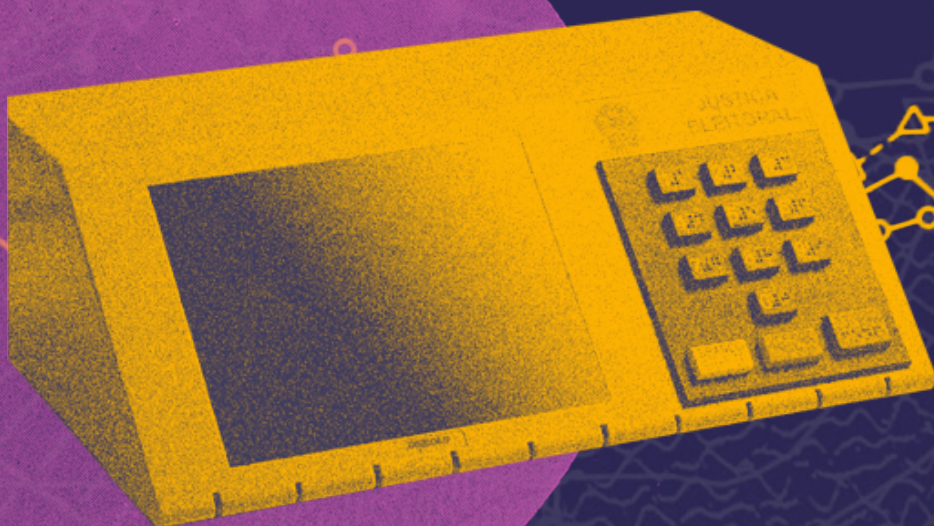




monitorA

REPORT ON ONLINE POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE PAGES AND PROFILES OF CANDIDATES IN THE 2020 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS



ORGANIZATION

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Presentation

MonitorA is an observatory of **political and electoral violence** against candidates on social networks. It is a project by **Revista AzMina** and **InternetLab**, in partnership with the **Update Institute**. **The Volt Data Lab** developed the data analysis tool and the hate speech researcher, **Yasmin Curzi**, developed the glossaries of terms searched.

Through InternetLab, MonitorA is one of the fronts of the project Recognize, Resist and Remedy, a partnership with the Indian organization **IT for Change**, funded by the **IDRC** (International Development Research Center), to research occurrences **of offensive expressions and problems in the fight against online hate speech directed at women** in Brazil and India.

The observatory collected comments related to all candidates, male and female, for municipal executive and legislative positions during the 2020 Elections, on Twitter, YouTube and Instagram platforms. In this report, we have organized the data collected between the months of September and November 2020, **so that we can contribute to the formulation of measures that prevent and seek to eradicate political violence, before, during and after the electoral period.**



A non-profit institute which seeks to combat the different types of violence that affect Brazilian women. It produces a digital magazine, maintains an App for tackling domestic violence, and uses a tool to monitor women's rights in the National Congress, in addition to conducting campaigns to combat violence against women in Brazil.

[Learn more: azmina.com.br/instituto-azmina/](https://azmina.com.br/instituto-azmina/)

INTERNETLAB

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It is a research center in law and technology. It develops research on human rights and technology, oriented towards public policies, and publishes books, reports, articles and guides. It has been working on gender violence on the Internet since its foundation, as well as addressing issues related to women and online privacy and feminist activism.

[Learn more: internetlab.org.br](https://internetlab.org.br)

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Executive summary

The year 2020 ushered in a new moment in terms of politics and elections in Brazil. This is because the SARS-COV 2 pandemic impacted directly on the 2020 municipal elections, demanding the transformation and development of new campaign strategies. In order to adapt to the new health recommendations, candidates had to reinvent themselves on the Internet since, in many cases, **conducting online activities was the only option to debate proposals and interact with voters during the electoral process.**

The engagement of candidates and voters on the networks, on the other hand, is not recent. In the 2018 general and presidential elections, Brazil witnessed the strengthening of the use of the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) during election campaigns, which also resulted in an increase in the dissemination of **disinformation and hate speech motivated by political and ideological beliefs.** Such dynamics were maintained and expanded during the 2020 municipal elections, reinforcing practices of **political violence.**

Political gender violence is a phenomenon that crosses borders, and the fight against it, using sanctions and attempts at prevention, is provided for in international legislation. Understood as **any action, conduct or omission based on gender, which has the objective of intimidating, nullifying, preventing, blackmailing, abusing or restricting political rights,** political violence is directed very specifically to certain social groups marked socially by gender, race, sexuality, generation, etc., especially impacting on the participation in political life **of women, black people, the elderly and LGBT+.**

In this sense, MonitorA was born with the intention of following the 2020 election, paying attention **to the way the internet is used by the candidates and by the voters (s) and, at the same time, questioning how different social conflicts can influence and shape the debate.**

METHODOLOGY

Understanding how political violence inserted itself on the Internet during the 2020 municipal elections requires not only the identification of gender, but also the articulation of this with other social markers of difference, from an **intersectional perspective.** Aware of this, we selected 175 candidates — both women and men — running for the

positions of city / town councillor, mayor and deputy mayor in 13 states from all regions of Brazil. The candidates were chosen observing different identity characteristics (race / ethnicity, sexuality, generation, social class, etc.) and different political-ideological spectra (right, center and left).

The analysis was carried out based on the monitoring of candidates on the **Twitter, Instagram and YouTube** platforms, from September 27 to November 29, 2020, in two phases (first round and second round of voting), using different techniques and data collection platforms. From these collections, we extracted **1,610,932 tweets, 632,170 Instagram posts and 50,361 comments on YouTube**. Due to the large volume of data, we developed a methodology over seven stages, which was carried out collaboratively and individually by AzMina, InternetLab, Volt Data Lab and by the hate speech researcher Yasmin Curzi. We also relied on the partnership of journalistic vehicles in Bahia (Marco Zero Content), Minas Gerais (BHAZ), Pará (Amazônia Real), Santa Catarina (Portal Catarinas) and São Paulo (Agência Mural).

THE DATA FOUND

The instrumentalization of notions of morality for the practice of political violence online appeared frequently on all social networks. However, we found that **users' behavior regarding the candidates differs on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube**, with Twitter, due to its open architecture and the limitations we had in collecting on other platforms, the platform on which the offensive comments and attacks on the candidates were more visible. Given these specificities, we have come to the following conclusions:

- In the analysis of data from the first round, we have quantified and shown that political violence is recurrent and mostly directed towards female profiles, and alludes to their bodies, their intellectuality and to other moral aspects. **Moral offenses, fatphobia and discrediting** were the three main types of offenses directed at candidates. Such offenses are not only related to the status of being female, but are also linked to inequalities of race, generation, sexuality and political ideology.
- During the second round, these dynamics gained new ramifications and the attacks, which at first were mostly directed at female candidates, **extended to their supporters**, with even more violent, offensive and sexist content.

- We also realized, by separating some candidacies and analyzing only offensive tweets, that racism operated from different facets in the way Benedita da Silva (PT) was attacked. The animalization of her body, the denial of her racial identity and the direct association between ugliness and blackness were some of the ways in which racist discourses appeared.
- With regard to different masculinities, we observed that men are mostly sworn at by users who consider them to be bad managers or ideologically mistaken. There were changes in that tone, however, when we analyzed tweets directed at Eduardo Suplicy (PT), due to the candidate's age; and candidate William de Lucca (PT), who received LGBT phobic comments, attempting to delegitimize him as a political figure.
- Transphobia was also present in comments that denied gender identity and reinforced the biologization of bodies. Thammy Miranda (PL) and Erika Hilton (PSOL) were the targets of hate speech that tried to invalidate the participation of the candidates because both are transsexual people.

Based on the monitoring and analysis of the data, we corroborated the research that indicates that **political violence** permeates and shapes the Brazilian political scenario, which builds itself up from actions constantly present in the electoral contests and beyond them. We understand, therefore, that if, on the one hand, these practices occur based on inequalities that pre-exist the electoral scenario — such as gender, ethnic-racial, LGBT phobia and age inequalities —, on the other hand, **the dissemination of hate speech and other forms of violence that occur in the online sphere**, contribute to reinforce notions that support the **hierarchy among different social groups**.

LEGISLATION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Brazil is a signatory to and has ratified several international treaties on violence against women, in addition to having one of the most advanced bodies of legislation in the world on this subject. In order to analyze these dynamics, the project AzMina, **Elas no Congresso** (Women in Congress¹), has been monitoring legislative proposals (PLs) under discussion in the National Congress that deal with women's rights. Between 2014 and 2019 in the projects that dealt specifically with the political participation of women, only three mentioned the issue of political violence.

In 2020, due to municipal elections and the increase in cases of political violence, this scenario **changed significantly**, and parliamentarians presented five PLs (proposals for new legislation). We understand that some of these projects need extensive discussion and better adaptation to the different dimensions of political violence, including observing their digital dimension and the aspects outlining policies for protection and punishment. Nevertheless, in general, the projects signal an **advance in the discussion** of political violence in Brazil.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At this point, we warn that, by reinforcing hierarchies historically constructed through hate speech online, we may be facing an expansion in the beliefs that feed the perception that some bodies and modes of existence are inferior, which would make them, from that point of view, illegitimate beings to occupy political positions. Given this, we understand the urgency to develop and strengthen specialized strategies to discuss and resolve such issues.

As a way of contributing to the consideration of the theme from different sectors approach, we gathered, as a result of looking directly at historically subordinated groups, **eight recommendations** that point the way towards **combating, preventing and monitoring political violence**.

Legislative

- 1 Improvement and adaptation of ordinary and electoral legislation to confront political violence

Judiciary

- 2 Application of legislation dealing with political violence, anti-racism and anti-LGBT phobia in Common and Electoral Justice
- 3 Create special units or task forces dedicated to tackling political violence within the Public Prosecutor's Office
- 4 Improving the channels for reporting and inspecting before, during and after the electoral process

Executive

- 5** Include representation from Civil Society, the Private Sector, the Legislature and the Judiciary in debates on the Internet, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and political violence

Internet Application Platforms and Providers

- 6** Facilitate reporting, improve responses, make content moderation activities more transparent and improve tools to control one's online experience

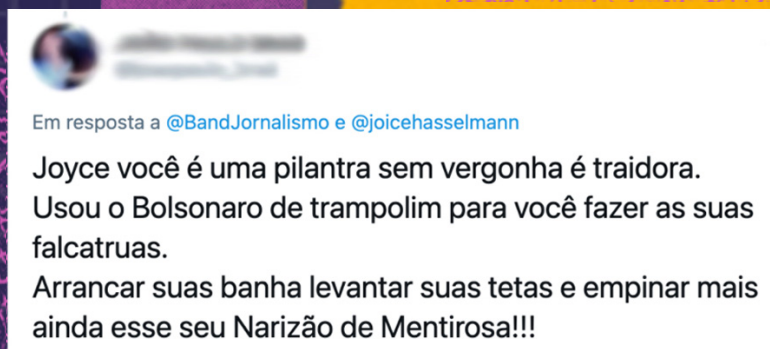
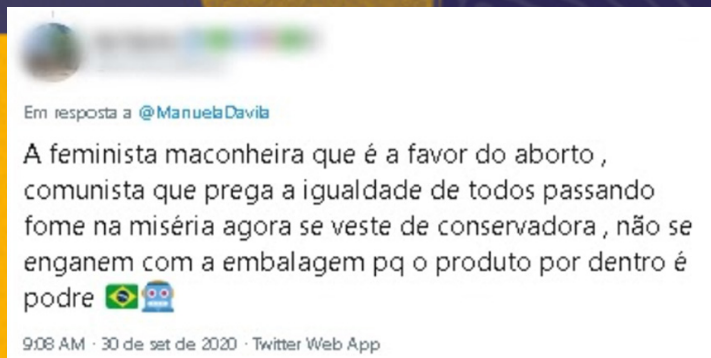
Civil Society

- 7** Expand the quantity of interdisciplinary and intersectional research on the dimensions of political violence
- 8** Create and strengthen networks on elections and violence (political and electoral, gender, race, etc.)

We are also convinced that the overcoming of these violence can only take place completely through profound structural and cultural changes with regard to gender inequalities. Our objective, in presenting these recommendations, is not to point out definitive paths or responses, but to contribute to risk mitigation, as well as to the identification of patterns, finding common denominators and consideration of the best strategies for the present and future of Brazilian democracy. ■ ■ ■



1



POLITICAL VIOLENCE, GENDER AND THE INTERNET



THE 2020 MUNICIPAL ELECTION scenario was marked by at least two important events. The first of these was the SARS-COV 2 pandemic, which required the candidates to engage with new and different internet tools, as the campaigns encountered barriers in health recommendations prohibiting them from taking place in person. The second was the fact that the 2020 elections were the first to take place after the strong repercussions caused by the polarization and political violence experienced in the 2018 elections² — including the murder of Rio de Janeiro city councillor Marielle Franco (PSOL), which until now has still not been clarified by the Justice authorities.

In view of this, the limits set by the pandemic led some candidates to use social media in a very creative way. In some cases, they approached voters from previously unexplored paths,³ which included online pre-campaign meetings,⁴ organization of live broadcasts for the presentation of proposals, live broadcast of artists in support of candidates⁵ and even one broadcast in which a candidate played an online game with a digital influencer.⁶

The increased use of the internet however has also meant the growth of virtual attacks. According to data from *Fortinet Threat Intelligence Insider Latin America*,⁷ the number of virtual attacks grew in Brazil during the pandemic. There were about 2.6 billion in just three months of monitoring. The country is in third place in the ranking of nations with the highest number of crimes committed on the internet.

It is essential to underline that the debate about the influence of the internet on the operation of the elections is not new. There has been a continuous decline in the role of broadcasting and the traditional press, and simultaneously, an increased growth in the use of platforms and apps of instant messaging in political campaigns. This has been significant for some time, but has been observed more carefully in Brazil since the 2018 elections.⁸

The novelty because of the **pandemic** scenario was, therefore, the fact that **the internet, in different ways, was the only option** for the candidates to connect with their voters, which generated the need to observe the **democratic process** from a new perspective.

Therefore, it is necessary to highlight that the growth of debates on the importance of the internet as a means of communication during the electoral period took place against a backdrop of an increase in political posturing arising from strong polarizations in Brazilian political and social life.⁹

In 2018, one of the main points made during the elections was to question the legitimacy of debates on **gender equality**. For part of the Brazilian population and politicians, the idea of promoting an equitable society, with regard to the equal **rights of men and women**, sounded like an affront to the Brazilian family-oriented constitution and the maintenance of religious faith. Similar attempts to disenfranchise black and LGBT+ people were made. These groups feared that their rights would be undermined due to the resurgence of conservatism.

The attacks against gender equality are not something restricted to Brazil – the issue is relevant in other countries because it is part of a wider global agenda. However, here we see an intensification of this opposition, which was accompanied by threats to values and principles such as “plurality, secularism, protection of minorities, the right to free expression and opposition”,¹⁰ which began in the 2018 elections and extended to decisions taken by the current federal government.

The change in narrative, with regard to women’s rights and gender equity, constructed through dialogue with civil society and social movements over the past two decades can be easily illustrated by the dissolution of the Special Policy Secretariat for Women and the Special Secretariat for Human Rights. These had both been created in 2003, and were replaced by the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights.

In view of this context and the continuous occurrence of events that perpetuated cases of political violence, those who followed **the 2020 elections began to focus on how the internet would be used by the candidates and by the voters, and, at the same time, questioned how different social conflicts could interfere with and shape the debate.**

The contribution of **MonitorA** was based on the understanding that it is essential to identify the way in which political violence occurs in electoral processes. This is because, although violence is constitutive of strained social relations and has become part of the political culture, it should not be thought of only as an exception to the rules,¹¹ political conflicts deserve a lot of attention, especially when we consider the candidacies of people belonging to social groups considered historically as subordinates. These groups have suffered as frequent targets of violent practices that seek to distance them from the political sphere, whether on the internet or outside it.



The need to monitor the dynamics of the 2020 elections and the concern related to the possibility of the growth of political violence brought to light several initiatives that aimed to follow up on complaints of political violence in the 2020 election. We highlight here the initiatives of Instituto Marielle Franco (Marielle Franco Institute), which produced a piece of research “[Political Violence Against Black Women: Elections 2020](#)”.¹² This was carried out with 142 black female candidates from 21 states in Brazil, and [TRETAqui](#), a project that receives complaints about hate speech on the internet during elections and produces materials for the protection of rights during the electoral process. We also highlight the report produced by Terra de Direitos (Land of Rights) and Justiça Global (Global Justice), entitled [Political and Electoral Violence in Brazil: Overview of human rights violations from 2016 to 2020](#)¹³ and the [UN Women 2020 Municipal Elections newsletter](#), produced in partnership with the European Union. These publications present relevant information on female participation in the last elections, in addition to addressing the issue of political violence and publicizing relevant events and initiatives on the issue.

This attempt to silence certain candidacies, as well as the distancing of women, black people and LGBT+, has generated important reflections on how the Brazilian democratic structure is put at risk when the representativeness of different social groups is threatened. This is due to the fact that the distancing of these groups reinforces pre-existing inequalities to the electoral process. Thus, understanding the way in which the use of the internet impacts and influences political violence allows us to delineate the relationship between the construction of democracy and inequality.

When thinking about this relationship, we ask — **how has the use of the internet reinforced and enhanced the inequalities that structure Brazilian society?**

What characterizes political gender violence?

Different researchers and organizations around the world have addressed the phenomenon of political violence. Fischer, in 2002, defined it as “any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse an interested political entity in an attempt to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process”. While, therefore, **any candidate or politician can be a victim of political violence**; what we observe is that the **violent actions are directed in a very specific way, and their effects are felt most notably by women, black people and LGBT+.**

Political violence, when it occurs at the time of elections, has been categorized as “electoral violence”. According to Lauris and Hashizume,¹⁴ **electoral violence** happens more punctually, following official campaign calendars, and is related to disputes between candidacies, political parties and coalitions. Its main objective is **to influence the results of the elections, upsetting the dynamics that have been established between the candidates.** For this reason, formal mechanisms of “management, inspection and electoral control of the constituencies”¹⁵ are fundamental to prevent and stop this phenomenon.

In 2015, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Declaration on Violence and Political Harassment against Women (2015), because of the need to draw special attention to cases of political violence against women. According to this document, political violence against women can include **any action, conduct or omission based on gender, individually or in groups, which aims to annul, prevent or restrict a person’s political rights.** This type of violence also prevents women from being recognized as political subjects and discourages them from exercising and continuing their political careers.



If during the 20th century the interest of the international community was to ensure that women could vote and be voted for, which resulted in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953), the turn of the 21st century has brought new challenges and the concern now is how to ensure that women do not experience political violence. In this context, several international legal instruments have been adopted, such as the Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women in Political Life (2017). **The Model Law understands that political violence against women can occur in several spaces, including within political parties, in the media and on social networks.** Especially on social media, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Online Violence against Women and Girls (2018), Dubravka Simonovic, political violence against women can lead to a **reduction in their online presence, their withdrawal from public life and the loss of exercise of democracy and good governance, creating a democratic deficit.**

The impact of violent speeches targeting female candidates and/or women working in politics is linked to the fact that women, because of social and historical gender hierarchies, are usually targeted with arguments linked to different **notions of morality**. Moral attacks, as we will see later, seek to belittle women for their dress, hair style, family life, bodily aspects, affective-sexual relationships, assumptions about whether or not they are good mothers, in addition to establishing a direct association between political-ideological positioning and other behaviors that are expected of each of them.

It is not enough, however, just to point out the type of violence to which women are most vulnerable, it is necessary to demonstrate **how violent practices target women because they are women.**¹⁶ Understanding how this violence takes place is, above all, central to the fact that women are **social subjects marked not only by gender, but also by race, social class, generation and sexuality.**

From an **intersectional perspective**, in which we considered the need to examine gender along with other social markers of difference, male and female candidates with different profiles were **monitored online**. This allowed us to set up a series of groupings that would enable us to observe how different **femininities and masculinities** are used in speeches that aim to **offend, blackmail, and more broadly, psychologically violate political subjects in the context of elections**. Below, we detail how this choice was made.

Initially, studies and activism related to the understanding of how the condition of women in society differed from the condition of men started from an assumption that universalized the category “woman”, thus failed to open space to consider **multiple experiences**. During the 1980s and 1990s, black women, women of the so-called Third World and lesbian women began to demand a change in theoretical and political positions so that their specific **experiences** could also be considered under the umbrella of feminism. In this scenario, the considerations of important black intellectuals and activists who had already produced studies on **race, gender and social class in an articulated way** were recovered and, at the same time, new theories were constructed in an attempt to understand such articulations. Many gender scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patrícia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Lélia Gonzalez, Sueli Carneiro and Anne McClintock, advocate an intersectional perspective. From their work, we understand that the social markers of difference can be understood as **indicators that cross the bodies of the subjects, informing how they will be interpreted and how they will occupy social positions**. These indicators, however, cannot be added or embedded like “lego pieces”, they must be allowed to dialog with each other, thereby making it possible for us to notice the way in which these interactions occur situationally.¹⁷

Political violence, hate speech, insults and aggressions: the different concepts and their uses

Violence, as pointed out by different scholars,¹⁸ is not a given concept, but constructed and disputed socially, historically and culturally. Therefore, attempts to categorize types of violence occur when we seek to name and, from there, prevent and tackle situations that harm the way different groups live socially.

If the understanding of how violence is constituted is being developed and disputed politically, it also means that, at times, some violent practices can be read according to different categories that have been created. At the same time, it means that some of these categories need to be considered together so that we can understand some specific social phenomena, which can therefore lead us to deal with different concepts of violence simultaneously.

As will be seen throughout this report, we use some **concepts that are interchangeable in some situations**, which is because of the fact that some of them are related to the inequalities that structure society. For this reason, **political violence**, for example, can be linked to **racism**, **ageism** and **LGBT phobia**. In other situations, connections between **political violence** and **hate speech** will be observed, which although are different concepts, they can intersect each other.

Even though we understand that these concepts are interlinked and connected, we also understand the importance of **naming each of these practices**, because by naming them we ensure the possibility that each of them is properly **thought out, prevented and combated**. Thus, we have organized some differentiations that may guide you during this reading.

- The concept of **political violence** adopted, for example, by the Model Inter-American Law, encompasses any action, conduct or omission of a physical, sexual, psychological, moral, economic or symbolic character, which harms or nullifies the enjoyment, exercise or recognition of political rights. There are overlaps between this concept and that of **misogyny** (hostility towards women because they are women)¹⁹ when **political violence is directed at women**.
- We can also think about the connection between **political violence and hate speech**. **Hate speech**, in turn, is understood as any discursive act that **aims to intimidate and instigate hatred**.²⁰ Intimidation and discrimination, however, are not

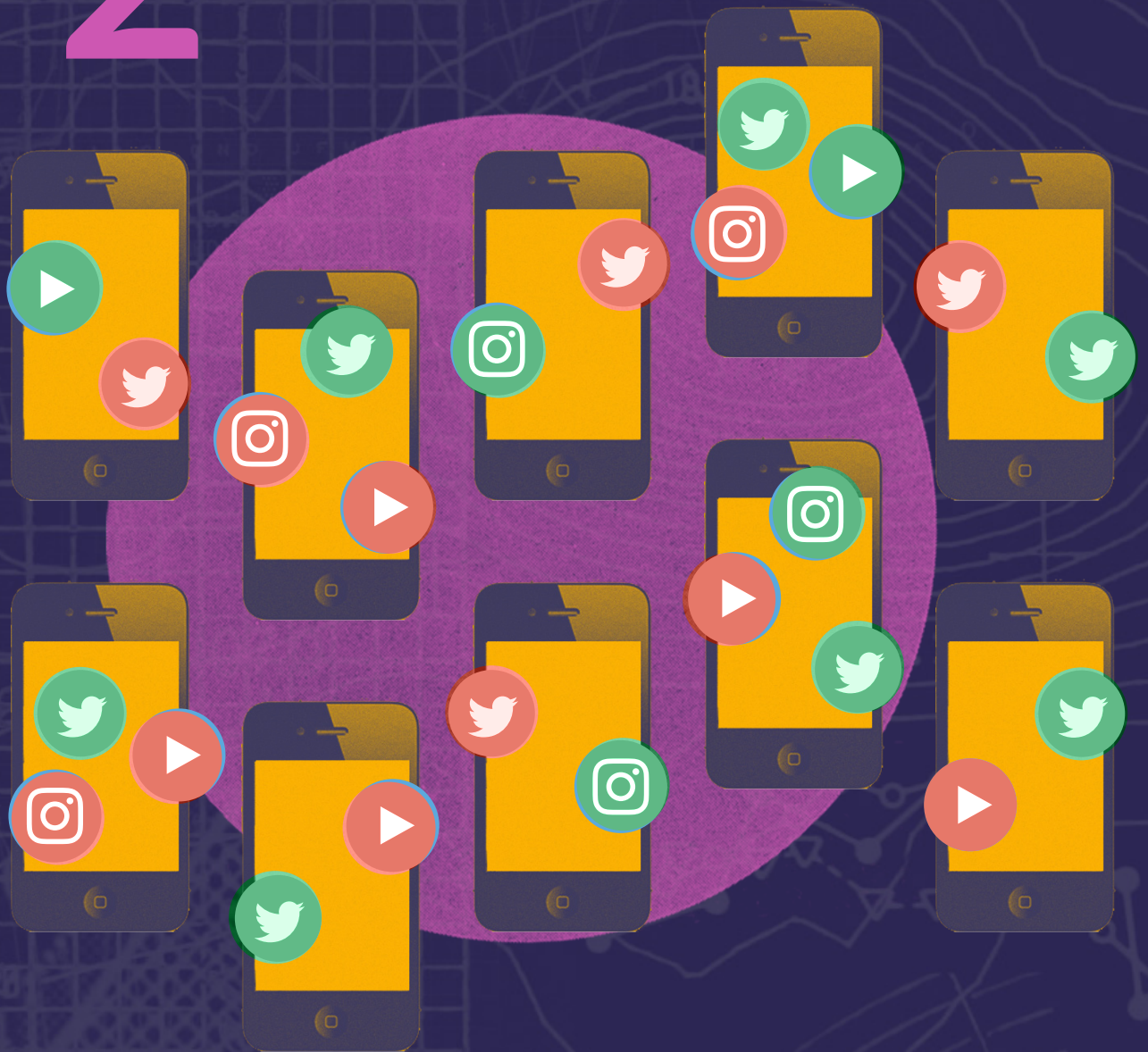
directed at any social group, but at those who historically occupy marginalized social places. What is at stake, therefore, is the **historical affirmation and / or reaffirmation of the inferiority of some social groups in relation to others which have until now been considered superior**. It is worth mentioning that **there is no legal definition of hate speech in Brazil**, although these acts are defined and criminalized when they concern race, ethnicity, religion and national origin by Law 7.716/89.²¹ In addition, it is important to emphasize that the Federal Supreme Court has recognized that the law extends to cases of LGBT phobia (Mandado de Injunção N°. 4733²² and ADO 26²³).

When we consider the debate **on hate speech on the internet**, it is important to highlight the importance that platforms have and have had, in recent years, for the way this issue has infiltrated and become a major part of the debates within social movements and civil society. Currently, we have observed that social networks have created ways to regulate content considered as “hate speech”.²⁴ In the electoral context, however, even though we have observed contribution initiatives between the platforms and the Electoral Superior Court (in Portuguese, Tribunal Superior Eleitoral – TSE),²⁵ our research points to the importance of asking questions related to the extent to which **these regulations have observed and monitored the phenomenon of political and electoral violence and which practices are mostly aimed at socially marginalized groups**.

Thus, hate speech is a form of political violence when it refers to political rights. We will also speak here of insults, offenses and attacks: generic words used frequently to refer to those events, which are not used in the legislation nor in the platforms' terms of service. These manifestations, when they express hatred, contempt or ridicule people belonging to marginalized social groups, can be understood as hate speech. In this report, we do not make this classification, or any assessment of the lawfulness of the content collected in each particular case; the set of results will point, however, to an articulation of these factors. ■ ■ ■



2



METHODOLOGY



THE PROFILES OF 175 CANDIDATES were selected, including women and men, from all regions of the country. The selection was made based according to criteria of **multiple identities**. We chose candidates who were distributed along a spectrum of different ethnic-racial groupings, ages, gender identity, sexual orientation, regionalities and diverse ideological positions.

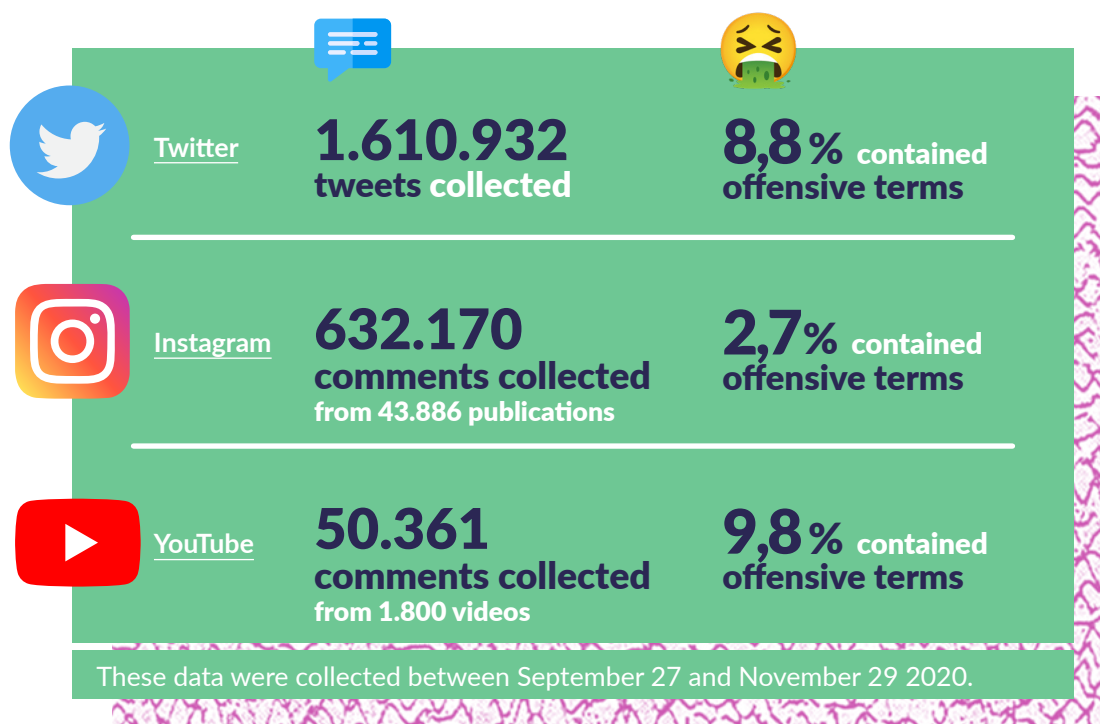
Monitoring was carried out through the collection of social media posts, comments and other interactions by users, on **Twitter, Instagram and YouTube**. The collection of data was carried out in an automated way, using Python programming, and all data collected was stored in **CSV** format.

According to the profile of the candidates, we also developed a lexicon of **offensive terms** – words and terms often used in sexist hate speeches on social media, elaborated from previous research experiences and refined from the data collected in this research. This lexicon was used to filter the results obtained, for an in-depth study of the violent comments directed at the candidates, the profiles of the attacks and the strategies used.

Developed over different stages, the methodology was carried out as follows:

METHODOLOGY STAGE	RESPONSIBLE
Choice of monitored candidacies	InternetLab
Development of the glossary of offensive terms	Yasmin Curzi
Data capture on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube platforms	InternetLab
Data filtering	Volt Data Lab
Creation of the visualization platform	Volt Data Lab
Data analysis	AzMina + InternetLab
Publication of journalistic content	AzMina + InternetLab

The collection in numbers



Which candidates were monitored?

Altogether, **147 female candidates** running for **councillor, mayor and vice mayor** were selected, from political parties with **ideologies on the right, center and left of the political spectrum**.²⁶ As previously mentioned, they also identified as belonging to different social and ethnic groupings: black, white, indigenous, heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, religious, cissexual and transsexual, among others. We also sought diversity in the political agendas they were primarily concerned or identified with, when it was the case.

We also selected **28 male candidates** in order to use them as a comparative parameter and, at the same time, investigate how violent speech could be directed at men in dialogue with the **different masculinities** that were triggered. Although the number of men monitored is smaller, their profiles were also selected based on multiple criteria with regard to parties, political positions they were running for and their social profiles. They were heterosexual, cissexual and transsexual, from the right, center and left of the ideological spectrum.

Partnerships

In order to contextualize the cases of political gender violence inside and outside social networks, including the local specificities of different regions of the country, we awarded grants to five independent vehicles for them to produce reports based on MonitorA data.

These reporting vehicles produced specific journalistic content, with clippings of the local areas and social profiles of the candidates in the following states:

- Bahia: Marco Zero Conteúdo;
- Minas Gerais: BHAZ
- Pará: Amazônia Real;
- Santa Catarina: Portal Catarinas;
- São Paulo: Agência Mural.

Monitoring and data collection

Monitoring was carried out between September 27 and December 29 in two phases that together comprised the first 30 days of the electoral campaign, as well as the first and second rounds of the elections.

FIRST PHASE

In the first monitoring phase, carried out between September 27 and October 27, candidacies from different municipalities in **Bahia, Minas Gerais, Pará, Santa Catarina and São Paulo** were considered. The choice was made according to the jurisprudential research on hate speech previously carried out by InternetLab in these states. Two candidates from other states who had reported ongoing attacks on their social networks were also included: Manuela d'Ávila (RS) and Benedita da Silva (RJ). Overall, in that first moment, MonitorA analyzed **117 female candidates — four of which were collective candidacies — and four male candidates, on Twitter, totalling 122 candidates from nine different political parties.**

Data collection on Twitter was performed using its [API](#). For that, the implemented code accessed API using the [Tweepy library](#). Tweets and replies written by each candidate were collected, as well as tweets and retweets that cited the username (@username) of these candidates.

For each tweet, the information collected included: tweet ID, tweet date, tweet author, tweet text content, total retweets and “likes” the tweet received.

SECOND PHASE

The scope of the second phase of monitoring, which took place between November 15 and 29, was expanded. In addition to **Bahia, Minas Gerais, Pará, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and São Paulo**, monitoring covered candidates in the second round in the states of **Acre, Espírito Santo, Paraná, Pernambuco, Rondônia and Sergipe**, totalling **13 states in all regions of the country**. The reason was that, given the reduced number of candidacies at this stage, we could expand the base of monitored profiles and cover more territories. In these states, **35 women and 23 men (the majority, opponents of the female candidates) were monitored, totalling 58 candidates**.

In this second moment, in addition to Twitter, monitoring was also carried out on Instagram and YouTube.

Data collection for Instagram was performed using web-scraping techniques. Thus, the resources used were the [CrowdTangle](#) social network analysis tool and the [Selenium task automation package for Python](#). CrowdTangle was used to collect the direct link to all publications directed at candidates. With the direct links to the publications, the implemented code used Selenium to collect all existing comments in each of the posts. The information collected were: the post ID, the name of the user who wrote the comment, the content of the comment, the date the comment was made and the total number of “likes” received.

On YouTube, data collection was performed using its [API](#). For that, the implemented code accessed the API using the [google-api-python-client library](#). The data collection aimed to recover the identification and the main characteristics of the videos published in the respective channels of the candidates on this platform, and the comments received. Thus, the information collected for each video was organized into two sets:

- **With reference to the video:** video ID, date and time, author, title, description, total views, total likes, total dislikes and total comments.
- **With reference to the comments:** author of the comment, content of the comment, date and time, total “likes” and “dislikes” that the comment received.

Two further factors were taken into account collecting information on YouTube:

- Where comments received responses, these responses were also collected as comments.
- In cases where comments were disabled, the code did not return this information, so as not to be confused with cases of videos that received no comments.

Both in the 1st and 2nd Phase, due to the large volume of posts and comments, the collection on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube was carried out daily, with the code always collecting the data from the previous day.

Methodology limitations

As pointed out above, the methodology was divided into two phases. In the first one, corresponding to the first round of the elections, we kept our focus on Twitter. We did that due to the ease of access to Twitter's API, which enabled automated data collection, and allowed faster data collection, analysis and dissemination of data during the first round of the elections.

It is also important to say that, for technical reasons, it was not possible to collect and analyze Facebook data - which had been initially foreseen. We would have needed to collect the data by scraping it, due to limits in accessing data from Facebook's API; our limited resources only allowed us to choose between Facebook or Instagram, and we went for the latter, because less research is available about Instagram than Facebook on these issues.

When considering the number of users in each of these social networks, as well as the presence of some candidates in all of them — which means variable numbers of followers in each one — we understand that the absence of Facebook data analysis limits the comparisons between the different platforms, regarding the specificities related to architecture and, consequently, the way in which political violence is present in each one of them. ■ ■ ■



3



THE DATA



ANALYZING THE DATA, we identified the propensity for the users' behavior to differ on each social network in relation to the female candidates. It is worth remembering that our data used an outgoing bias: we only analyzed comments directed specifically at the candidates (directly on their Instagram profile, on their YouTube channel videos, and in the responses or markings with @ on Twitter). This excludes offensive comments made, for example, on posts from other channels on YouTube, or related to our monitored profiles, but on another Instagram profile. Of course, we also did not collect messages sent in private chats on the platforms.

With regard to these specifically directed comments, we observed, during the second round, proportionately **more offenses and incitement of hate on Twitter, both against the female candidates, and against LGBT+ candidates.**

The perception that Twitter seems to be an environment more susceptible to violent speech dialogues with notes made in a survey conducted by Amnesty International²⁷, whose focus was to understand what the experiences of women with different social profiles were on this platform. According to the research, due to the architecture of Twitter, which proposes to connect people who do not necessarily know each other, providing space, even, for public figures to address the public directly without going through the press, the dynamics that have established themselves on this social network open loopholes so that more people have access to what is said. Consequently, there is greater scope for users who disagree with or oppose the content to express themselves also — in some situations aggressively — about what is being said.

The problem, however, is not in the proposal of how Twitter works, since this way of working also allows more voices and people to be heard and to have their voices amplified. Nevertheless, in the absence of an efficient monitoring policy to combat political violence, which often appears in conjunction with hate speech, behaviours that oppose the very idea that 'every voice has the power to impact the world' are promoted across the platform and remembered by Amnesty International's research.

Unlike Twitter, in qualitative analysis, we noticed that on Instagram the approximation of users with candidates for which they had some kind of sympathy and / or voting intentions was more visible. Apparently, the architecture of Instagram facilitates more frequent encounters with personalities with which users have some kind of affection and / or admiration. Furthermore, unlike what happens on Twitter, on Instagram those responsible for the candidates' pages can exclude comments and / or not show violent content, in addition to being able to pin positive comments that have been made by users.

Although we have observed this possibility, this did not mean that the offenses and insults were absent from the social network. In this case, insults and offenses were frequently directed at the female candidates' opponents, revealing another type of discursive action that deserves the attention of further new research.

In the case of YouTube, the volume of comments collected was not significant, thus we were unable to carry out such an in-depth analysis of the dynamics established on this platform. We noticed less use of YouTube by candidates and, in many cases, when used, the possibility of making comments on the videos posted was disabled.

As indicated, we did not collect comments made about the female candidates monitored, which were not specifically directed at them. Thus, it is not possible to state that one social network has more or less political violence content than another; however, what can be said is that, on Twitter, this dynamic is more visible, most likely also for the person to whom the attacks are directed.

The differences perceived in the dynamics of each of the network platforms can be better understood in considering the following topics.

First round of elections

In the first stage of the study, MonitorA carried out content analysis based on the 93,335 tweets that cited the 123 monitored candidates in Bahia, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and São Paulo, which occurred in the first month of the election campaign. It is important to emphasize that when we collect data from Twitter's API, we do not have access to the data as it is being circulated on the platform. For this reason, some of the tweets mentioned in the report are no longer available on the social network. To understand whether the posts contained any violent content, a lexicon was prepared with misogynistic, racist and offensive terms. The filter from that lexicon showed that 11% of the tweets had some aggressive content. Among those who had some kind of engagement (like and / or retweet), **1,261 were offenses directed specifically at the female candidates.**

VIOÊNCIA DE GÊNERO CONTRA CANDIDATAS NAS ELEIÇÕES DE 2020

123 candidatas a prefeitura
e vereadora monitoradas

93.335 tuítes coletados

11% dos tuítes tinham
termos ofensivos

Separamos um total de

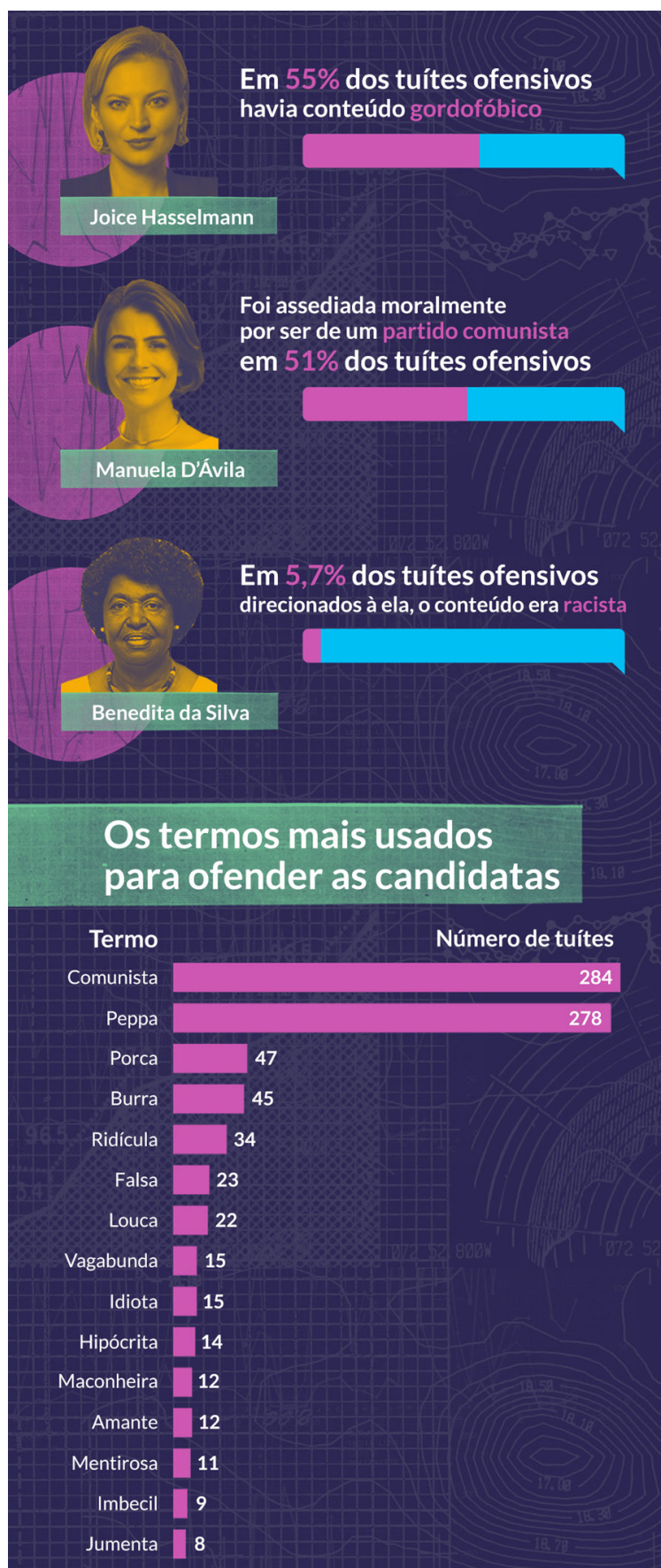
3,1 mil tuítes
com termos ofensivos e
engajamento (like e/ou retweet)

Deste total,

40%
foram de xingamentos
direcionados às candidatas

Ranking das candidatas mais atacadas

Candidata	Tuítes com xingamentos
Joice Hasselmann	612
Manuela D'Ávila	584
Benedita da Silva	52
Major Denice	4
Erika Hilton	3
Carla Ayres	2
Bella Gonçalves	1
Margarida Salomão	1
Profª. Dayane Pimentel	1
Wafá Kadri	1



The analysis was able to quantify and demonstrate a routine situation that women experience, but that until then had never been measured empirically. In this first round, MonitorA identified in this group of female profiles an average of 40 offensive comments per day. In general, the swear words used alluded to the candidates' bodies, intellect, mental health or the moral aspects of their lives. Many expressed different types of discrimination, such as misogynies, racism and LGBT phobia. We can see, therefore, that women are generally offended for what they are supposed to be, (according to the comment writers) not for their actions as candidates and / or political actors. Among the female candidates monitored, women who ran for the positions of Mayor of São Paulo, Porto Alegre and Rio de Janeiro were the most attacked on Twitter.

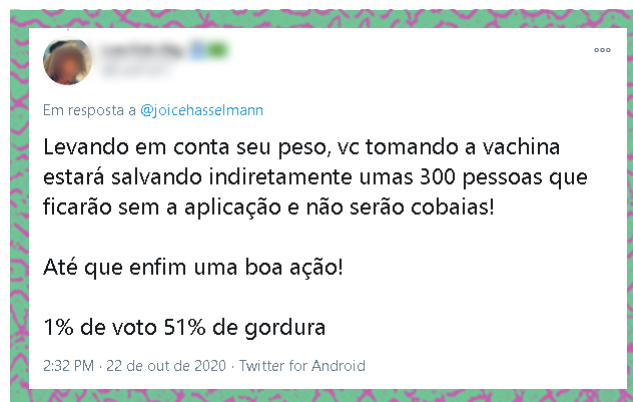
Terms like “porca” and “Peppa” (referring to the character Peppa Pig) were the expressions most used to attack the physical attributes, especially of Joice Hasselmann, a candidate for Mayor of São Paulo for the PSL. The term “communist”, used in a pejorative way and using different collocations such as “scoundrel communist”, “naughty communist” or “shitty communist”, for example, were the most used terms to offend Manuela D’Ávila, candidate for Mayor in Porto Alegre.

In the first analysis with the wide variety of terms used and each being linked to specific social markers constituting each of the candidates, the offensive expressions identified were classified into predominant categories, taking into account the context in which they were inserted. These included the physical attributes of the candidates (such as the clothes they wore in the photos, haircut or appearance), moral, sexual and intellectual harassment, discrediting, fatphobia and transphobia.

Thus, we had the following divisions:

OFFENSE TYPE	TWEETS	% (OF THE TOTAL DIRECTED TO EACH FEMALE CANDIDATE)
Moral	535	42,46
Fatphobia	341	27,06
Discrediting	232	18,41
Intellectual	53	4,21
Physical attributes	47	3,73
Sexual	40	3,17
Racism	3	0,24
Transphobia	2	0,16
Homophobia	1	0,08
Threats	1	0,08

For Joice Hasselmann, a candidate for Mayor of the City of São Paulo, **just over half of the offensive tweets (55%) cited physical characteristics and used fat phobic terms.** The candidate began to be called “Peppa” on social media after Eduardo Bolsonaro, son of President Jair Bolsonaro, with whom she broke up politically, used this term to offend her. It is worth mentioning that **the fat phobic offenses against the candidate started before the election campaign** and continued during the election, which demonstrates a **direct and lasting impact on her life in a practical way.**



Manuela D’Ávila, a candidate for Mayor of Porto Alegre, was constantly discredited for being affiliated to the Communist Party of Brazil. **In none of the offensive tweets analysed her technical ability was questioned. Despite this, the candidate was classified as “unprepared” for the position.**



“I have endured at least five years of attacks, since I was still pregnant with Laura and they created the first fake news by saying that I had gone to the United States to purchase my baby trousseau. Since then , they have continuously destroyed my image and provoked attacks against me, verbally, physically and on social networks. Social Network violence, in my case, spilt over to the street. The first assault my daughter suffered was in October 2015, by a woman who slapped the sling I was wearing with my daughter inside. “This study shows the intensity of the attacks”, said Manuela in an interview with the magazine AzMina.

Despite the fact that all the candidates were the subject of commentaries that brought up hierarchies permeated by gender inequality, each of them was on the receiving end of insults that highlighted the characteristics that

connect them with specific identities or specific political niches. For this reason, we can say that the offenses are not only related to the fact that the candidates are women, **there is also a connection between the expressions used and inequalities of gender, race, sexuality and political ideology.** This dynamic is much more evident in the cases of Manuela D'Ávila, as we saw above, and in the tweets directed at the candidate Benedita da Silva, who was the target of racist and sexist jokes, as we will see below.

Local content (1st round)

BAHIA

In the first round, [Marco Zero Content](#) analyzed the tweets of 25 female candidates monitored in Bahia. Of the total, eight received offensive tweets in the first month of the campaign. Five of them were black women and six were from left-wing parties. In addition to racist comments, the candidates also faced disinformation campaigns, as is the case with Major Denice, affiliated to the PT, in the dispute for Mayor of Salvador.

“I have resorted to justice in cases of racism and fake news.” The fight against this type of case is daily, as the crime of racism and the practice of sexism are cultural”, highlights Major Denice in an interview.

It is worth mentioning that there are also cases of political violence in other political arenas, involving non-black women. This is the case of federal deputy Professor Dayane Pimentel (PSL), who was a candidate for the Mayor of Feira de Santana — Bahia's second largest city. MonitorA found offensive tweets directed at the candidate, which originated from the fact that Pimentel broke off political relations with current President Jair Bolsonaro (no political party).

SÃO PAULO

[Agência Mural](#) analyzed the peripheral candidacies in the city of São Paulo. Among them was Erika Hilton, the candidate for the São Paulo legislature who received the most offenses on Twitter.

Erika will be the third black woman to occupy a seat in the Chamber of São Paulo and the first trans woman. In the analysis of MonitorA, **8.5% of the tweets directed to the candidate were insulting, many of them of a transphobic character. The pejorative term most directed at her was “disgusting”, which appeared 432 times.** Further on, we look specifically at the transphobic comments directed at this candidate.

According to a [survey conducted by Instituto Marielle Franco \(Marielle Franco Institute\)](#), eight out of 10 black candidates have experienced virtual violence. Of these, 20.72% received sexist and / or misogynistic messages in the online environment; 18% received racist messages and 17% had a virtual meeting hacked.

MINAS GERAIS

In Minas Gerais, the [BHAZ Portal](#) showed how motherhood, sexuality and age were used to attack female candidates on social networks. Áurea Carolina, who was a candidate for the Mayor of Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, is a mother. Cida Falabella, a city councillor, is 60 years old. Bella Gonçalves, also a council member, is a lesbian. Marcela Valente, elected as a substitute for the political party PSL, is too “feminist” to be on the right. Dandara Castro, PT, is black. None of these characteristics is about the ability of these women to assume public positions of power, but these were the subjects of the attacks that they and other candidates received on social networks during the first round of the campaign.

“If you have such a busy schedule with a small child, how do you want to be mayor of BH?; “Casting a lesbian to win a vote is the greatest marketing ever created”; “But she is a disqualified old woman”; and “A beautiful woman doesn’t know shit” are some of the examples of tweets collected in the monitoring. A silence that was reflected in the polls: women are only 13% among those elected in the 853 cities in Minas Gerais in 2020.

Second round

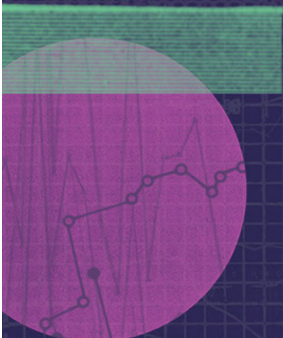
In the second round, MonitorA identified another aggressive dynamic in attacks against female candidates on social networks. In addition to the candidates, women who have spoken out publicly in favor of some campaigns have also become the target of attacks.

VIOLÊNCIA DE GÊNERO CONTRA CANDIDATAS NAS ELEIÇÕES DE 2020 2º TURNO

Todas as mulheres que foram para o
segundo turno no País foram monitoradas:

20 prefeitas
15 vice-prefeitas

O estudo incluiu o monitoramento de
23 candidatos opositores



Em três dias (15 a 18/11)
foram coletados

347,4 mil tuítes
que citavam os monitorados

Destes,

31,5%

eram direcionados às candidatas



Separamos

2.390 tuítes

tuítes com termos ofensivos
que tinham uma ou mais
curtidas ou retweets

Destes,

17,3%

eram ofensas diretas
às mulheres candidatas

Ranking das candidatas mais ofendidas no Twitter

Candidatura monitorada	% de tuítes ofensivos no total de tuítes analisados com engajamento
Manuela D'Ávila (PCdoB) <i>Prefeita Porto Alegre - RS</i>	90,60
Marília Arraes (PT) <i>Prefeita Recife - PE</i>	5,06
Luiza Erundina (PSOL) <i>Vice-prefeita São Paulo - SP</i>	4,10
Suely Vilela (PSB) <i>Prefeita Ribeirão Preto - SP</i>	0,24

Termos mais usados para ofender no Twitter

Termo	Quantidade de tuítes
comunista de merda/ safada/ boutique / iphone / fd*	99
lixo/ esgoto / podre	45
hipócrita e mentirosa	34
abortista	11
bandida	11
vagabunda	11
bosta e merda	10
corrupta/ ladra	10
esquerdopata	8
porca	7
louca	6
velha	6
ridículos	5
dissimulada	4
feminazi	3

Between November 15 – 18, **347,400 tweets were collected that cite 58 male and female candidates running in the second round in municipalities in 13 states in the country.** In total, 20 candidates for mayor and their opponents were monitored, in addition to 15 candidates for Deputy Mayor and three candidates for city council. **Of these, 109,400 tweets were targeted at the female candidates, and 8,000 contained offensive terms.** Among 2,390 tweets with offensive terms that had one or more “likes” or retweets, **17.3% (415) were specifically targeted at the female candidates. Manuela D’Ávila was targeted in 90% of the attacks carried out in the period analyzed on Twitter.**

In the second round, in addition to the tweets that use the term “communist” in a pejorative sense, in an attempt to discredit the candidate intellectually, the insults became even more offensive, using terms such as “trash”, “bandit” and “slut”. There are also many references to the term “abortionist”, implying that by defending the legalization of abortion Manuela should be disqualified from being Mayor.

The term "communist" whether alone or in addition to other words like "abortionist", "bumpkin", "naughty", "cursed" and "pothead" appeared frequently aimed at candidates standing on the left side of the political spectrum.

Even though "communist" alone cannot be thought of as an offense, referring only to an ideological position, in the research it drew our attention how, in several situations, the word was used in a pejorative way and associated with other types of discrimination. In these cases, we observed a huge number of posts that took on the shape of aggressiveness, blurring the boundaries between what is only political disagreement and what is political violence. In dialogue with gender studies, we could say that "communist" was in some cases a synonym for "slut". It is as if we are facing an update of the "holy" versus "bitch" dyad, which, in this case specifically, associates moral deviation only to women placed to the left of the political spectrum. We believe, due to the observations made in relation to this term, that it is important to think of solutions for situations where contextually a term sounds aggressive, even if it is not considered illegal and is not present in the terms of use of the platforms. We have a great challenge here. We have a great challenge here.

Of the 1,859 tweets that mentioned female politicians who publicly declared their support for Manuela on social networks, MonitorA analysed 686 that registered at least three “likes” or were retweeted. Of these, **150 were offenses directed specifically at Marina Silva, a former senator from Acre and a former minister of the environment and founder of the Rede Sustentabilidade party.** In just two days, **three offensive tweets per hour** were collected. **Age and religion were the main aspects highlighted in the insults.** She was called “old” with pejorative terms used like “mummy” and “turtle”, and also “ugly” and “hypocritical”.

The same happened with ex-president Dilma Rousseff (PT), who was mentioned in some insults as “an example of the failure of women in politics”. By publicly declaring support for Marília Arraes and Manuela D’Ávila on Twitter, **Dilma began to be harassed with even more violent swear words, containing offensive and sexist content.**

INSTAGRAM

On Instagram, 70.7 thousand comments were captured from the accounts of monitored candidates, with 28.5 thousand directed at the profiles of female candidates. Altogether, 514 comments with offensive terms were analyzed. Of these, 61 contained specific insults to the candidates and 50% were directed at Manuela D’Ávila. Next up are candidates Paula Mascarenhas (PSDB), candidate for Mayor of Pelotas (RS), with 13.1%, and Loreny (CIDADANIA), candidate for Mayor of Taubaté (SP) with 9.8%.

DIFFERENCE OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN GENDERS

Still in the second round, MonitorA analyzed the difference in the attacks suffered on social networks by men and women who competed for the same position.

Between November 15 and 29, the campaign period before the second round of voting, 94,108 tweets were collected that cited candidates from different regions of the country. Of this total, 30% of the tweets that had some engagement (like or retweeted) were filtered. After this second round, 1,310 tweets targeted at candidates and considered offensive were analyzed — the 100 tweets most engaged with directed to each candidate, or the total number of tweets to the candidates that did not reach 100. In order to verify the dynamics of these commentaries towards men and women, only female candidates were selected and their respective competitors were analyzed after applying all the filters, totalling a group of six female and six male candidates.

In the case of these twelve candidacies, women were severely attacked with misogynistic insults whose aim was to destabilize or embarrass the candidates, either by positing offensive facts against their dignity or by criticizing their physical appearance and decisions in private life. Contrary to this, most offenses directed at men focused on how they had conducted their professional activities.

monitorA

VIOÊNCIA DE GÊNERO CONTRA CANDIDATAS NAS ELEIÇÕES DE 2020

2º TURNO

Para entender a dinâmica da violência política de gênero nas redes sociais, foram analisados tuítes ofensivos deste grupo de candidatos e candidatas que disputaram o segundo turno:

Prefeitura de Porto Alegre (RS)

Manuela D'Ávila (PCdoB) X Sebastião Melo (MDB)

Prefeitura de Recife (PE)

Marília Arraes (PT) X João Campos (PSB)

Prefeitura de São Paulo (SP)

Luiz Erundina* (PSOL) X Bruno Covas (PSDB)

*Luiza Erundina foi candidata a vice-prefeita na chapa de Guilherme Boulos (PSOL)

Prefeitura de Ribeirão Preto (SP)



Suely Vilela (PSB)

X



Duarte Nogueira (PSDB)

Prefeitura de Santarém (PA)



Maria do Carmo (PT)

X



Nélío Aguiar (DEM)

Prefeitura de Contagem (MG)



Marília Campos (PT)

X



Felipe Saliba (DEM)

Os termos mais usados no Twitter para ofender os candidatos

Candidata

Concorrente

Manuela D'Ávila

X

Sebastião Melo

hipócrita, mentirosa, dissimulada, comunista (de merda, safada, de iphone e etc)

mentiroso, lixo, nojento e velho

Marília Arraes

X

João Campos

vitimista, lixo, mentirosa e hipócrita

jogo sujo, mentiroso, play boy, menininho, garoto mimado

Luiza Erundina

X

Bruno Covas

velha, caduca, difunta viva, bandida

hipócrita, mentiroso, pior prefeito, coveiro

Suely Vilela

X

Duarte Nogueira

"uspiana" arrogante

FDP, burro

Maria do Carmo

X

Nélío Aguiar

política suja, sanguessuga

velho larazento, irresponsável

Marília Campos

X

Felipe Saliba

política suja

rato dos infernos, mentiroso

“Old”, “victimized”, “sneaky” and “bandit” are among the most common insults aimed at women. Among those destined for male candidacies, were terms such as “worst mayor”, “corrupt” and “dirty player”, related to their political trajectories, which does not happen with women, even with those who have held political positions. In Porto Alegre, for example, while Manuela D’Ávila (PCdoB) was called a “hypocrite” for the way she dressed, her opponent, Sebastião Melo (MDB), was called a “swindler” and “corrupt” for accusations of tax evasion.

YOUTUBE

YouTube data was also analyzed in the second round. Of the 3,431 comments captured, 34 were specific offenses against candidates Manuela D’Ávila and Marília Arraes. Despite being of a lesser quantity, the comments also contained misogynistic and sexual content. An example of this is one comment directed to Manuela after the release of the result of the second round in Porto Alegre by the Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (Electoral Superior Court): “VTNC, *bandit* (Portuguese abbreviation for “go take one up the a**” or “f*** off”) *You should be arrested for sheltering the Lava Jato (Operation Car Wash)*²⁸ *hacker*” or the one directed to Marília, after the end of the vote count in Recife: “*Today João won bro suck on that, lol*”.

Local content (2nd round)

SANTA CATARINA

The news [site Catarinas](#) analyzed the offensive comments directed at five of the nine female candidates monitored by the observatory. Carla Ayres (PT), a white, lesbian woman was the most attacked. The elected council member in Florianópolis had 2,234 messages analyzed by MonitorA. Of these 4.6% contained offensive terms. Among them, the term “sapatão” (a pejorative term to refer to lesbians), was mentioned 56 times. Together with MonitorA, the news site also applied a questionnaire among state candidates to identify their experiences regarding political gender violence online. Of the 36 female candidates interviewed, 69% said they had already suffered violence because they

were women, 61% had suffered or suffer political gender violence and 47% were victims of political attacks on social networks, including Facebook, a platform not monitored in this study.

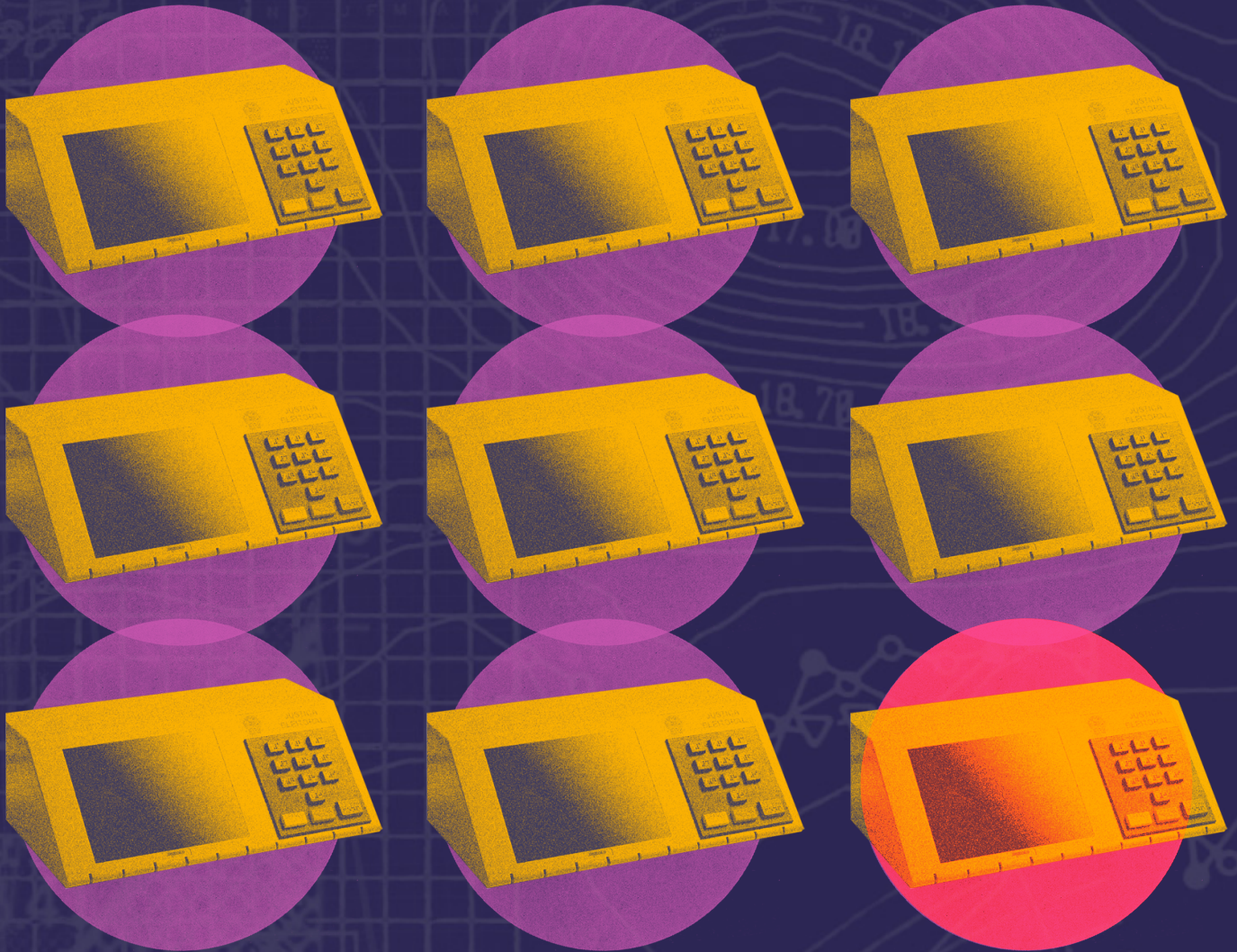
PARÁ

An independent investigative journalist agency [Amazônia Real](#) demonstrated how political gender violence took over social networks in Pará. In Belém, until then candidate for Deputy Mayor, Patrícia Queiroz, of the Christian Social Party (PSC), suffered attacks on social networks, but also suffered the most serious type of violence: against her life and the lives of members of her family. In the early hours of 23 of October, her home was fired upon four times and one shot hit her five-year-old son's bedroom. No one was injured. In this state, women suffered aggressions on the streets during campaigning and were even impeded from participating in their own party's events.

In the next topic we will extricate how political violence manifested itself in some specific cases, revealing itself in hate speech, racism, ageism and LGBT phobia. ■ ■ ■



4



THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL MARKERS OF DIFFERENCE IN SPECIFIC CASES



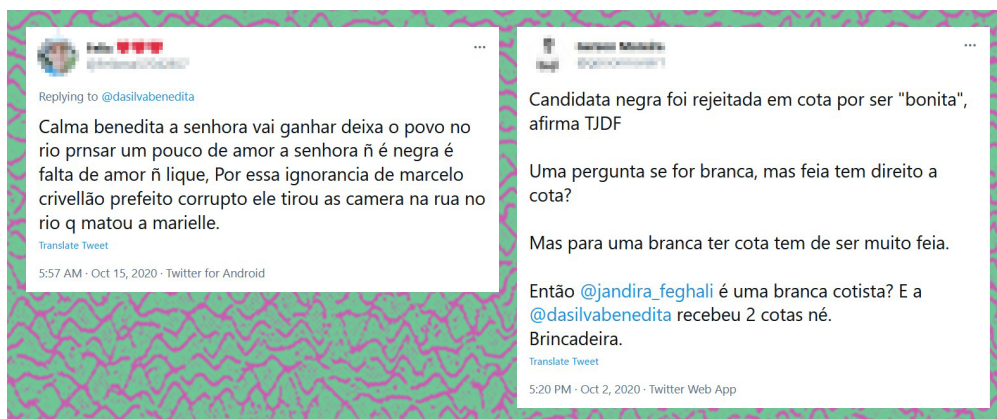
IN THE ANALYSIS MADE from the data collected during the first and second round of the elections, we could observe how the attacks directed at candidates differed according to the social markers that are socially attributed to them. **In this sense, talking about women, in general, was not enough. Just as talking generally about men would not be enough.** For this reason, we selected some candidacies that allowed us to make two different moves:

- We looked deeper into **how the articulation between gender, race and political-ideological positions takes place.**
- We perceived different forms of **masculinities and femininities** being used when hate speech is triggered.

Therefore, because Twitter has proved to be a useful social network for conducting offenses directly against candidates, we chose to analyse only tweets in this part of the report. We then selected tweets that we considered relevant to address the above points.

Associations between gender and race

Benedita da Silva, candidate for Mayor of Rio de Janeiro for the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores / Workers Party), was the target of tweets that pointed to the candidate's physical appearance, both regarding her skin tone and her physical features, such as her facial appearance. As with other candidates, her **body became the focus of the debate**, leaving little room for comments on her political performance. In the selected tweets, it is possible to see how her place as a political figure **was delegitimized**, taking as a basis for this rejection the fact that Benedita is a black woman.



In the first tweet we selected, even though the user seeks to comfort Benedita after the attacks that she has suffered and there appears to be an intention to vote for the candidate, the attempt to embrace her **reinforces the racist comments** that, apparently, it seeks to combat. This becomes clear when the user states: “*You are not a black woman*”. The fact that Benedita is seen as a black woman is taken by the user as an offense, as a “lack of love” by those who identify her in this way. **The attempt to deny her blackness, as if it were an insult or something that she should be ashamed of, is one of the characteristics of Brazilian racism.**

In Brazil, racism operates, at many levels, sometimes in a cordial manner, forging affectivity in situations in which, in fact, what is at stake is the hierarchy between subjects that arises not only from a mentality that holds white people up as superiors, but regards black people as inferior subjects. Race thus operates in a relational way. A body can only be classified as black, because other bodies will be classified as white, yellow, indigenous, etc.²⁹

The effectiveness of racism in Brazil is therefore connected to the fragmentation of racial identity and the desire to ‘whiten’ that leads people, in general, and some users of social networks, in particular, to **deny the blackness of a person in an attempt to place her on an equal footing with white bodies.**

The racism suffered by the candidate also operated from other facets. The question “if [the candidate] is white, but ugly, is she entitled to be a beneficiary of a racial quota?” made by another user shows a belief in a direct association between **black bodies** and **the absence of beauty**. Although the denial of the beauty of black bodies has been widely discussed in recent decades, the comment demonstrates how much this stereotype of the ugliness of black bodies remains alive. Furthermore, what also motivated us to separate this tweet is what follows the first question.

Then, the user states that to be a beneficiary of quota policies, a **white woman** would have to be “very ugly”. He then asks if “@jandira_feghali”

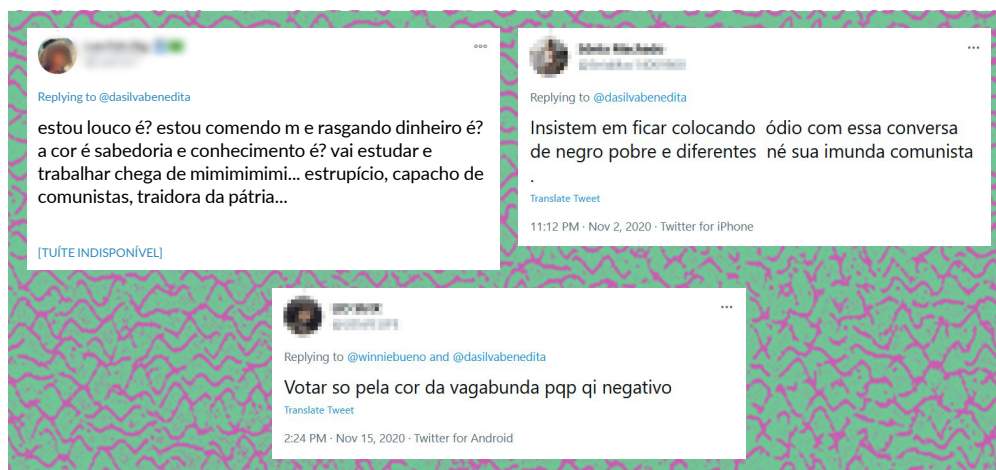
could be considered as a beneficiary of a racial quota for white people. Jandira Feghali, federal deputy for the PCdoB (Partido Comunista do Brasil – Communist Party of Brazil), although she is white, is considered ugly. Here, the belief of a lack of physical beauty in black women unfolds in an articulation with the candidate's political-ideological positions. From the user's point of view, the absence of beauty is reserved for black women and for women who, even though they are white, are on the left of the political spectrum.



“Black communist son of a bitch”, “communist filth”, “dirty pig”, “dairy cow”. These were other offenses directed at the candidate. Again, the ideological positioning is made possible by articulating ethnic-racial belonging. In addition, Benedita had **her body dissociated from humanity when she was called “dairy cow” and “pig”**. The association of black bodies with the bodies of other animals³⁰ is a reference to the colonial view of black people, whose possession of a soul and their very humanity was called into question by the colonizers, and, at the same time, to contemporary **hate speech** that, through a rationale similar to those of the colonizers, **seeks to affirm the inferiority of specific social groups**.

Thus, the use of offenses that put Benedita's humanity in question is yet another way of reinforcing the candidate's supposed inferiority for being black, distancing her from the notion of humanity, which would make her body more akin to other species of animals than those of other candidates. The result of this action portrays an attempt to generate a distance between Benedita's existence and the possibility that she legitimately exercises political activities.

In this case, we also witness the dehumanization of their voters when they are called “ass” and “donkey”, which indicates, again, the fact that some aggressors take their positions to the extreme, taking cover in offenses against those who have different political positions from them.



The aggressors’ difficulty in dealing with opposing political positions is also perceived when the defence of the importance of the **political representation of black women** is distorted and understood, from their perspective, as voters choosing Benedita only because of her “color”, which we note also when another user asks if “**color is wisdom and knowledge?**”. Furthermore, we observe **the dispute over the meaning of what would be the spread of hatred**. If, for hate speech specialists, hate manifests itself when part of the population refuses to make room to listen to and live with the existence of groups that have been historically marginalized, for one of the users, hate speech expresses itself when visibility is given to the “poor, black and different”.

The selection of these tweets allowed us to observe **how, during the 2020 elections, stereotypes, prejudices and racist practices operated on Twitter**. It is important to emphasize that offenses should not be understood only as if they were directed at Benedita. Again, when we have the body of a black candidate being the subject of comments that reinforce prejudices and stigmatize **her, she is not only attacked individually, but also as a member of a marginalized social group**, the group of black women, which contributes socially to pre-existing social gaps that enable this type of behaviour.

Different masculinities at play

In comparison to the offenses directed at the candidacies of women who, as we have seen above, focused mainly on the physical characteristics and morals of the candidates, **the discourse directed at men reveals different approaches.** The diversity surrounding the attacks suffered by each of the candidates is related **to the different ways in which men consider themselves and are considered socially.**

When we choose to monitor not only profiles of female candidates, but also male candidates, we align ourselves with the understanding that gender is constructed in a relational way,³¹ so it is not possible to talk about men without talking about women and vice versa. Men and women, therefore, cannot be thought of as empty concepts, but as concepts that are completed from what is said about each other. Studies on masculinities form part of the field of gender studies and, more recently, from the impacts of intersectional studies, space has been opened to think also about non-hegemonic masculinities, that is, masculinities that escape the more traditional views of what it is to be a man or what behaviours we should expect from men. In this way, we have seen the elaboration of different concepts on black masculinities and trans masculinities.³² In this part of the report, we focus on observing gender, sexuality and generation markers regarding the male candidates we chose to observe. Due to the data collected, it was not possible to analyze tweets directed at any black male candidate. In the first round, the black male candidate we selected to monitor had his candidacy rejected by the Electoral Superior Court (in Portuguese, Tribunal Superior Eleitoral – TSE and, in the second round, as we focused on monitoring all women candidates for Mayor who had reached the second round, as well as their opponents; we ended up without a black male candidate to monitor.

This is because, just as it is not possible to think of a single mode for being a woman, the constitution of men is also a patchwork of different characteristics and social readings. We will talk here about the **different forms of masculinities referenced**, which can be seen in the way the attacks were directed at the candidates.

To observe the behaviours of users targeted at candidates, we will analyze offensive tweets that targeted **João Campos (PSB) candidate for the Mayor of Recife, Guilherme Boulos (PSOL) and Bruno Covas (PSDB) candidates for Mayor of São Paulo, Eduardo Suplicy (PT) candidate for councillor in São Paulo and William de Lucca (PT) candidate for councillor in São Paulo.**

The offenses directed at the candidate João Campos drew attention especially for the way in which the candidate was classified: “kid”, “little boy”, “urchin”, “boy”, “immature” and “manipulable”. Although, as an adult, being **infantilized** is offensive, it is necessary to consider how much putting a candidate in the place of “child” or “immature”, to some extent, brings about a **greater social tolerance** to supposed mistakes made by men in politics and, consequently, makes them less **accountable for their deeds**.

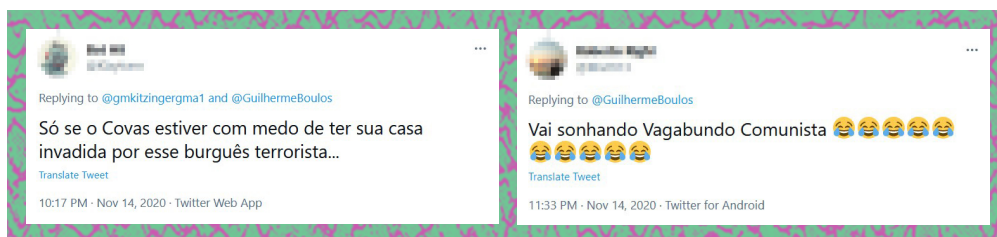


As we can see in the tweets above, Campos is criticized by users for his behaviour, but the way to question the candidate's **ability** to be Mayor of Recife is based on comments that classify him as **unprepared** to take office, as is the case of the user who asks if the candidate "knows how to make a bed" or "wash a dish".

Campos' lack of preparation, however, is **nothing in comparison to the way Benedita (PT) was attacked**, for example. The incapacity of the first would be related to the fact that he is not considered **man enough or mature enough**. In no time, his body, physical appearance or morals, with regard to aspects of his personal life, were brought up or questioned. Even though Campos' opponent was a woman, the way the offenses are directed at the candidate fuels the perception that **politics is mostly done by men**. Therefore, in this sense, if the candidate were **sufficiently male**, there would be no reasons for the electorate to reject him.

Similarly, Guilherme Boulos, despite having extensive experience on Twitter, is responsible for most of the tweets we collected in the second round. He received criticism and comments that, in general, focused on the political spectrum in which he is located. Boulos was called an "invading parasite of private property", "cheeky communist crook", "and bourgeois terrorist", "leftist", "vagabond" and "communist vagabond". If, in the case of women, we observe the term "communist" being used as a curse and being aligned with other types of offenses, in the case of Boulos, criticism is restricted to his choices as a political activist.



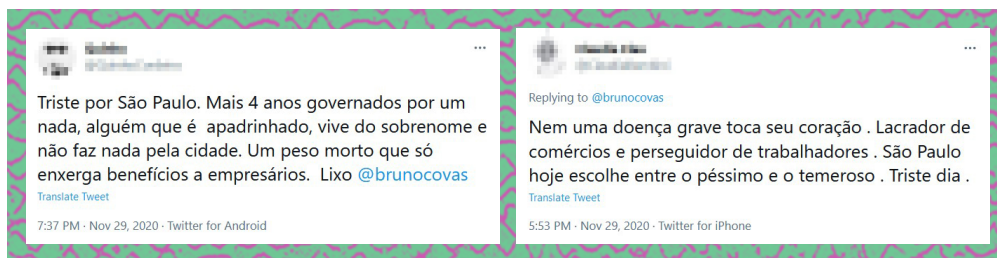


The tone of the comments received by Bruno Covas does not differ much from those received by the candidates mentioned above either. Covas was accused of only completing projects “on the eve of the election”, he was called “corrupt breast feeder”, “lousy politician”, “lousy administrator”, “sponsored”, “little shit boy”, “a dead weight that only gives benefits to entrepreneurs”.

The offenses directed at the current Mayor of the capital of São Paulo focus mainly on his functions as a **political manager**. In addition, we can identify a class bias in some criticisms related to the fact that the candidate is from a family in which many held positions in institutional politics. He would be seen as having the right surname to occupy political spaces — and be among the most affluent social class families in São Paulo, that’s why he was called “spoilt little boy”.

We noticed a difference, in relation to the other candidates, in the way Covas was attacked when some users talked about the fact that the candidate was undergoing cancer treatment. One of them says that even though he got sick, Covas “did not learn anything from life” and another says, “not even a serious illness touches his heart”. **The fact that the candidate fell ill appears as a possible weakness to be used against him by those who did not support his candidacy.**

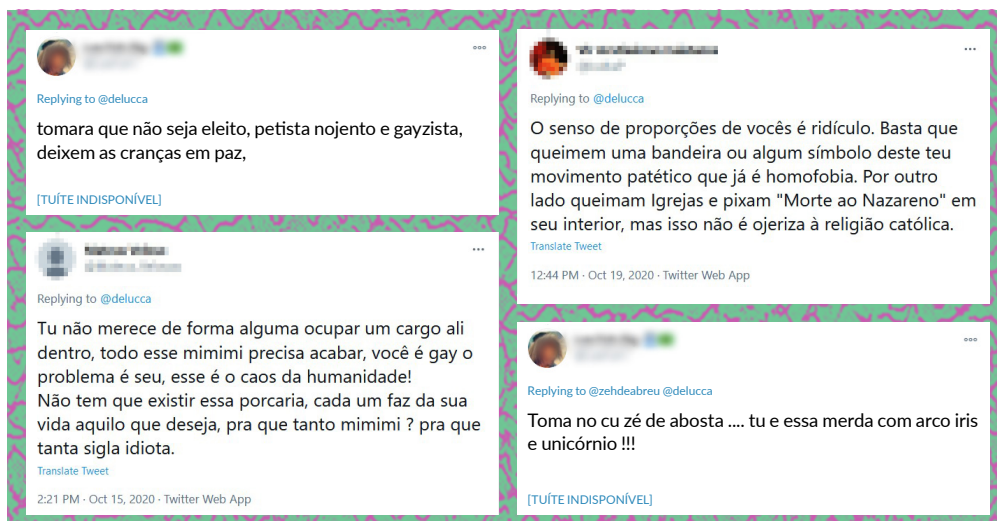




In the case of Eduardo Suplicy, we identified a shift in the way the attacks were directed at him: “decrepit old man”, “go enjoy your retirement”, “go to the old folks home you dirty old man”. The tone of the tweets is to disqualify Suplicy, which is somewhat similar to what happened with Erundina, but in his case, only **age** is highlighted. Born in 1941, for some users, his age seems to call into question if the council member is able to remain active in the political sphere.

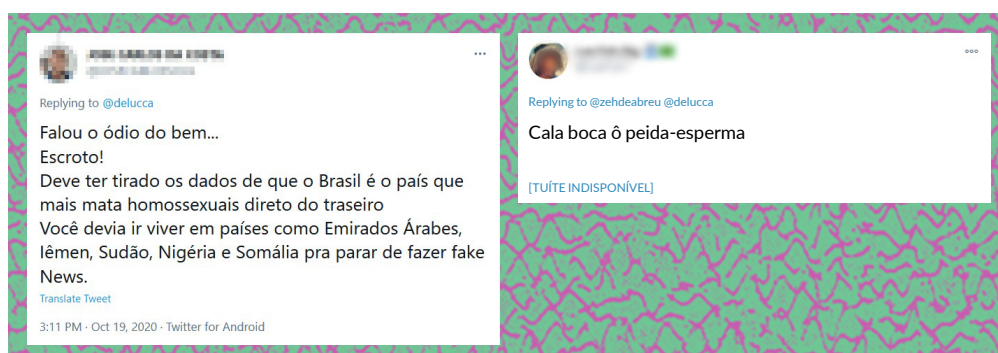


Among the candidates analyzed in this section, William de Lucca was the one who received the tweets that differed most with those previously mentioned. Lucca was the target of **homophobic** comments that highlighted his **sexual orientation** and was attacked for the **LGBT+ guidelines** he defended.



“Gay guy”, “your pathetic movement”, “all that ‘look at poor little me’” and “stupid acronyms” were some of the terms used to attack this candidate. It is noticeable, in this case, that Lucca was not only the target of comments that were addressed to him individually, because, as in the case of Benedita, there was an **intention to denigrate a specific social group: LGBT+ people, as well as the LGBT+ movement**. This is what happens, for example, when the user says, “leave the children alone”, raising the concern that the guidelines for an educational project defended by Lucca should not reach the children.

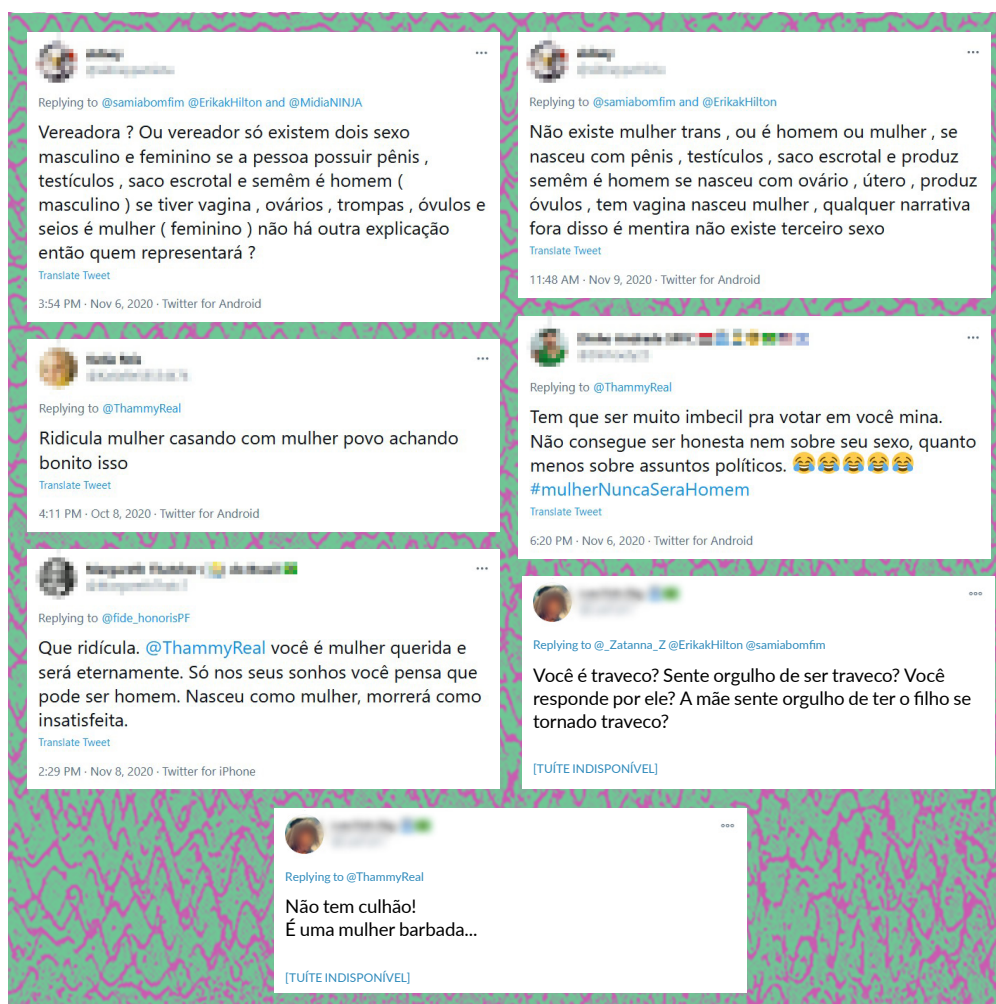
The fear that the issue of diversity around different family constitutions or sexual orientations will touch children brings us to the scenario of the 2018 elections, when the circulation of uninformative news aimed to prevent the formal education of children and adolescents from addressing **gender diversity**. We identified, therefore, that the discussions that took place in 2018, many of them causing a strong polarization among portions of the Brazilian population, did not completely disappear in the 2020 elections.



As can be seen in the tweets above, the homophobic discourse was mobilized against Lucca’s person to indicate his **existence as something unfit to occupy political spaces**. Taking information “straight from the ass” and “fart-sperm” were violent and gross ways of referring to the candidate’s sexual orientation. **His sexuality was seen as dissonant compared to candidates whose sexuality is in line with what is expected of those who legitimately hold political office**. Although he is a man, his sexuality is seen as something that makes him less of a man, pointing to the belief that politics is mainly done by men, but not by any man.

Biologization of persons and transphobia

The difficulty in having their bodies and forms of existence legitimized in political spaces was not restricted to women, black women and gay men. When observing the comments received by the female candidate for city councilwoman Erika Hilton (PSOL) and the candidate for city councilman Thammy Miranda (PL) we observed that, regardless of the political spectrum in which they were located, there was resistance and aggression directed at the female candidate and the male candidate for being trans.



We noted in the above tweets the refusal to respect the gender identities of Érika and Thammy, which comes from interpretations that understand biological sex as determining how we should refer to people's gender. According to the philosopher Butler,³³ in our society

an attempt is made to characterize persons from a reading that makes the association between sex, gender and sexual identity automatic. In that sense, when you are born with a vagina, you are expected to identify yourself as a woman and be sexually-emotionally attracted to a man who has a penis. Likewise, if you are born with a penis, you are expected to identify yourself as a man and relate to a woman who has a vagina.

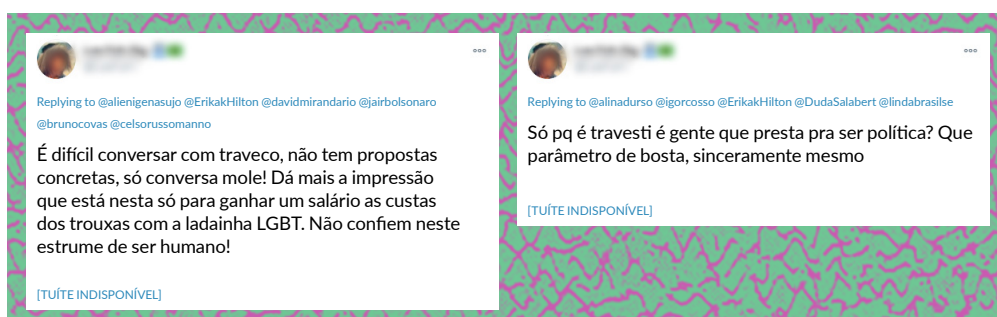


Contemporary gender studies argue that the sex of a body is not easily identifiable. Anne Fausto-Sterling,³⁴ a professor of biology and gender studies at Brown University, argues that labelling a person as a man or a woman is less about biological issues and more about social readings of an individuals' whole person. Scientific knowledge assists in decision-making, but the social beliefs that have been established about gender will also affect scientific productions about sex. The author is pointing to the fact that scientists do not produce impartial knowledge, even in fields of biological studies, which means that the social experiences and the narratives that are produced from these experiences will also inform the way bodies are understood socially and scientifically.

When this rule of **sex – gender – sexual attraction** breaks, we see social reactions that seek to reintegrate people into this way of functioning, as we could see in the violent comments directed at the candidate William de Lucca and now, also in the comments that refuse to recognise Thammy and Érika as man and woman, respectively. It is worth noting that, in Brazil, since 2018, the Supreme Federal Court has recognized **the right of transgender people to modify their first name and sex in documents, regardless of having undergone sex reassignment surgery or not. The refusal to respect candidate's gender identities, therefore, ignores recently acquired rights.**

The accusation that Benedita was being put up as a candidate just for her color, which indicated an attempt to distort the debates about political representativeness, was also observed in the comments made

about Érika. For some users, people were voting for her just because she was a trans woman and not because she would have anything to add to the political scene.



Similar to what we observed in cases of racism and homophobia, here both candidates were disqualified, being the target of transphobia, by users who considered their bodies as illegitimate to occupy the public sphere. Again, we are not contemplating comments that are simply based on individual attacks, although Hilton and Miranda were also attacked individually. By not paying attention to these behaviours, **violent practices are ignored and end up being socially normalized, ensuring the validation of political and electoral violence, as well as hate speech that is directed at subordinate social groups.** ■ ■ ■



5



**LEGISLATION
AND POLITICAL
VIOLENCE**



BEFORE GETTING INTO THIS TOPIC, it is worth remembering that in 1996 Brazil ratified the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, and in 2002 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, which included in the list of violence against women acts that prevent her from exercising her political rights. Some of the bills that are under discussion today in the National Congress seek **to create mechanisms to curb and prevent political violence** against women under these treaties.

The magazine *AzMina* monitors, through its project *Elas no Congresso*, how women's rights are being considered in the National Congress. On a daily basis, this monitoring focuses on **bills** that have keywords that are frequently used in debates on gender, whether on sexual and reproductive rights, political participation or violence against women. "*Elas no Congresso*" analyzed the projects created by parliamentarians that dealt with the participation of women in politics since 2014. By 2019, out of 43 projects, only three spoke of **political gender violence and political-electoral discrimination** — all of which were brought forth by women.

Last year, given the scenario of municipal elections and the various attacks already mentioned here against female candidates, five more projects were introduced in Congress. They are: **PL 4963/2020**,³⁵ initiated by deputy Margarete Coelho (PP-PI) and signed by several parliamentarians; **PL 5136/2020**,³⁶ by deputy Rejane Dias (PT-PI); **PL 5295/2020**,³⁷ by the deputy Talíria Petrone (PSOL-RJ), who was the victim of several attacks and threats in the last legislature; **PL 5587/2020**,³⁸ by deputy Shéridan (PSDB-RR); and **PL 5611/2020**,³⁹ the only one initiated by a man, deputy Alexandre Frota (PSDB-SP). The first four are now working their way through Congress, annexed to **PL 349/2015**,⁴⁰ by deputy Rosangela Gomes (PRB-RJ), which was approved by deputies in December 2020 and is now being analyzed by senators. The five bills on political gender-based violence were evaluated by organizations collaborating with "*Elas no Congresso*", which

classified and analyzed the bills. We outline here the points raised not only by AzMina and InternetLab, but also in the discussions of the organizations *TRETAqui* and Themis on the PLs (draft bills) within the scope of “*Elas no Congresso*”.

First, it is noteworthy that some of these bills focus on defining the conduct that constitutes political violence and on what the **punishments for possible offenders should** be without including, however, **protection policies for the victims**. It is also worth mentioning that the *Maria da Penha* Law,⁴¹ considered one of the three best laws in the world dealing with violence against women, was created to address the complexity of issues involved in domestic violence: education in relation to the subject, protection for the woman, assistance for the victim, and punishment and rehabilitation of the aggressor. In order to create **policies to combat violence against women**, including political gender violence, it is necessary to pay attention to all these issues.

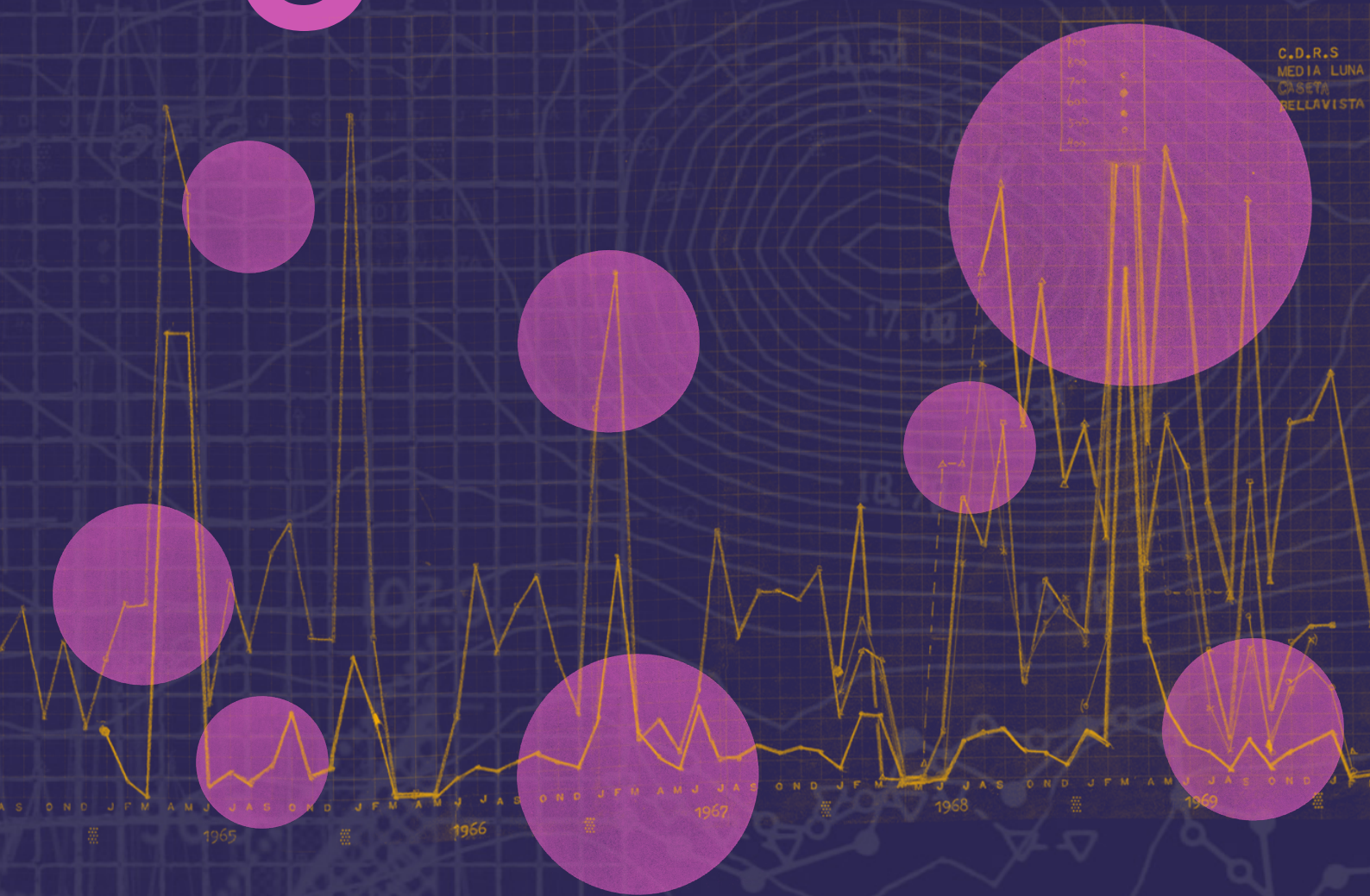
Furthermore, among the projects, there is little consensus on the **political violence that takes place online**: while some suggest greater penalties for crimes committed on the internet, others do not classify or mention this sphere, something that we consider essential. Another important point is the characterization of what is political gender violence. PL 5587/2020, for example, limits political violence to the act of slandering, insulting, defaming or offending the honor and or the image of women because of the condition of being a woman. In practice, political violence goes far beyond that.

PL 5611/2020 also brings up an important issue for consideration: it suggests that “the man” who commits any of the actions identified as political gender violence will have his **political rights or mandate revoked**. It is important to realize that political gender violence is not committed only by men.

In general, however, all projects bring **advances in the discussion on political gender violence**. They need to be discussed in detail, but they also need to move forward in Congress so that we finally have alternatives to combat this type of practice. ■ ■ ■



6



RECOMMENDATIONS



POLITICAL VIOLENCE PERMEATES and is very much part of the Brazilian political scene, drawing, therefore, from actions constantly present in and outside electoral occasions. With the help of the data considered in this report, we understand, therefore, that while these abuses happen based on inequalities that pre-existed the electoral scenario — such as gender, ethnic-racial, LGBT phobia and age inequalities, we need to be aware that **hate speech and other forms of violence that occur in the online sphere**, also contribute to reinforce notions that support this pre-existing **hierarchy among different social groups**.

It is important to underline that the reinforcement of hierarchies historically constructed and re-affirmed by discursive acts that are produced on platforms can **lead us socially to a wider belief that considers some bodies and ways of existence as inferior**, which would make them, according to this point of view, **illegitimate beings to occupy political posts that should be preserved for other forms of humanity**.

These findings, however, coexist with some important information about Brazil on the world stage:

- The country is considered one of the most advanced regarding discussions related to Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), as it has expanded these discussions among the Three Powers (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary), and adopted rules that seek to study, understand and regulate the reflexes of such technological innovations. In the last 10 years, laws and decrees on computer crimes and contracting through electronic commerce have been discussed and implemented, in addition to the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet and the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data (In Portuguese, Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados Pessoais — LGPD), which heralded a new moment for guaranteeing rights in the country.
- Likewise, Brazil, with a history of international protagonism in matters of gender and race, is considered one of the countries with the most advanced legislation in the prevention, combat, sanction and repair of social inequalities such as sexism and racism. It is worth pointing out, however, that this protagonism finds limits in the scope of the application of legislation within the Judiciary.

- In addition, the country is a signatory to several international standards, and has adapted its domestic legislation to ensure political and electoral rights for all capable people (without distinction of any kind).

The three points above, added to the concerns that we underlined, with regard to the fact that political violence, electoral violence and hate speech are impediments to increased representation **in elective positions, which should include subjects belonging to different social groups, has revealed the urgency to develop and strengthen specialized strategies to discuss and resolve such issues.**

In view of this controversial scenario, we offer, from a consideration of historically subordinated groups, **eight recommendations to the sectors involved** that allow us to envision how we can **combat, prevent and monitor political violence.**

Legislative

1 Improvement and adaptation of ordinary and electoral legislation to confront political violence

Legislating on the prevention, sanctioning and fighting against political violence, in all spheres, should become one of the **priority agendas of the Legislative Power** after the 2020 municipal elections. In addition to the discourses and practices that were already taking place outside the digital sphere, it is notable that online political violence largely focused on certain candidates who are socially identified according to inequalities related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and generation. These markers appear in a qualified and recurrent way in the speeches and practices of political violence online, and reinforce historical and structural social inequalities, **which pre-existed the electoral process, as well as the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)**, such as sexism, racism, ageism and LGBT phobia.

In this sense, we understand that it is the duty of the Legislature to ensure that the legal proposals presented and sanctioned to challenge political violence start from an **intersectional perspective**, which reflects the articulations between different social markers, and that pay special attention to the digital dimension.

In addition, **current legislation needs to be revised and reformed** in order to expand and include concerns about political violence in multiple dimensions. This should occur both in **ordinary legislation and**

in electoral legislation, since the latter deals only with electoral periods and, even so, it is possible that the jurisdiction of the Electoral Justice tribunal is denied, depending on the agent and the type of violence.

With regard to electoral legislation, we suggest that the provisions of the Electoral Code that deal with prohibitions in electoral advertising include a specific provision to address speeches that mobilize sexist, LGBT phobic and racist content. The principles should follow, as far as possible, those already existing in Law n. 7.716 /89. With that, we would have more resources available during the electoral period, to deal with these types of content beyond the issue of injury, defamation and slander (which individualize the issue and do not challenge the inherent discrimination), at the speed that is necessary, when it originates from campaigns and candidates.

Within the scope of ordinary legislation, it is necessary to move forward with a **legislative framework that takes into account both manifestations of sexism beyond the scope of domestic violence** as well as the intersectional dimensions of this type of violence. This framework must exist without prejudice to the legislation already in force on discrimination, and in line with the treaties and recommendations of the international system for the protection of human rights.

Judiciary

2 Application of legislation dealing with political violence, anti-racism and anti-LGBT phobia in Common and Electoral Justice

Ensuring democratic participation and good governance requires an **observance of the social markers of difference**, from an intersectional perspective. In this context, the Judiciary must focus its action against all forms of inequality that may compromise the **exercise of democracy** and the **integrity of the electoral process, before, during and after the elections**. **It should** ensure the application of both ordinary and electoral legislation against political violence and against any sexist, racist and LGBT phobic practices, among others, with special attention to the digital dimension.

This action should demand efforts from the Superior Electoral Court, but should not be limited to this specialized branch of the Judiciary. It is crucial that **Common Justice** also acts to investigate and resolve cases of political violence within its competence.

For both cases, we also recommend that the training offered to members of the Judiciary include information on political violence, discrimination and the respective legal ways of dealing with it, including through civil procedure / tort law, which are frequently overlooked legal strategies.

3 Create special units or task forces dedicated to tackling political violence within the Public Prosecutor's Office

Cases of online political violence must be dealt with speedily, as this is a practice that affects not only the dignity of the victims and undermines the democratic system, but also due to the rapid dissemination of content in a digital environment.

For this reason, we suggest the creation of **special units (or mixed) or task forces within the competence of the Public Prosecutor's Office**, so that these cases can be dealt with speedily and with the specialization necessary, especially when the victim needs emergency measures — ensuring that they are heard, attended to and not re-victimized.

We also believe that these efforts should be centered on the protection of the victim, for whom the need to dismember and allocate complaints between different branches of the Judiciary adds to the difficulties already inherent in the pursuit of cases that often involve multiple attacks and multiple intermediaries.

We also recommend, as stated above, that the capacities **and training of the Public Prosecutor's teams include content on political violence.**

4 Improving the channels for reporting and inspecting before, during and after the electoral process

One of the challenges reported by candidates concerns the difficulty in **reporting cases of political violence**. According to a survey produced by Instituto Marielle Franco (Marielle Franco Institute), 78% of the candidates interviewed reported having suffered political violence online in the 2020 municipal elections, but only 32.6% said they had reported the violence suffered. Among those who did not report, 17% said they felt **afraid or insecure to report** and 6.8% reported not having done so because they **did not know where to report it..** According to the candidates, the violence occurred through social networks, e-mail and messaging apps, as well as in virtual meetings and live broadcasts. Some candidates also reported the spread of false news about themselves, their family members or members of their campaigns, as well as invasion or censorship on social networks.

These data reveal the distance between discussion and practice when it comes to political violence. It is necessary that, in addition to independent alternatives such as *TRETAqui*, the Judiciary, in particular the Public Prosecutor's Office, **also improves its reporting and inspection channels**, and disseminates information on **where and how to make such complaints**. Candidates must feel safe to be recognized as political

subjects and to continue their political careers and, when necessary, to report cases of political violence, either against themselves or against other candidates. This must be **an inalienable right** for people in the exercise of political life and to their voters before, during and after the electoral process, in an integral and continuous manner.

Some of the cases we dealt with in this report could lead to multiple complaints, such as cyber-crimes (**Cybercrime Police Offices**), **crimes against women (Police Departments Specializing in Women's Services – in Portuguese Delegacias Especializadas no Atendimento à Mulher – DEAMs)** and improper or illegal practices within the scope of Electoral Justice (**Pardal – mobile app**). **Both the concentration of complaints in one channel alone and the integrated performance of various channels are viable possibilities.** Regardless of the creation of special units and specialized channels, these channels must be improved and adapted to receive complaints, investigate or redirect cases of political violence to the competent organs.

Executive

5 Include representation from Civil Society, the Private Sector, the Legislature and the Judiciary in debates on the Internet, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and political violence.

The Executive Branch must support all strategies that deal with political and electoral violence discussed and implemented by the Legislative and Judicial Branches. Such support may include **technical support, provision of human and financial resources**, and especially the **mandatory and unrestricted inclusion** of representatives of Civil Society, the Private Sector, the Legislature and the Judiciary in debates that culminate in the review, development and consolidation of agreements about the internet, ICTs and political violence.

The observance to the inclusion of different Powers and Sectors allows these debates to represent the most comprehensive **and advanced technical and theoretical plurality** around each theme, and, consequently, will give rise to the implementation of precise public policies against political violence online. It is important to highlight that the contributions must not overlap and impose interpretations designed to defend their own personal and institutional interests.

In the long term, we understand that the National Data Protection Authority (in Portuguese, Autoridade Nacional de Proteção de Dados — ANPD) can also contribute to this support, playing an **educational role** in the propagation of these and future debates on Internet, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and political violence online.

Internet Application Platforms and Providers

6 Facilitate reporting, improve responses, make content moderation activities more transparent and improve tools to control one's online experience

Companies responsible for internet application platforms and providers must commit to national and international legislation that deals with the guarantee and protection of rights. We cite here the **Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet**, the **General Law of Protection of Personal Data** (in Portuguese, Autoridade Nacional de Proteção de Dados — ANPD), and the **Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (POs)** of the United Nations (UN).

In view of the cases considered in this report and the fact that a lot of content of an extremely discriminatory nature is still on the air at the time of publication, we recommend the platforms:

- a. Integrate policies to combat hate speech into their policies of electoral integrity**, in order to ensure internal visibility and centrality in solving this type of problem during the election period;
- b. Facilitate reporting**, creating simple mechanisms that prevent victims from having to report item after item, which is not viable in many cases of mass attacks or a very high volume of aggressions;
- c. Invest in moderation activities**, providing quicker and more appropriate responses to incidents reported;
- d. Develop tools that allow candidates to have more control over their experience on the Internet**, such as, for example, reporting bulk posts, limiting who can respond to posts, etc. These measures must be thought out carefully, especially when it comes to the accounts of people in public office, so that they do not serve as a way of excluding political opponents from the debate.

- e. **Be transparent about the procedures and inform**, both those who had content removed and those who reported it, the reasons for the decision and the possibilities of appeal;
- f. Offer **transparency reporting on content removal** specifically covering the electoral period;
- g. Carry out **awareness** campaigns against political violence online, emphasizing the consequences of such practice inside and outside the platforms.

In relation to the reporting channels, at least during the period in which the electoral process takes place, it is also necessary that the platforms include **political violence as a specific reporting item**. This will facilitate identification, reporting and support for combating and preventing political violence. It may also contribute to the investigation and resolution of such practices by the Judiciary, if the complaints are organized, concentrated and made available to the offended users and to the Common or Electoral Justice departments.

Civil Society

7 Expand the quantity of interdisciplinary and intersectional research on the dimensions of political violence

It is essential to identify the way in which political violence occurs in electoral processes, particularly in the digital dimension, considering the social markers of differences that have historically and systematically structured Brazilian society, such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age. Although **MonitorA** — and initiatives such as Other Voices,⁴² *TRETAqui*,⁴³ Instituto Marielle Franco (*Marielle Franco Institute*),⁴⁴ Terra de Direitos (*Land of Rights*) and Justiça Global (*Global Justice*)⁴⁵ and the UN Women,⁴⁶ among others — join efforts to **understand, discuss and disseminate** what political violence is and how it is configured online, it is necessary that civil society provide human and financial resources to **expand the dimensions of interdisciplinary research produced from intersectional perspectives on the size and shape of political violence**. In its digital dimension, political violence is still a **recent issue in the legislative and judicial fields**, and discussion of the issue can lead to an unfolding of different aspects, including a range of **possibilities and opportunities for research and public policies**.

8 Create and strengthen networks on elections and violence (political and electoral, gender, race, etc.)

In parallel with amplifying the list of research on the dimensions of political violence, it is important that **Civil Society networks are created and strengthened for research, lobbying and advocacy** on elections and the different types of violence that emerge during the electoral process whether this is political or electoral violence, gender violence, racial violence, or LGBT phobic violence, etc. Such networks must respect the **plurality of debates, ideas and representations** — such as the Legislative, Judiciary and Executive Powers — in order to strengthen the exercise of democracy and the discussion, prevention, sanction and fight against political violence online. For this, it is also necessary that social networks are made aware of their responsibility and role to **identify, understand and dialogue** with different actors from Civil Society, the Private Sector and the Three Powers to articulate strategies and policies that reflect public opinion and interest, of both the actors and the victims.

Although we are convinced that the overcoming of these violence will only happen in a complete way through profound structural and cultural changes with regard to gender inequalities, our goal in making these recommendations is to contribute to institutional policy as an environment in which different social representations can live, corroborating with democratic acts that make it possible to listen to one another, together with guaranteeing the political existence of different social groups.

If people do not have space to compete, and institutions are slow to act, electoral and democratic integrity has already been violated and ceases to exist.

Thus, we believe that all data and recommendations described here should be discussed, expanded upon, revised and consulted publicly in all areas, in order to mitigate risks, identify patterns, find common denominators and consider the best strategies for the present and the future of Brazilian democracy. ■ ■ ■



7



**MATERIALS
PRODUCED BY
MONITORA**



Comments feed for InternetLab »“Fat”, “pig”, “dumb”: candidates are sworn at more than 40 times a day on Twitter during election campaign



Political violence and sexist discourse against women fused and spread on social networks during the elections — without favoring a party or political spectrum. Candidates for Mayor accompanied by MonitorA received an average of 40 offensive daily tweets. In general, the offenses refer to the bodies of the female candidates, their intellectual capacity, mental health or other moral aspects of their lives. Many are misogynistic, racist, lesbo, Trans and homophobic in essence.

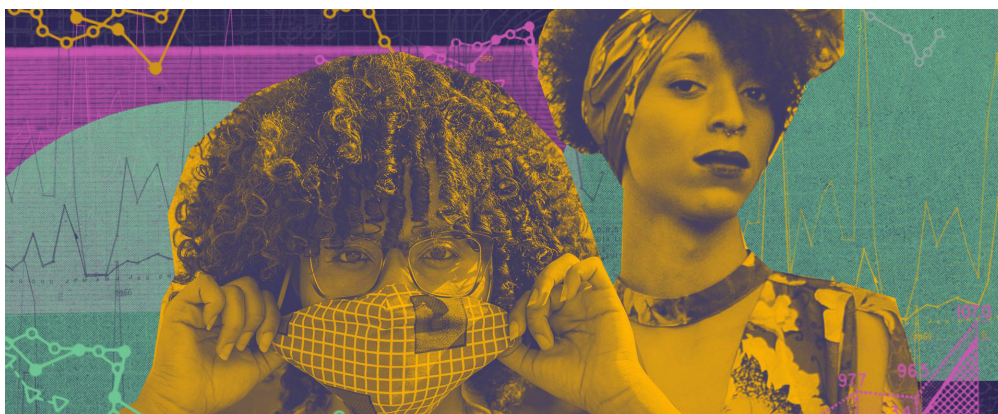
Black women are the main target of political violence on social networks in Bahia



In a year of female records in the dispute to occupy spaces of power and decision-making, in which campaigns were reinvented on the streets and on social networks, political gender violence has intensified in the

direction of women candidates for city hall and city councils across the country. In Bahia, it touched, especially, the candidacies of black women and LGBTQI+. They were misogynistic, racist, transphobic attacks that made use of disinformation campaigns and even hacker attacks.

Candidates from the peripheries of São Paulo suffer virtual attacks and intimidation during electoral dispute



Erika Hilton, a black and trans woman, was the most offended candidate for the São Paulo legislature on Twitter during the election campaign. Erika will be the third black woman to occupy a seat in the Chamber of São Paulo and the first trans woman. According to the analysis completed by MonitorA 8.5% of the tweets directed at the female candidates contained swear words, many of them transphobic in nature. Like Erika, other candidates from the outskirts of São Paulo and black women were also attacked in the digital environment.

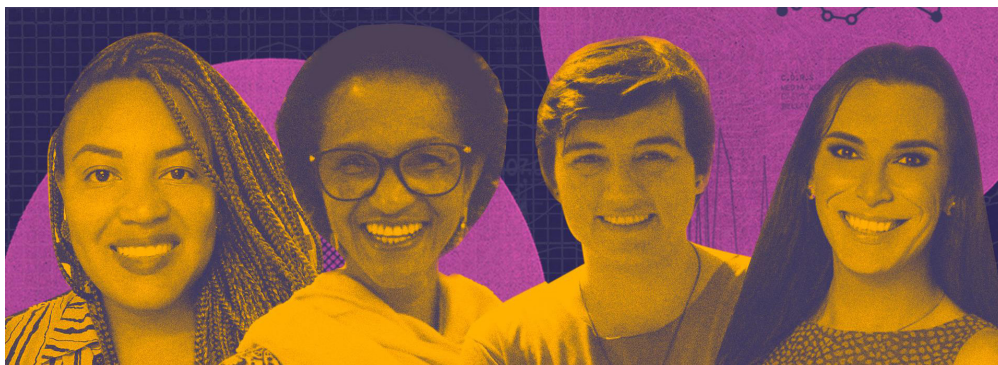
Maternity, age and sexuality make candidates targets of attacks on social networks in Minas Gerais



Being a mother. Being a black woman. Being a feminist. Being over 60 and continuing to act politically. Being a lesbian. None of these characteristics concerns the ability of these women to assume public

positions of power. However, these were the contents of the attacks that candidates from Minas Gerais received on social media during the first round of the campaign.

In Santa Catarina, 61% of candidates say they have already suffered political gender violence



The call for diversity in politics and the expansion of voices in the spaces of power has strained party politics and opened up innumerable forms of gender violence in Brazil, especially against candidacies that personally represent this agenda in their lives and discourse. In the first round in Santa Catarina, five of the nine monitored candidates, from parties such as PT, PSOL, NOVO, PCdoB and MDB, were the target of insults on social networks.

Attacks on candidates extend to supporters in the second round of elections



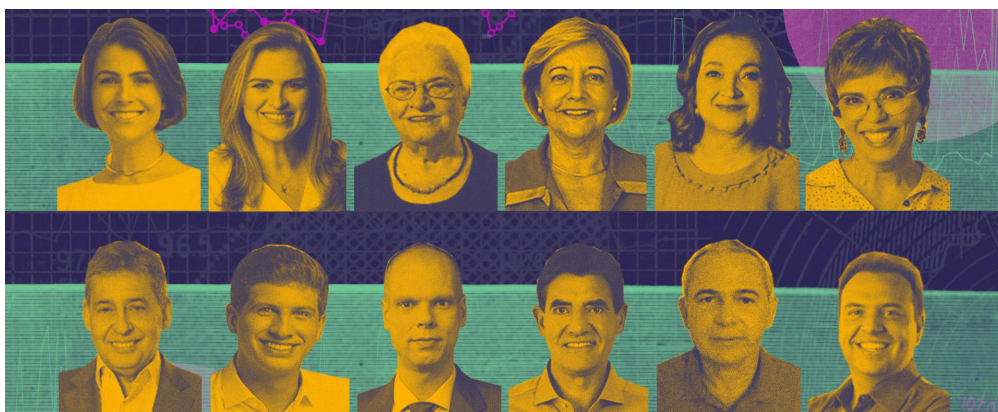
Having reached the second round in the dispute for the Porto Alegre City Hall, Manuela D'Ávila (PCdoB) took the lead in an unfortunate ranking: she is, by far, the candidate in the country that has received the most offenses on Twitter and Instagram during the last days of the election campaign. And in the second round, in addition to being the target of insults that allude to her intellectuality, political ideology, mental health or the moral aspects of her life, political gender violence also extended to her supporters.

From shots to street aggressions: in Pará, political violence against women goes beyond social networks



Political gender violence and attacks on female candidates does not happen only in the online world. On social networks, MonitorA showed that candidates receive more than 40 offenses per day. But this is only a tip of gender-based political violence, which outside of the internet takes the form of attacks and physical threats.

Political gender violence: the differences between attacks received by women and their opponents



The analysis of comments directed at male and female candidates in the second round of the elections reflects a common characteristic of political gender violence: Women are the target of attacks for what they are supposed to be — with reference to physical, intellectual, and moral characteristics, while, generally, men are offended for what they do, either for work they have already done or for attitudes they have adopted.



8



IMPACT



ONE OF THE IMPACTS OF THE MONITORING already identified was giving inputs to the offended candidates so that they can see the dimension of the violence suffered – information that ends up as empirical on a daily basis.



“MonitorA’s disclosure had an impact because what I was feeling on a daily basis was quantified. It wasn’t just a bunch of crazy people tweeting and attacking me in the first round of the campaign, I could see that it was something orchestrated, organized. Quantifying this, made my legal team even more attentive to everything that was happening. Some offensive comments were removed and complaints were made to the platforms”, Joice Hasselmann, federal deputy and candidate for Mayor of São Paulo for PSL.

DIÁLOGOS

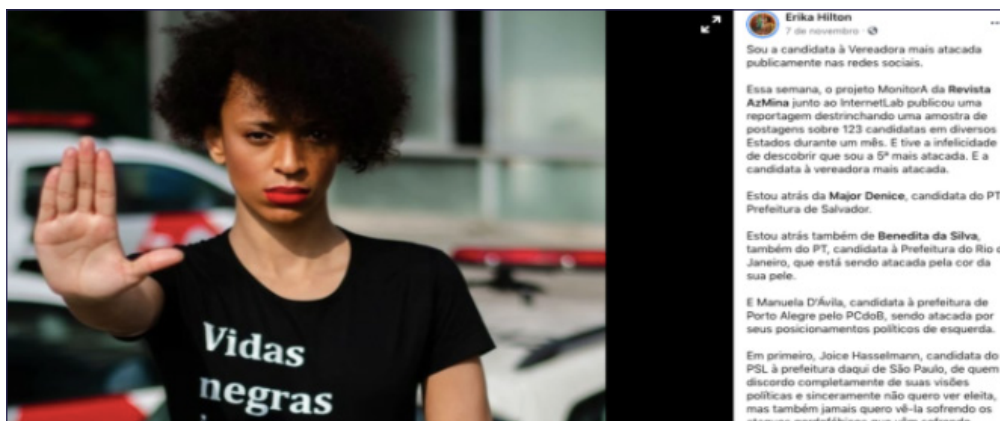
DIÁLOGOS – ASSÉDIO E MACHISMO NA POLÍTICA

Joice Hasselmann: aprendi na prática que existe violência política de gênero no Brasil

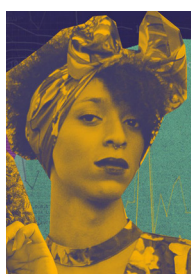
Nós enfrentamos batalhas simplesmente porque somos mulheres

por [Joice Hasselmann](#)

Érika Hilton (PSOL), city councillor elected in São Paulo and the country’s best-voted parliamentarian in 2020, filed a lawsuit against 50 people who verbally assaulted her over the internet.



In an interview with [Jornal da Tarde on TV Cultura \(01/08/2021\)](#), the parliamentarian highlighted that she based her decision on MonitorA's data:



“When I found out via InternetLab and Revista AZMina that until then, I was the most attacked candidate, I was very scared. We started to track these offenses and the humiliations suffered from these comments, all of them with a misogynistic, transphobic and racist nature”
Érika Hilton, councillor of São Paulo for PSOL.

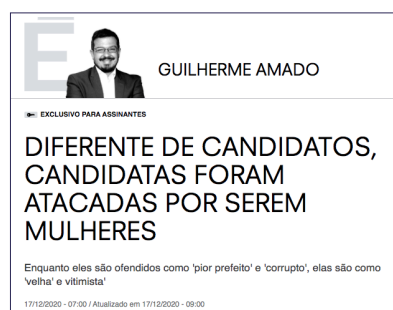
Candidate Manuela D’Ávila also used data from MonitorA during the [debate held in the second round](#) by RBS Television, an affiliate of Rede Globo in Porto Alegre.



Clipping

Between November 2020 — when the observatory was launched — until January 2021, 58 reports were published about or that quoted **MonitorA** in news media across the country. In addition to disseminating the violence data identified in the study, the publications also expanded the discussion, listening to other sources and guiding the topic in the public debate.

It is important to highlight some vehicles with national reach, such as CNN news, the newspapers o Estado de São Paulo and Folha de S.Paulo, the web platform UOL and the magazines Época and Carta Capital, for example.



MEDIA	LINK
Jovem Pan	https://jovempan.com.br/noticias/politica/gorda-porca-e-burra-candidatas-recebem-quase-11-mil-tuites-ofensivos-em-um-mes-de-campanha-eleitoral.html
Época	https://epoca.globo.com/guilherme-amado/candidatas-prefeita-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha-24729453
Congresso em Foco	https://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/opinioao/colunas/a-violencia-politica-e-o-crescimento-do-discurso-de-odio-nas-eleicoes/
A Tarde	http://atarde.uol.com.br/politica/eleicoes/noticias/2145221-candidatas-sao-alvos-de-ofensas-e-xingamentos-nas-redes-sociais

Correio do Estado	https://correiodoestado.com.br/colunistas/%E2%80%9Ce-um-homem-que-luta-pelo-interesse-do-brasil%E2%80%9D/379072
Portal dos Jornalistas	https://www.portaldosjornalistas.com.br/azmina-passa-a-monitorar-discurso-de-odio-contra-candidatas-nas-eleicoes-2020/
Pense numa Notícia	https://pensenumanoticia.com.br/projeto-da-azmina-em-parceria-com-o-instituto-update-e-internetlab-monitora-o-discurso-de-odio-contra-candidatas-nas-eleicoes-de-2020/
Aner	https://www.aner.org.br/anj-aner-informativo/instituto-azmina-lanca-ferramenta-para-monitorar-violencia-politica-contra-mulheres-nas-eleicoes-municipais.html
Bahia Econômica	https://bahiaeconomica.com.br/wp/2020/11/06/candidatas-sao-alvo-de-ofensas-nas-redes-sociais/
Vida e Ação	https://www.vidaacao.com.br/candidatas-sao-alvos-de-ataques-em-redes-sociais/
Vocativo	https://vocativo.com/2020/11/05/eleicoes-candidatas-recebem-quase-11-000-tuites-ofensivos-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
Revista Galileu	https://revistagalileu.globo.com/Sociedade/noticia/2020/11/candidatas-recebem-quase-11-mil-tweets-ofensivos-em-um-mes-de-campanha.html
BNews	https://www.bnews.com.br/noticias/politica/eleicoes/286068,um-em-cada-dez-tuites-enviados-a-candidatas-mulheres-tem-conteudo-ofensivo-e-xingamentos.html
Portal Imprensa	https://portalimprensa.com.br/noticias/ultimas_noticias/84001/instituto+azmina+lanca+ferramenta+para+ monitorar+ violencia+politica+contra+mulheres+nas+ eleicoes+municipais
Amazonas Atual	https://amazonasatual.com.br/candidatas-de-sete-estados-recebem-11-mil-tuites-ofensivos-em-um-mes/
Bahia.BA	https://bahia.ba/eleicoes2020/candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
Portal Rosa Choque	https://www.portalrosachoque.com.br/noticias/9600/candidatas-recebemquase-11000-tuites-ofensivos-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
Bahia Jornal	https://www.bahiajornal.com.br/noticia/4090/instituto-azmina-e-internetlab-lancam-o-monitora-n-observatorio-de-violencia-politica-de-genero
Cenário Minas	http://cenariominas.com.br/brasil/candidatas-recebem-quase-11-000-tuites-ofensivos-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
Roma News	https://www.romanews.com.br/eleicoes/monitoramento-de-redes-sociais-revela-violencia-preconceito-e-racismo/98604/
Jornal da Chapada	https://jornaldachapada.com.br/2020/11/05/eleicoes2020-candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
Guia Certo Sousa	https://www.guiacertousa.com/mundo/candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha/

Pernambué	https://pernambuesagora.com.br/noticia/brasil/230326-candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha
Gaúcha ZH	https://gauchazh.clicrbs.com.br/donna/noticia/2020/11/porca-burra-vagabunda-candidatas-sao-alvo-de-pelo-menos-40-ofensas-por-dias-nas-redes-sociais-ckh567d3s0066016g0dll1o04.html
Etc Notícias	https://etcnoticias.com.br/2020/11/05/violencia-de-genero/
Blog do Roberto Santos	http://www.blogdorobertosantos.com.br/candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
PE Notícias	http://penoticias.com.br/blog/candidatas-a-prefeita-e-vereadora-receberam-11-mil-ofensas-em-um-mes-de-campanha/
CNN Brasil	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCpNZDm9H_8
CBN	https://cbn.globoradio.globo.com/media/audio/324279/violencia-politica-de-genero-nao-escolhe-espectro-.htm
TV Cultura	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDjhI02D2I8
Época	https://epoca.globo.com/guilherme-amado/diferente-de-candidatos-candidatas-foram-atacadas-por-serem-mulheres-1-24800352
PT	https://pt.org.br/2o-turno-monitoramento-aponta-violencia-de-genero-contra-as-mulheres-candidatas/
Rede Brasil Atual	https://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/politica/2020/11/manuela-davila-violencia-politica-contra-mulheres/
PCdoB	https://pcdob.org.br/noticias/manuela-fala-da-violencia-politica-de-genero-em-entrevista/
O Vale	https://www.ovale.com.br/_conteudo/politica/sessao_extra/2020/11/118071-sessao-extra-loreny-diz-que-foi-terceira-candidata-mais-atacada-nas-redes-sociais-no-brasil.html
Portal Imprensa	https://portalimprensa.com.br/noticias/ultimas_noticias/84058/pesquisas+revelam+crescimento+de+ataques+a+mulheres+na+politica+e+de+campanha+sobre+fraude+nas+eleicoes
UOL	https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/observatorio-das-eleicoes/2020/12/05/fake-news-em-2020-repetem-2018-misoginas-e-reforcando-a-polarizacao.htm
Carta Capital	https://www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/manuela-x-melo-eleicoes-em-porto-alegre-foram-marcadas-por-fake-news/
A Gazeta	https://www.agazeta.com.br/colunas/leonel-ximenes/poucasamboas-campeao-de-levantamento-de-peso-quer-ser-prefeito-no-es-1120
PT Piauí	https://ptpiaui.org.br/2020/12/01/2o-turno-monitoramento-aponta-violencia-de-genero-contra-candidatas/
Congresso em Foco	https://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/opinio/colunas/justica-eleitoral-fez-pouco-contra-desinformacao-violencia-politica-e-uso-de-dados/
Pensar Piauí	https://pensarpiaui.com/noticia/manuela-davila-na-politica-violentar-mulheres-e-utilizar-o-machismo-da-certo.html

Carta Maior	https://www.cartamaior.com.br/?/Editoria/Politica/Violencia-politica-marca-eleicoes-e-mandatos-conquistados-por-mulheres/4/49197
Jornal GGN	https://jornalggn.com.br/politica/a-falacia-do-nem-direita-nem-esquerda-e-as-regras-do-sistema-politico-brasileiro/
Rede Brasil Atual	https://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/politica/2020/11/manuela-davila-porto-alegre-prefeitura/
Poder 360	https://www.poder360.com.br/opiniao/brasil/a-vida-nada-facil-das-mulheres-eleitas-por-adriana-vasconcelos/
Agência Mural	https://www.agenciamural.org.br/eleitores-das-periferias-para-camara-de-sp-tem-estrelas-bancadas-coletivas-e-velha-guarda/
Gente	https://gente.globo.com/representatividade-e-diversidade-nas-eleicoes-2020/
Nexo	https://www.nexojournal.com.br/expresso/2020/12/01/Como-as-campanhas-virtuais-revelam-a-viol%C3%Aancia-de-g%C3%AAnero
TV Cultura	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9Z1td0VVio
MyNews	https://canalmynews.com.br/dialogos/joice-hasselmann-aprendi-na-pratica-que-existe-violencia-politica-de-genero-no-brasil/
Folha Vitória	https://www.folhavoria.com.br/politica/noticia/01/2021/violencia-atinge-75-de-candidatas-a-prefeita-em-capitais
Terra	https://www.terra.com.br/noticias/brasil/politica/violencia-atinge-75-de-candidatas-a-prefeita-em-capitais,4ee119d1c974afd744c9ac0ff45e58c2u0qvodyo.html
UOL	https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/agencia-estado/2021/01/10/violencia-atinge-75-de-candidatas-a-prefeita-em-capitais.htm
Agência Estado	https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,violencia-atinge-ao-menos-75-de-candidatas-a-prefeita-em-capitais,70003576342
Estadão	Impresso
Estadão	https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,ha-resistencia-dos-partidos-em-querer-incluir-as-mulheres-diz-pesquisadora,70003576347
MyNews	https://canalmynews.com.br/politica/mulheres-na-politica-conquistam-espacos-e-desafiam-violencia-de-genero-e-racismo/



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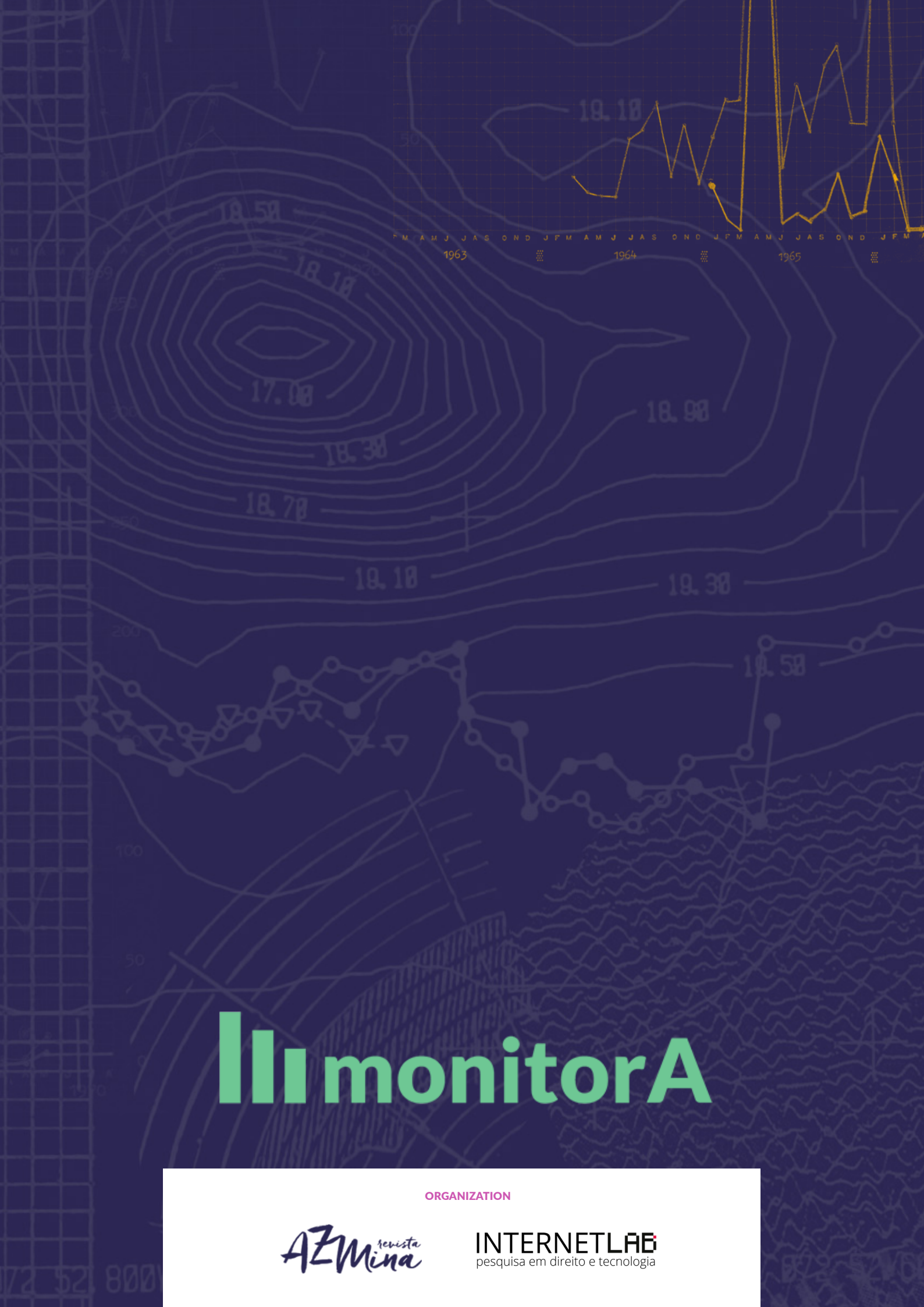


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The cover of the magazine 'Il monitorA' features a dark blue background with a grid pattern. Overlaid on the grid are topographic contour lines and a line graph. The contour lines are labeled with values such as 17.00, 18.10, 18.30, 18.50, 18.70, 18.90, 19.10, 19.30, 19.50, 200, 250, 300, and 350. The line graph, located in the upper right, shows a fluctuating line with a peak labeled '19.18'. The x-axis of the graph is labeled with months (F, M, A, M, J, J, A, S, O, N, D, J, F, M, A, M, J, J, A, S, O, N, D, J, F, M) and years (1963, 1964, 1965). The title 'Il monitorA' is prominently displayed in large, green, sans-serif font. Below the title, the organization names 'AZMina' and 'INTERNETLAB' are listed, along with the tagline 'pesquisa em direito e tecnologia'.

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