOGY

In methodological terms, the qualitative, explanatory, descriptive approach was adopted given the aim of the present study and its research question. According to Gerring (2012, p. 722), “a descriptive argument describes a world aspect. By doing so, it aims at answering the questions (for example, when, who, based on what, how) about a phenomenon and a set of phenomena”. In this case, the research question refers to likely causes helping to increase the number of self-declared candidacies in the herein

analyzed elections. The present study construction comprised seven analytical dimensions to respond for the research question about the three assessed elections (2014, 2018 and 2022), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Presence of indigenous peoples in elections (2014 – 2022): analytical dimensions



Source: Elaborated by the authors (2025).

Data of the seven herein described analytical dimensions (Figure 1) were collected from Open Database of the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) from October 15th to November 10th, 2022. Connections to other data sources were set, such as to *Atlas da Violência 2021* – in regards to indigenous peoples; violence against indigenous peoples in Brazil – reports produced annually by the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) from 2011 to 2022; *Cadernos sobre Conflitos no Campo* – issued by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT); data from the last demographic census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2024), among others.

The research followed a theoretical reference for data interpretation on the historical impact of colonization on indigenous peoples in the field of disputes inherent to the representative democracy. Thus, the theoretical analysis lens contributes to research mostly conducted in the post-colonial studies field, as well as to decolonial studies, and to indigenous and indigenist academic movements. According to Gerring (2012), the descriptive methodology applied to the collected data can be integrated to the social scientific method as attempt to set human actions in a systematic, rigorous and empirical way, as structure analysis.

In order to offer a clear and analytically coherent organization of the empirical data, respecting the criteria of the methodological approach of descriptive exploratory qualitative research, this article has structured the presentation of the results based on the seven analytical categories described in Figure 1. These categories have been grouped together in order to: a) introduce the data on the temporal evolution of the number of indigenous candidates in Brazil in the period 2014 to 2022, thus providing a critical reading of the Brazilian reality; b) explore the final situation of these candidates and emphasize

the data representative of each Brazilian state, thus emphasizing the political struggles against structural racism and other aspects that constitute the organization of institutional politics in the different regions of the country; c) highlight the positions applied for, the level of education and political parties establishing an interrelationship with a gender perspective, with a focus on the protagonism of indigenous women.

Each of these groupings is accompanied by an analysis that makes explicit its direct dialogue with the central question guiding the study: what factors explain the growth of indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections? In this way, the analyses produced in the results seek to go beyond a simple statistical description and, therefore, deepen the critical and contextualized interpretation of indigenous representation in Brazilian elections. This is why the connection between empirics and theory is articulated in all sections of the results. This shows that the data analyzed is articulated with the concepts of structural racism, necropolitics and political insurgency, in order to contribute to scientific productions that seek to understand the social and political processes that condition the participation of indigenous peoples in institutional democratic disputes. In this sense, the proposed structure reinforces the articulation between the analytical dimensions and the empirical findings, ensuring greater cohesion and clarity to the results.

4.- RESULTS

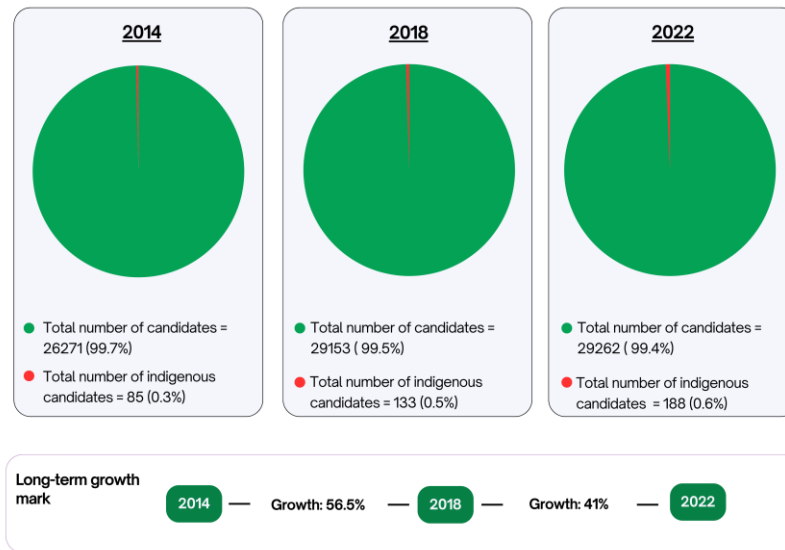
The 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections in Brazil were the very stage for several interests that have emerged strongly polarized. The two last elections took place after a coupe against democracy, after the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff, back in 2016. It was possible observing the rise of the extreme right as crashing phenomenon in the 2018 elections. Therefore, this process brought along all the implications of this ultra-conservative ideological line of thought, which destabilized the Rule of Law in the country (Moreira, 2018; Nassif, 2020). These two episodes were a milestone for the agenda focused on limiting the rights of the labor class, namely: reinforcing the mechanisms to oppress vulnerable political minorities; political violence against some people, groups and institutions self-declared as opposition to the nefarious project of the extreme right; making environmental laws flexible and ecocide practices; usurping the rights of women; consolidating genocide scenarios, mainly against indigenous peoples, among others.

It is important acknowledging that the anti-indigenous policy configuration in Brazil emerges as historical and political process, other than just economic (Andrade, 2023). It means thinking anti-indigenous scenarios as not exclusive to the herein addressed period-of-time, but as part of the Brazilian social and political structure (Assirati & Moreira, 2019). Accordingly, the action by indigenous movements was a determining factor to outspread the ‘necropolitics’ reinforced during former president Bolsonaro’s administration (Amado & Motta Ribeiro, 2020). From the viewpoint of Barretto Filho (2020), de Mello and Feitosa (2021), and Guajajara et al. (2022), the 2016-2022 period stood out for the great vulnerability imposed on indigenous peoples’ rights due to frequent invasions and usurpation of their territories.

Vulnerability during this period was understood as right to life, since indigenous peoples were placed on the very edge of existence, in its several interpretations, due to the intentional omission by the State (Cerqueira et al., 2021; Guajajara et al., 2022). The indigenous movement reinforced the

understanding about the need of fighting for power spaces in the democratic field to face historical anti-indigenous politics and to loud these peoples’ voices in their struggle for rights at the representative democracy scope (Chaves, 2021). Thus, self-declared indigenous candidates’ participation in elections, since 2014, can be observed in Graphic 1.

Graphic 1. Total number of self-declared indigenous candidates in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections.



Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Representative offices in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 disputes comprised a) presidency of the republic – president and vice-president; b) State and Federal District governments – governor and vice-governor; c) Congress – state and district congressmen and congresswomen (popular representatives of the Federal District); d) national Congress – national congressmen and congresswomen; e) Federal Senate – State and Federal District representatives (TSE, 2022). TSE got 406 applications from self-declared indigenous candidates willing to run for different offices in the three herein analyzed electoral processes.

Based on data depicted in Graphic 1, there were 26,271 candidacies in the country, in 2014, and 85 of them were self-declared indigenous individuals; this number corresponds to 0.3% of the total of candidacies. In 2018, data pointed out 133 indigenous individuals running for an office in the elections out of the total number of 29,153 candidates, and this number corresponds to 0.5% of the total number of people running for a representative office. In 2022, there were 29,262 candidates, in total, and 188 of them were indigenous individuals; this number corresponds to 0.6% of the total number of candidates. This finding highlights that from 2014 to 2018 there was 56.5% increase in the number of indigenous candidates, and this rate reached 41% between 2018 and 2022.

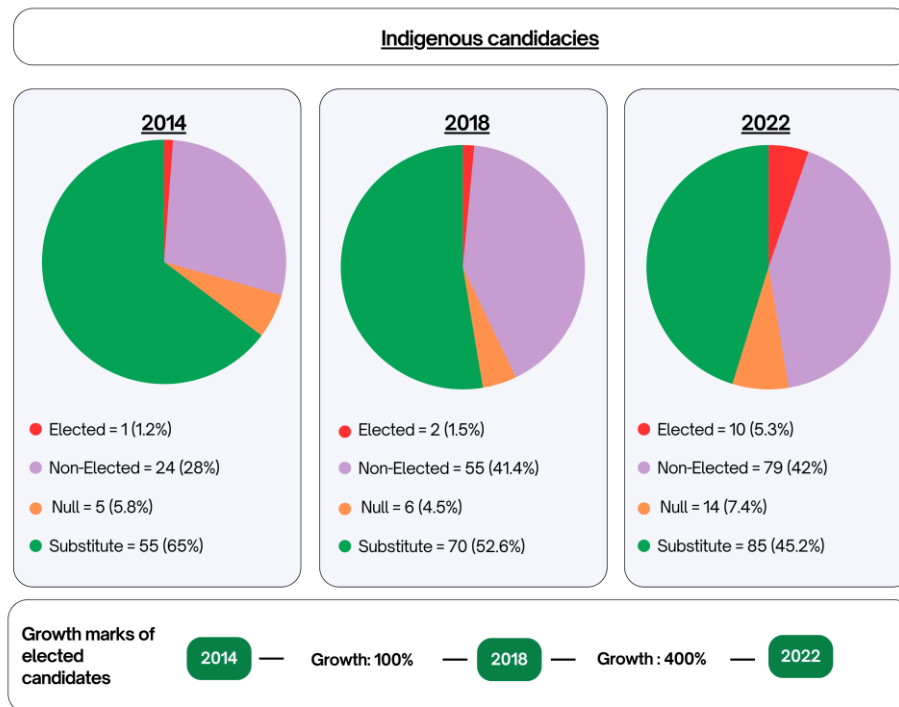
The represented data allow taking into account the increasing number of indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections, and it must be related to the growth of indigenous organizations and associations in states and municipalities, in the last three decades. According to the database of the Socio-environmental Institute (ISA, 2024), nowadays, 1,105 indigenous associations and organizations

are enacted as legal entities, in Brazil. On the other hand, this scenario points towards a strong political organization undergoing a consolidation process. However, it can point out this movement’s adjustment to institutional politics’ rules, which is featured by this movement’s maturity and new stage.

Indigenous candidacies: political horizons on the fight against structural racism

Based on a historical analysis, the increased number of indigenous candidacies observed in the last three national elections – 2014, 2018 and 2022 – can be related to political insurgency against the structural racism that, from the ethnic prejudice narrative, gives roots to multiple barriers faced by indigenous citizens seeking access to basic rights, among other issues that end up taking these peoples away from power spaces (Codato et al., 2017; Chaves, 2021). Yet, structural racism emerges as strong social-inequality component, and it has been limiting indigenous peoples’ participation in electoral processes. However, it can also set the conditions for decisions made against these peoples by voters. These decisions sometimes rise as outcome of school-consolidated indigenous peoples’ lack of representativeness, which is observed in didactic materials, in traditional media, in digital platforms and in official discourses of power-office representatives. These representatives outspread and boost stereotypes, folklore, anti-indigenous feelings and arguments against candidates’ indigenous roots. From this perspective, Graphic 2 depicts the final situation of self-declared indigenous candidacies in the herein analyzed elections.

Graphic 2. Final situation of indigenous candidacies in 2014, 2018 and 2022



Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Graphic 2 shows the total number of indigenous candidates in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections: 85, 133 and 188, respectively. It is important highlighting that only 1 of the 85 candidacies turned effective in 2014 was elected, and this number corresponds to 1.2% of the total number of candidates in the electoral process. Two self-declared indigenous people were elected in 2018 (1.5% of all self-declared indigenous candidates in this very year). In 2022, 10 self-declared indigenous candidates were elected, and this number represents 5.3% of the total. Data in Graphic 2 show 55 substitute candidacies in 2014, and this number increased in 2018 and 2022 (70 and 85, respectively). When it comes to rates, these data correspond to 65% (2014), 52.5% (2018) and 45.2% (2022) of the total of candidacies in the herein assessed period. Therefore, these data highlight that almost half of indigenous candidates are mostly substitute representatives.

The number of substitute candidates can be interpreted based on the several barriers faced by indigenous peoples to get a seat in democratic representativeness spaces. On the other hand, this phenomenon can be understood as the indigenous movement's strength in the attempt to "*aldear a política*" (village the politics), since the number of candidacies in 2022 presented significant increase in comparison to data of 2014 and 2018. Data in Graphic 2 also highlight the number of non-elected candidacies in the three elections – 2014, 2018 and 2022: 24, 55 and 79, respectively. It means that 28% of indigenous candidates were not elected in 2014, and it was followed by 41.4% in 2018 and 42% in 2022. Another relevant information regards the number of null candidacies, which accounted for 5.8% in 2014, 4.5% in 2018 and 7.4% in 2022. Null candidacies are those not approved to the process because of criteria provided on the national legislation (at the time to show a document, due to legal claims, among others).

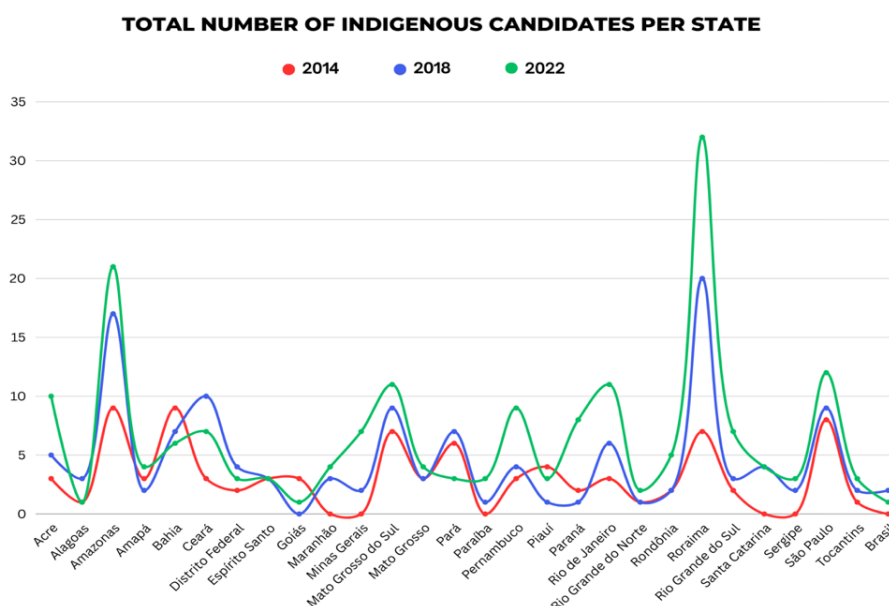
Data about candidacies elected in 2022 show rise by 400% in it in comparison to 2018. This finding points out the sensitive view of the non-indigenous population about the rights of these peoples to the detriment of an assumed anti-indigenous feeling often observed in the Brazilian society, mainly when it comes to candidacies with strong adherence and support from national indigenous movements. Yet, it is worth highlighting that structural racism shines light on the racial democracy myth, in the political field. It gets clear when the chief of the executive power, in its official chamber, outspreads hate speech against indigenous peoples (Vicuña, 2019).

This discourse tends to widespread a racist narrative substantiated by the sense that indigenous peoples are primitive and backward, full of stigma and stereotypes (Bessa-Freire, 2016). Structural racism protects whiteness interests, which use the political power to put 'racialized' peoples aside the political dispute spaces. It also approves projects and Bills to try to oppose the dignity and fundamental rights of original peoples by making them vulnerable to all sorts of violence.

Information in Graphic 2, mainly the small number of elected candidacies in 2014 and 2018, can point out structural racism effect on the success of indigenous candidates whose lack of proper electoral financing (shorter TV time and other factors) end up setting barriers to consolidate their democratic representativeness in a multi-ethnic and intercultural country like Brazil. On the one hand, there is a gap in the production of data about indigenous candidacies' financing in the country; on the other hand, this research field has been advancing on studies about black people's candidacies. The study by Campos and Machado (2015) highlights the strong inequality between white and non-white candidates when it comes to access to campaign funds.

The research by Barbieri and collaborators (2022) provides an overview of candidacies' campaign distribution in the 2020 and 2016 municipal elections based on race and gender. According to their results, there was resources displacement in favor of white women candidacies due to the new campaign financing standard set by ADPF 738/DF by TSE. This process ended up echoing on black women's candidacies. Despite this empirical evidence, the aforementioned research also showed the small presence of white women and black people (men and women) "elected for the country's National Congress, and it impairs these candidacies' representation in Bills and in public policies' formulations, since it stops the conquest and effective application of these populations' rights" (BARBIERI *et al.*, 2022, p. 7). Graphic 3 provides an overview of self-declared indigenous candidacies per state, based on territorial interests and fights.

Graphic 3. Total number of indigenous candidates per state, in 2014, 2018 and 2022



Source Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Information in Graphic 3 points towards the larger number of indigenous candidates in the last three elections in Roraima (7, 20 and 32) and Amazonas (9, 17 and 21) states. The sum of the total number of indigenous candidates on these three elections (406) reached 26% in these two states (106). According to the last demographic census by IBGE (2022), Brazil houses 1.69 million indigenous citizens, and this number corresponds to 0.8% of the national population. The Northern region holds the largest indigenous population in the country (753,357 inhabitants) and this number represents 44.5% of the self-declared indigenous in Brazil. Thus, 490,854 indigenous citizens live in Amazonas State and 97,320 in Roraima State, and these numbers represent 65% and 12% of the total number of indigenous individuals living in the Northern region, respectively. It is possible observing that Roraima State has the fifth largest population of indigenous citizens in Brazil by analyzing data in Graphic 3, in combination to the number of indigenous populations per state (IBGE, 2022). It emphasized the number of indigenous candidates. Amazonas State, in its turn, has the largest indigenous population, but ranked the second position in the aforementioned ranking.

The association of these two variables – number of candidates and indigenous population per state – is interesting when one analyzes data of other states that held the largest indices of indigenous candidates in the three assessed electoral processes. Accordingly, Graphic 3 points out that Amazonas and Roraima states occupied the first position in the ranking of number of self-declared indigenous candidacies in 2014. Each state presented 9 candidates. These states hold the first and second largest indigenous populations in Brazil, respectively. Ceará State ranked the third position in this ranking in 2018, with 10 indigenous candidacies; São Paulo held the 4th position with 9 candidates. These states occupy the 9th and 10th position in the list of states with the largest indigenous populations, respectively. On the other hand, in 2022, São Paulo State ranked the 3rd position (12) in this ranking, and it was followed by Mato Grosso do Sul (11) and Rio de Janeiro (11) states, both in the 4th position. It is worth highlighting that these last three states occupy the following positions in the list of states with the largest indigenous populations in Brazil: 10th position, 3rd position and 21st position, respectively (IBGE, 2022).

According to the analysis carried out based on associating the two aforementioned variables, the number of indigenous populations per state did not proportionally represent the number of indigenous candidates. This analysis described, among other cases, the situation of indigenous candidates in Pernambuco and Pará states, which house indigenous populations comprising 106,634 and 80,974 individuals, respectively (IBGE, 2024). However, in both cases, the sum of the three analyzed elections showed total number of candidates in each state equal to 16. This finding means thinking about deeper dynamics in the indigenous movements than self-declared indigenous candidacies and other elements yet to be assessed.

The association between candidacies and number of indigenous population per state followed another analysis. In other words, it looked closer at socio-environmental and territorial conflicts making indigenous peoples victims of violence and violations. Brighenti (2015, p. 105) highlights the need of understanding contemporary violence against indigenous peoples based on a systemic analysis, since “it is not enough analyzing statistical data, it is necessary understanding the subjectivity of violence, how it is felt, perceived and understood by indigenous peoples, themselves, from their worldviews”. According to *Atlas da Violência* (2021), worsened inequalities, vulnerabilities, and ethnic and interethnic violence are felt and explained by indigenous homicide rates countrywide (Cerqueira et al., 2021).

The Brazilian indigenous movement has reported lethal violence against indigenous peoples at different national and international instances. This is an important agenda mobilizing this movement’s insurgency towards struggles and claims for their rights, rather than just setting one of the arguments reinforcing indigenous participation in disputes, in the democratic representativeness field, mainly in the 2018 and 2022 elections (Chaves, 2021; Guajajara et al., 2022). Report arguments and the search for justice were consolidated in the political field, whereas the strategy to disrupt it in networks promoting lethal violence against indigenous peoples rises from acknowledging the historical violence imposed on these peoples, mainly in territories of interest of large economic sectors, such as the agribusiness and mining, among others (Andrade et al., 2022a). These peoples’ daily reality shows the lethal violence against them, which got worse in the last few years, as shown in the 2021 *Atlas da Violência*, “from 2009 to 2019, in absolute numbers, there were 2,047 homicides of indigenous peoples” (Cerqueira et al., 2021, p. 83).

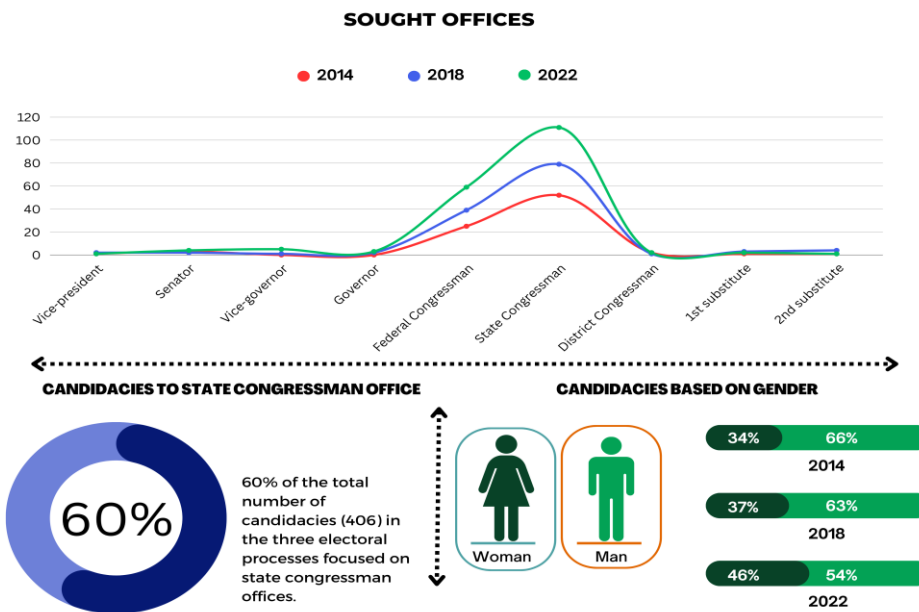
Based on the analyses introduced in the 2021 *Atlas da Violência*, there is one question that opens room for interpretations about data associated with the concepts of structural racism and necropolitics: indigenous homicide rates increased between 2009 and 2019, whereas the national rate decreased. Seven states (where one finds municipalities with demarcated indigenous territories) presented indigenous

homicide rates higher than the national rate for this same segment. It is important highlighting Mato Grosso do Sul (53.6), Santa Catarina (31.2), Amazonas (30.2), Tocantins (29.5), São Paulo (24.9), Acre (24.4) and Ceará (20.42) among these states (Cerqueira et al., 2021). Some of these states also account for the largest number of indigenous candidacies in the assessed elections: Amazonas, São Paulo, Acre, Mato Grosso do Sul and Ceará (TSE, 2022). This finding suggests the association between empirical results in the current research – mainly increase in the number of indigenous candidates – and the worsening of lethal violence rates against this population; i.e., indigenous individuals’ murdering.

Occupying the national politics: indigenous women leadership

The progressive increase in the number of self-declared indigenous candidates in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 electoral processes opens several analytical possibilities. One of them is related to indigenous peoples’ understanding about the Brazilian State responsibility for implementing public policies, the protection of constitutional rights, indigenous lands and territories’ security, among other issues (Brasil, 1988). Therefore, the indigenous agenda is national, because power disputes featuring these peoples’ rights vulnerability take place in spaces of national political representativeness. Nevertheless, the indigenous movement, which was reinforced in the last three decades, sees the need of occupying these spaces, their voices and demands must enter the national-politics stages to put pressure on the representative democracy. Graphic 4 is an overview of offices sought in 2014, 2018 and 2022.

Graphic 4. Indigenous candidacies: sought offices in 2014, 2018 and 2022.



Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Data in Graphic 4 show that candidacies focused on State Congressman offices prevailed in the three herein assessed elections. In 2014, 61% of candidates aimed at this office and 29.4% of candidates aimed at the National Congress. In 2018, 59.4% candidacies focused on state congressman offices and 29.3% of them focused on the Federal Congress. When it comes to the 2022 elections, candidates

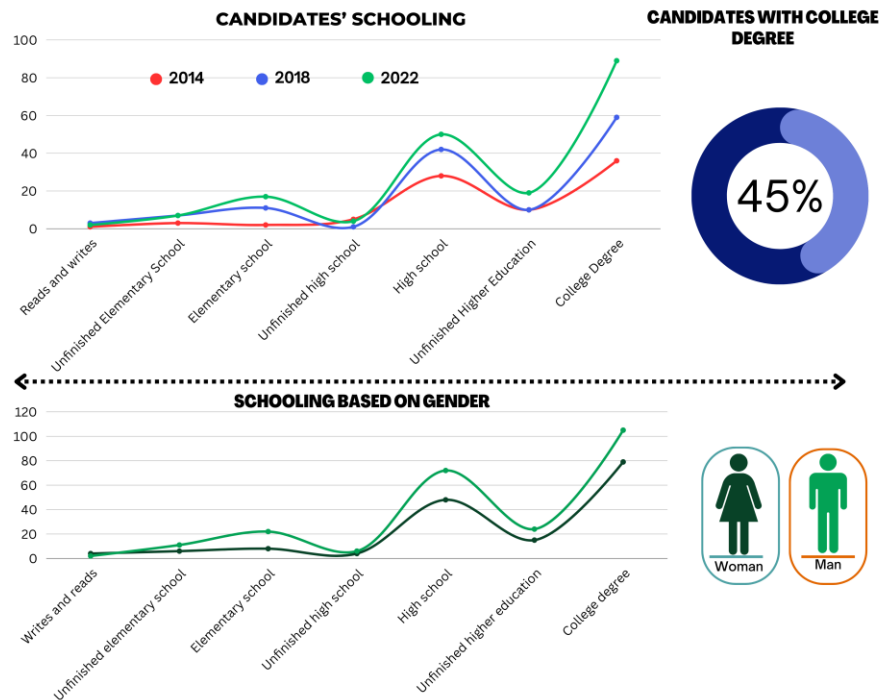
running for state congressman reached 59% of the total number indigenous candidacies, whereas those focused on the National Congress represented 31.4% of it. The sum of all indigenous candidacies focused on State congressman offices (52, 79 and 111) in the three elections represented 60 % of the total number of indigenous candidacies (406).

Moreover, 2022 data show small variation in the standard of indigenous candidacy presentations, and small increase in the rate of candidacies focused on the National Congress. This variation must persist in the next electoral processes. It must be assessed as long as it keeps on growing, because the national standard is set based on the higher concentration of candidacies focused on State Congressman offices. This position is followed by Federal Congressman Offices (TSE, 2022). Yet, data in Graphic 4 highlight that the indigenous movement has been growing due to the presence of women who issued a political project in the 2022 election, the so-called: “*Aldear a Política com a bancada do cocar*”.

Women’s presence in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections, shown in Graphic 4, calls the analysis of a quite significant matter for nowadays scenario: indigenous candidacies’ distribution among different genders. Research information points out that only 8,127 of the 26,271 candidates in 2014 were women (31%), and 29 of them were indigenous women (0.11%). Based on the ethnic cut, 34% of indigenous candidates in 2014 were women. In 2018, 9,204 of the 29,153 candidates in the election were women (31.5%); of this total, only 49 were indigenous women, and this number represented 0.5% of the total number of indigenous candidacies. The 2018 ethnic cut showed that indigenous women participation rate increased by 37%. In 2022, 9,892 of the total number of 29,262 candidates were women (34%); and only 87 of them were indigenous women (0.9%). Indigenous women’s candidacy in the ethnic cut recorded significant increase and reached 46%. Based on these data, it is possible learning that indigenous women are still outnumbered in the list of candidacies based on gender. However, this same list points out that from 2014 to 2018 there was 69% increase in this total, and this number reached 77.6% in 2022. In other words, this is a positive result recorded for the indigenous women’s movement in its struggle to “*aldear a política*”.

Data appear quite interesting by looking at the ethnic groups they occupy. In 2014, 34% of indigenous candidates were women, and it shows greater representativeness of indigenous women within their ethnic group than in the group of women, in general. This number was even more significant in the 2018 and 2022 scenarios, when 37% and 46% of indigenous candidates were women, respectively. In other words, there was a quite matching gender-division in the last electoral process – increase by 9% within a 4-year time interval. Tavares (2021) highlight the possibility of thinking about indigenous women’s participation increase in electoral processes by understanding their movement as being held at different instances.

From the historical perspective, indigenous women are gaining room in ethnic movements, in their communities, in universities, and occupying core positions as Village Chiefs, in the last decade. Therefore, this growth reflects on significant increase in their participation in electoral processes (Tavares, 2021). Political awareness is understood as rising from their will to represent their communities, and this is related to the fight for schooling. Thus, self-declared candidates’ schooling is an aspect of interest in the present study, as shown in Graphic 5.

Graphic 5. Indigenous candidates' schooling: 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections

Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Data in Graphic 5 show the schooling of self-declared indigenous candidates in the three electoral processes. With respect to college degree, in 2014 and 2018, this variable reached 42% and 44.3%, respectively; in 2022, it rose to 47.3%. This finding points out the progressive increase in this variable, over the years. Despite such an increase in the 2022 election, the rate of indigenous candidates with higher education remains low in comparison to the national average – 55% (TSE, 2022). When the total data of graduated indigenous candidates are analyzed based on the sum of the total number of candidacies in the three electoral processes, it is possible observing the total rate of 45%. This is a clarifying datum and it helps understanding the schooling profile of these candidates, as well as other aspects featuring these peoples' hard time accessing higher education.

Besides the historical difficulties imposed on indigenous peoples when it comes to the guarantee of right to education (Baniwa, 2019; Souza Lima, 2016), most self-declared indigenous peoples running for a political office within the herein analyzed elections have complete basic education (39%). These data shine light on equity education policies and on ethnic-racial diversity inclusion. Some educational programs and policies were developed and implemented, mainly in the last three decades, to include certain social groups in Higher Education institutions - they have also included indigenous peoples. It is possible highlighting the following programs among the most essential ones for indigenous peoples:

- University for All Program (PROUNI): it was launched in 2004 through Bill n. 11.096/2005, whose aim was to make access to higher education in the country more democratic by providing scholarships – full or partial – in private Higher Education Institutions (Baniwa, 2019; Souza Lima, 2016).

- Program to Support Indigenous Higher Education and Intercultural Graduations (PROLIND): this program was launched by the Ministry of Education, in 2005, to financially support higher education to qualify indigenous school teachers with major degree in indigenous literature or in intercultural degrees (Brasil, 2008, Souza Lima, 2016; Baniwa, 2019; Andrade et al., 2022b).
- Program to Support Higher Education in Rural Education Teaching (PROCAMPO): it was launched by the Ministry of Education in 2007 and reinforced by Decree n. 7352, from December 4th, 2010, which enacted the National Rural Education Policy and the National Agrarian Reform Education Program (PRONERA) (Brasil, 2010). This Decree highlights that the Rural Education Policy aims at broadening the qualification available for basic and higher education to rural populations, among them, Indigenous Peoples (Andrade et al., 2022b).
- Quotas policy in Brazilian universities: it was implemented through Bill n. 12.711, from August 29, 2012. This law has changed the Brazilian public higher education reality, since the distribution of vacancies based on racial and disability quotas, depends on the ratio of indigenous, blacks, browns and people with disabilities in the state where the Federal Institution is located in (Brasil, 2012). This procedure allowed indigenous peoples to broaden their presence in Higher Education Institutions. Therefore, they now can occupy vacancies in tenders historically known for their elitist profile (Baniwa, 2019; Souza Lima, 2016).
- Permanent Scholarship Program: it was launched through Ordinance n. 389, from May 9, 2013. It aimed at providing financial support to minimize social and ethnic-racial inequalities, as well as to help the permanence and graduation of students facing socioeconomic vulnerability conditions (Baniwa, 2019; Souza Lima, 2016).

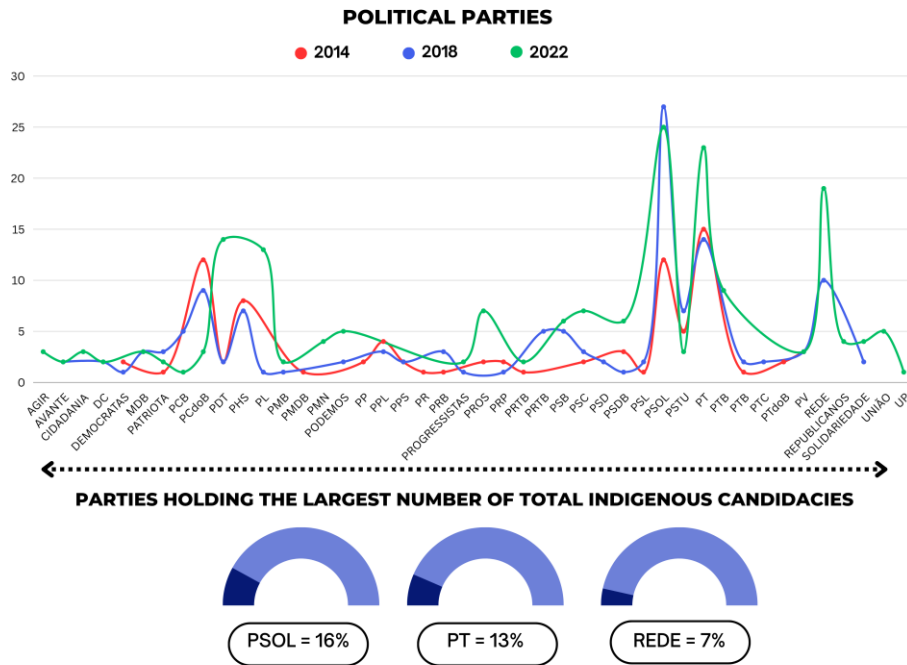
The aforementioned public policies are some examples of governmental programs used to interpret the schooling of self-declared indigenous candidates in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections. Accordingly, the number of indigenous individuals with higher school and college degree running for electoral offices shows the power of minority-inclusion public policies, among other aspects. It is essential highlighting that indigenous Federal Congresswoman Célia Xakriabá, who was elected in 2022, has a major degree in Intercultural Qualification for Indigenous Teachers. She graduated in 2003, at Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG).

However, based on Baniwa (2019) and Souza Lima (2016), these education policies did not come without struggles and mobilization by indigenous peoples, over the years. Actually, these peoples' participation exceeded the claims and are linked to the following actions: pointing out flaws and lack of completeness in documents addressing the implementation of these public policies; pointing out improvements in these documents to broaden the access to school education - these factors give indigenous peoples the perspective of *policy subjects*, i.e., not just as peoples that are granted with public policies, but that participate and elaborate these policies.

From the historical viewpoint, the restatement of indigenous peoples as *policy subjects* is linked to the participation of the Brazilian indigenous movement in the elaboration of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Their participation in it was emblematic, because it claimed for the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples in the public-policy field. That said, several conquests in this field head towards social equity and inclusion of ethnic-racial diversity as outcome of social movements' struggles, among them the indigenous movement.

This process makes the relevance of indigenous peoples’ actions as *policy subjects* clear. They helped consolidating policies and programs to ensure the formation of a generation to represent their interests and demands in the representative democracy field. Yet, they can help setting dialogues and alliances with different political parties defend the broadest interests of their movement, as well as the most specific demands of each territory. Graphic 6 depicts the political parties fighting for self-declared indigenous candidacies to help better understanding these alliances’ formation in the party-politics field.

Graphic 6. The 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections: indigenous candidacies and political parties



Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (TSE, 2022).

Graphic 6 gathers data about indigenous candidates’ party affiliations in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections. On the other hand, data highlight the higher affiliation of indigenous candidates in left-wing parties, such as a) *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade* (PSOL) – gathered 14%, 20% and 13.2% of indigenous candidates in 2014, 2018 and 2022, respectively; b) *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) – gathered 18%, 10.5% and 12.2% of indigenous candidates in 2014, 2018 and 2022, respectively; c) *Rede e Sustentabilidade* – did not have self-declared indigenous candidates in 2014, but housed 7.5% of them in 2018, and 10.1% of the total indigenous candidacies in 2022. Data have shown that these parties – and others with similar political spectrum – got to attract the largest number of self-declared indigenous candidates. *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade* (PSOL) recorded the highest capillarity in this variable; it accounted for 16% of the sum of indigenous candidacies in the three electoral processes. Assumingly, the agenda focused on protecting indigenous peoples advocated by this party was the differential to build alliances with these candidates.

On the other hand, data in Graphic 6 also show indigenous candidacies affiliated to right-wing parties, with emphasis on *Partido Liberal* (PL), with 14 self-declared indigenous candidacies in the three

elections - 13 of them ran for an office in the 2022 elections. *Partido Humanista da Solidariedade (PHS)* is another highlight for this variable, it gathered 8 candidates in the 2014 elections and 7 in the 2018 one; it totaled 15 candidacies. It is important pointing out that this party joined *Podemos* party in 2019, which jumped from 2 indigenous candidates in 2018 to 5, in 2022. Increase in the number of candidacies affiliated to right-wing parties shows that indigenous presence in the political field spectrum is also a place for disputes; i.e., this presence can legitimate agendas and actions that, oftentimes, are seen by the indigenous movement as anti-indigenous agendas.

It was possible identifying the dissatisfaction with indigenous women working in former president Jair Bolsonaro's administration during a field survey carried out in the 1st March of Indigenous Women, in 2019, in Brasília. This understanding resulted from the speech of their leaders, because this administration accounted for a series of attacks to indigenous rights (Andrade, 2023). Silvia Nobre Waiãpi – Waiãpi people –, Amapá State, was the Secretary of Special Indigenous Peoples and she was an example of disputes for indigenous individuals affiliated to the right-wing spectrum. Her collaboration to Bolsonaro's administration was seen by most indigenous women in the March with dissatisfaction (Tavares, 2021).

Silvia Waiãpi was elected Federal Congresswoman for Amapá State in 2022, by *Partido Liberal (PL)*, Bolsonaro's party. This datum helps arguing that indigenous candidates are not homogeneous and that there are internal disputes among indigenous peoples, since she defends mining in indigenous lands, and this position is absolutely against the national indigenous movement. This movement holds the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil (APIB) as important representative. It gathers several indigenous associations in Brazil, as well as builds and organizes these peoples' mobilization. Opposition to APIB, in the 2018 and 2022 elections, meant opposition to the political agenda advocated by Jair Bolsonaro. Therefore, Silvia Waiãpi's political Project goes against the expectations and agenda of the national indigenous movement.

The analyses carried out based on data shown in Graphic 6 introduce the political position of multiple political parties that house self-declared indigenous candidacies. It must be assessed in details, because the political agenda of some of these parties are radical and aim at the custody and integration-policy set for indigenous people. Their narrative and actions deny the right to cultural difference, mainly how these peoples relate to nature and to their territories. Yet, other complex issue resulting from this data analysis lies on the self-declaration criterion adopted for indigenous candidacies. It has gathered trajectories of completely different life backgrounds in the same group, regardless of their political-party spectrum. This is the case of Senator Hamilton Mourão and Congresswoman Silvia Waiãpi.

When it comes to the complexity of indigenous candidacies' self-declaration criterion, De Paula (2022) understands that, in order to learn the "identity issue", it is possible using four legitimacy types: a) self-declaration made available by TSE; b) connection to indigenous' collectives/communities; c) APIB's legitimacy; d) territorial legitimacy. He exposes the effort to separate the 2018 and 2022 candidacies in each one of these categories, as well as the interlocution among them. This process will not be reproduced in the current study, since his study was already informed as reference. However, 10 self-declared indigenous elected candidates were referenced in 2022, but, according to De Paula (2022), only Sônia Guajajara and Célia Xakriabá were legitimized by categories other than that provided by TSE. These indigenous women are related to APIB, to indigenous collectives and territories, besides their self-declaration. Thus, it is important stressing that De Paula (2022) does not delegitimize TSE's

self-declaration criterion, but he points out the need of an in-depth analysis of this category to better understand indigenous participation in electoral processes.

5.- CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to make the exploratory analysis of indigenous candidacies in Brazil in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections. In order to do so, information available at *Open Data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE)* database were used, and they were added to data in *Atlas da Violência*, in *Cadernos da Pastoral da Terra (CPT)* and in reports issued by the Missionary Indigenist Council (CIMI). The methodological qualitative reference focused on descriptive exploration was adopted as data interpretation element as attempt to answer the following research question: what are the likely causes contributing to increase self-declared indigenous candidacies in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections at state and federal scope? According to the main research results, between 2014 and 2018, and 2018 and 2022, there was increase by 56.5% and 41% in the number of self-declared indigenous candidacies, respectively.

The growing number of these candidacies can be interpreted from different lenses whose analyses (based on results) point towards a multi-causal perspective, which is supported by five likely causes. The first one lies on the growing number of indigenous organizations and associations in states and municipalities – 1,150 indigenous associations and organizations registered as legal entities in Brazil. The first organizations and associations were registered in the 1980s, but they multiplied after the 1988 Federal Constitution was enacted. It is so, because the Constitution opened the possibility for these organizations to become legal entities. Therefore, data show that the increased number of self-declared indigenous candidacies in the herein analyzed elections mirrors the indigenous movement's maturation process and consolidations in Brazil. Thus, it also evidences these movements' compliance with institutional political rules that feature a new stage of this movement: housing *policy subjects*.

This new stage of the indigenous movement in the country's political participation highlights the strength of social movements, in this case APIB. It organized the fight for democratizing power spaces in order to broaden indigenous peoples' presence in the representative politics field. Accordingly, as analysis feature, the present research summarizes the indigenous candidacies' growth in 2014, 2018 and 2022. It can reflect how indigenous peoples seek to denaturalize structural racism and the necropolitics in the representative democracy field, as attempt to rebuild an intercultural country. APIB strength consisted in gathering 30 indigenous candidates in the 2022 elections, and two of them were women. In other words, 2022 recorded increase by 100% in comparison to the 2018 election when it comes to elected candidacies legitimated by this movement. These 30 candidacies' bond to the movement has reinforced the indigenous-insurgency argument towards the representative democracy field.

As for the second cause, research data point out that the increased number of self-declared indigenous candidacies can be associated with the expansion of education public policies in the last two decades, since they included the ethnic-racial diversity, mainly at higher education scope. Despite the several complexities and issues inherent to implementing these policies in education institutions – as hard time remaining in education institutions, financial issues, territorial dynamics, linguistic differences, institutional racism, among others –, 45% of the total number of self-declared indigenous candidacies in the three electoral processes recorded higher education degrees. Similarly, 39% of the

total number of candidates, based on the sum of the three herein assessed elections, have finished basic education. This finding shows that inclusive public policies based on equity and ethnic-racial elements may have been essential allies to indigenous peoples' struggles. They reinforced political positions focused on participation at representative democracy scope.

Yet, research data also suggest that the political context of the last few years in the country influenced the rise of self-declared indigenous candidacies, and this might be a third cause for the herein addressed phenomenon. Results have shown increase by 56.5% in the number of self-declared indigenous candidacies in the 2014 and 2018 elections. In other words, the coup against democracy was legitimated by Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and by Michel Temer's office as president. The 2018 and 2022 elections followed this trend and recorded increase by 41% in the number of these candidacies during Jair Bolsonaro's office. Accordingly, it is essential pinpointing that, from the indigenous movement viewpoint, the post-impeachment period represented great vulnerability to indigenous peoples' rights in Brazil. The indigenous movement's understanding of this political scenario led to different mobilizations and agendas at APIB, among them, to the "*aldear a política*" project.

The research also highlights the intense political polarization in recent Brazilian politics and the instrumentalization of some indigenous candidacies by the right-wing. This might be the fourth cause of the increase in the number of indigenous candidacies in the analyzed elections. On the other hand, some candidacies that are not really bond to indigenous territories and movements use the self-declaration criterion to apply to a candidacy and to have some political gain or yet, to cause some embarrassment to the movement's agenda. Nonetheless, some candidacies, even those that have legitimate bonds to territories, use them to support political-party projects that radically support the "integrationist" and "developmentalist" perspective of indigenous peoples and of their territories. In other words, projects that are not in compliance with the movement's agenda.

However, it is important taking into account that some of these candidacies can represent other phenomena, such as indigenous individuals who joined right-wing ideologies, who are dissatisfied and disagree with the agenda set by the national indigenous movement. The affiliation of self-declared indigenous candidates in the 2022 elections to right-wing parties was a growing movement; therefore, this issue deserves in-depth analysis in further studies.

The analyses based on understanding the main causes of indigenous candidacies' growth may have boosted this process in the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections. It shines light on the indigenous movement's political insurgency to draw the representative democracy as fight for freedom and autonomy. Indigenous citizens become *policy subjects*, so they can talk by themselves, without the need of anyone to talk on their behalf. Indigenous peoples' political autonomy has been conquered through their movement's organization and through reports about the historical violence experienced by them, since the times of the colony. Accordingly, indigenous candidates in the three analyzed elections, mainly those acknowledging the indigenous movement, seek to face State politicians that practice necropolitics and structural racism against these peoples. However, data show that the increased number of self-declared indigenous candidacies does not necessarily mean increase in the indigenous' movement representation in the herein analyzed electoral disputes.

The research also showed the indigenous women's growing participation in electoral disputes; 50% of indigenous candidates in 2022 were women. This finding corroborates the argument that the indigenous women's movement in Brazil has been growing and women have occupied several positions

in different spaces in society – this is the fifth possible cause for the increased number of indigenous candidacies. The presence of the indigenous women’s movement also shows the insurgency and strength of it at the time to build a national political project to “*Aldear a Política com a bancada do cocar*”. However, as highlighted in the present research, challenges to village the politics are huge and also depend on the actions and continuity of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (MPI). This ministry is the real possibility of making concrete changes in the Brazilian State for indigenous peoples when it comes to their rights in and outside their territory. Therefore, these challenges are linked to overcoming the tutelary and integrationist imaginary by denaturalizing violence and criminalizing racism and genocide acts.

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