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WOMEN IN POWER: THE FEMALE TRAJECTORY IN BRAZILIAN POLITICS UNTIL THE ELECTION OF ROSANA MARTINELLI TO SINOP CITY HALL - MATO GROSSO

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Abstract: This work presents, through a bibliographic review, the historical participation of women in Brazilian politics from the struggle for the right to vote, until the election of Rosana Martinelli as mayor of the municipality of Sinop in the state of Mato Grosso. The proposed reflection indicates the long way to go in the construction of gender equality in the exercise of elective positions and in the insertion of women in politics.

Keywords: Elections; Women in Politics; Sinop-MT.

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN BRAZIL

The conception of the role of women in Brazilian society, since the beginning of the colonization process in the 16th century, was associated with domestic life and the education of offspring. Since the discovery in 1500, Brazil has taken root in a patriarchal culture, which places the male figure at the center of decisions, and the woman occupies a place of submission. This worldview was the fundamental axis of the country's social formation until the Imperial period, in the 19th century. It is with the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889 and the consolidation of democratic ideals that the struggle for gender equality gains strength. In this period, even having as principle a participatory democracy, in which the population expresses its opinion through the electoral system that results in the choice of representative, some social groups, such as women, were neglected from the political participation of the country for decades, not having even the right to vote.

This 19th century woman saw herself excluded from society, without political participation, restricted to the private world, pushed into the house. Those who needed to work faced prejudice, accused of a breach of morals, since their roles were

defined – wife, mother and housewife. leave home? A sin. She was an outcast, socially speaking. (ITAQUY, 2013, p. 18-19).

The struggle for the right to vote for women dates back to the 1800s, and is directly linked to the feminist effort for equal rights between men and women. In the same period of the 19th century, the author Nísia Floresta, a native of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, stood out, who brought in her studies the reflection of a patriarchal and sexist country, with ideals of ending inequality:

[...] the anticipatory consciousness of Nísia. Her attitudes and visions contemplated and gave new impetus to the struggle for female emancipation in the 19th century. She implied that her struggle went further, as if there were oppressors on one side and oppressed on the other. (ITAQUY, 2013, p. 11).

In a society where women were seen as subaltern, Nísia defies the standards imposed by patriarchal society and organizes the feminist struggle that claimed equal rights between the genders. As a result of this movement, Floresta creates schools just for girls, where women's participation in politics is debated, being one of the precursors of the demonstrations that would later demand women's suffrage.

Years later, with Decree No. 3029, of January 9, 1881, known as the Saraiva Law, direct elections were instituted for the elective positions of the Empire of Brazil, with senators, deputies of the general assembly, members of provincial legislative assemblies, councilors and justices of the peace. According to the Decree (BRASIL, 1881), they could vote:

Art. 2º It is considered a voter, every Brazilian citizen, under the terms of arts. 6, 91 and 92 of the Constitution of the Empire, who have an annual net income of not less than 200\$ for real estate, industry, commerce or employment.

In the exclusions of said art. 92 encompass the soldiers of the army, the navy and the police bodies, and the servants of the departments and public establishments.

X. Those qualified with scientific or literary diplomas from any national or foreign college, academy, school or institute, legally recognized.

The diploma or authentic document that supplies it will be the proof of title.

XI. Those who, for more than a year before enlistment, have managed education or teaching houses, attended by 20 or more students, or who teach in the same houses.

It will serve as proof - certificate issued by the inspector or director of public instruction in the Court or in the provinces.

XII. The justices of the peace and effective councilors for the 1877-1881 quadrennial and the following year, and the qualified citizens sworn in in the review carried out in the year 1879.¹

Based on this law, some women claimed the right to vote through proof of income and scientific title, since the Constitution was not clear and, implicitly, did not include or restrict them among voters.

The name of Isabel de Sousa Matos (19th century) must not escape us. Dental surgeon, in 1885, she requested her electoral registration in her hometown (São José do Norte / RS) based on the Saraiva Law (01/09/1881) - which guaranteed the right to vote to holders of scientific titles. With the advent of the Republic and the call for elections to the Constituent Assembly, Isabel de Matos, who had moved to Rio de Janeiro at that time, sought out the electoral enlistment commission of the Federal Capital in an attempt to guarantee once again the full exercise of her powers. citizen rights. The government's opinion, contrary to Dr. Isabel, would be the motto to exacerbate feminist moods around the inclusion of women in the political space [...] (SOUTO-MAIOR, 2004, p. 66)

1. The spelling of the text is according to the period.

With the proclamation of the Republic, on November 15, 1889, the need to write a new constitution arises. The issue of women's suffrage was widely debated in the constituent assembly, and all attempts to include women among voters failed.

The first actions in favor of the female vote "limited the participation to women who had scientific titles, professors, as well as those who had possession of their goods" (BRASIL, 1924). This limitation of the vote was based on the assumption that only citizens who had financial and intellectual independence must vote, which meant that several groups were excluded, some of them homeless, illiterate and women.

In the constituent debates, the arguments against women's suffrage started from the understanding that women participating in public life would be responsible for the dissociation of the family, reinforcing a vision that associates them with domestic life. Such an argument can be seen in the speech of deputy Lacerda Coutinho:

The 1891 constitution did not bring great advances in women's rights. The 19th century view of society was guided by patriarchy, reinforcing structural machismo.

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Faced with that society that valued men too much, giving them benefits and rights that left the female sex totally on the sidelines, in which they were nothing more than frightened beings, made only for procreation and to promise obedience to their husbands (ITAQUY, 2013, p. 17)

"As an act of protest against the non-approval of the female vote and with the aim of integrating women into political society, the Female Republican Party (PRF) appears in 1910, led by Leolinda de Figueiredo Daltro"

(LEITE, 2016, p. 59). The creation of the PRF represents an advance in the debate on rights by bringing groups excluded from social organization as protagonists. According to Céli Pinto, “it was a political party composed of people who did not have political rights, whose performance, therefore, would have to take place outside the established order” (2003, p.18). The party disappears in the same decade, which is when the Brazilian Federation for Feminine Progress (FBPB) appears, led by Bertha Lutz.

The year 1922 was a milestone for the conquest of the female vote in Brazil, in that year, Bertha Lutz organizes the 1st International Feminist Congress in Rio de Janeiro. From there, the FBPB spreads to other states in the country. It is worth noting that a large part of the women who made up the nucleus of the Federation came from a privileged economic class, which sought to break with traditional thinking without questioning male power over women, but rather the political representation of women.

In Brazil, in the same way, the first phase of feminism focused on the struggle of women for political rights, through electoral participation, as candidates and voters. This struggle was definitely associated with the name of Bertha Lutz, who exercised an undeniable leadership during the 1920s and remained linked to women’s causes until her death at an advanced age in 1970. (PINTO, 2013, p. 13).

The Federation organizes a series of demonstrations to promote the issue of women’s suffrage, culminating in:

The first achievement in favor of women’s suffrage took place in 1927, when, until then, Senator Juvenal Lamartine was running for Governor of Rio Grande do Norte. Pressured by Lamartine, the then current Governor José Augusto Bezerra agrees with the wording of article 77 of the constitution of Rio Grande do Norte, in the sense of allowing the political participation

of women, being able to vote and be voted on. (LEITE, 2016, p. 68)

In the same year of 1927, Celina Guimarães Vianna, from the municipality of Mossoró in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, requested her inclusion in the list of voters when State Law nº 660 of October 25th came into force, which regulated the electoral service in the state and established that in Rio Grande do Norte there would no longer be any distinction between the sexes in the exercise of the vote. According to the Superior Electoral Court, Celina became Brazil’s first female voter.

Although potiguar women have won the right to participate in elections at the state level, they remained excluded, along with other women in the country, from exercising their political rights at the federal level. “This achievement was only possible after the dismissal of President Washington Luís, through the revolution of 1930” (SOIHET, 2000, p. 104). With the Revolution, and the rise of Getúlio Vargas to the presidency, a commission was convened to create a new electoral law. The Brazilian Federation for Feminine Progress and autonomous entities appoint Bertha Lutz as a representative on the commission for drafting the draft of the 1934 constitution.

The female vote was finally won in 1932, with the approval of the Electoral Code, which also established the secret vote. After years of struggle, women could effectively participate in the public world through voting. Numerous candidates have started their public life. (LEITE, 2016, p. 69).

According to the Superior Electoral Court, as of February 24, 1932, the electoral code began to ensure the female vote, but this concept only covered married women who had the authorization of their husbands, or in the case of single women and widows who had their own income.

Based on this code, the constituent assembly was elected in 1933, which promulgated the new Constitution on July 16, 1934. The only woman elected to this constituent assembly, out of a total of 214, was Carlota Pereira Queiroz. Bertha remained an alternate until 1936, when she assumed a chair after the death of a deputy. At that time, the F.B.P.F. discussed projects to pressure the Legislature to expand women's rights. (COELHO, 2009, p. 90).

It was only two years later, in 1934, that the female vote came to be provided for in the Federal Constitution and these requirements were no longer mandatory. However, it was only in 1965 that the Electoral Code equated the female vote with the male vote. Other countries, such as New Zealand, had already granted women the right to vote much earlier, in 1893.

With the closing of Congress by Vargas in 1937, and the institution of the Estado Novo Dictatorship, which lasted until 1945, the female vote was only re-established in the redemocratization of the country, becoming mandatory by the 1946 constitution. With the 1964 coup, date that marks the beginning of the Military Dictatorship, the electoral process is altered according to the interests of the regime, causing the impeachment of opposing politicians, alteration in the duration of mandates and indirect elections for positions of the Executive.

During this period, many women, especially intellectuals and upper-middle-class young women, organized themselves into left-wing movements, demanding the reestablishment of their civil and political rights. Here, the struggle for equal rights

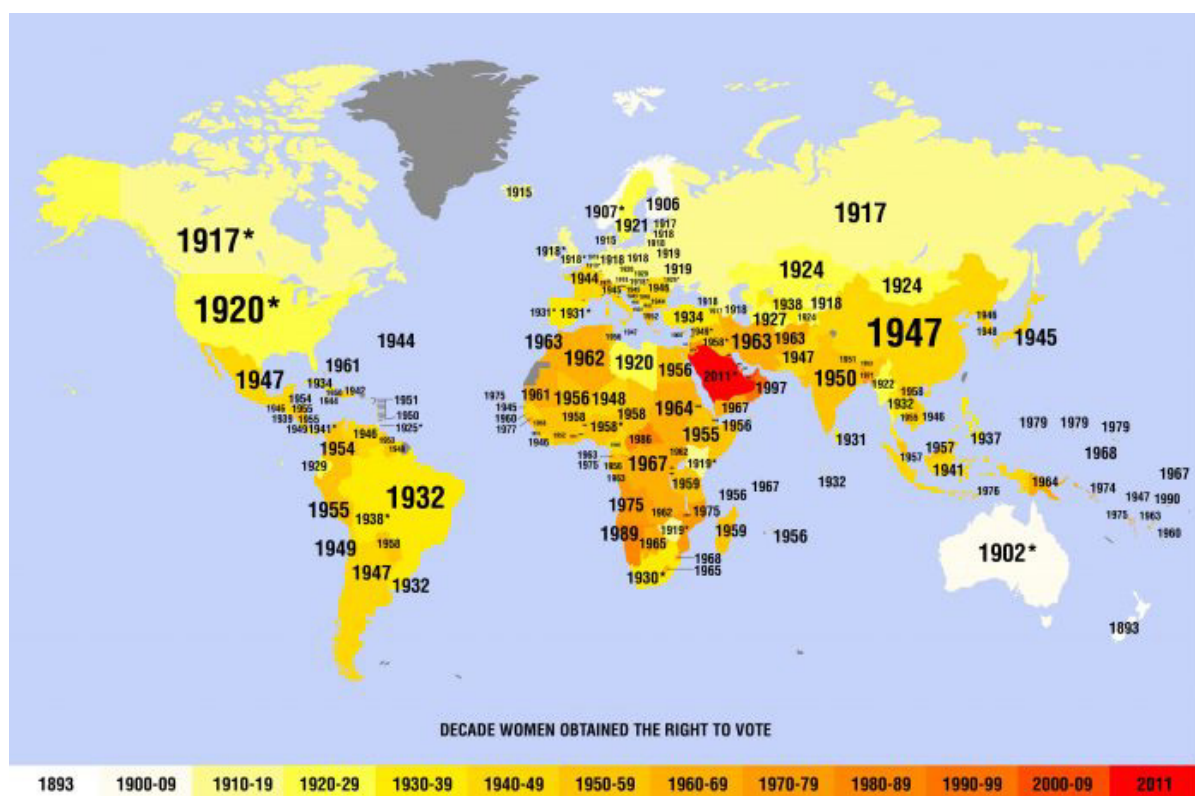


Figure 1 – map with the year each country approved women's right to vote.

Source: <https://vermelho.org.br/2020/03/08/voto-feminino-uma-conquista-do-seculo-20/>.

stands out and it is at this moment that the feminist movement starts to debate and criticize the power centered on the male figure. In the struggle for democracy and freedom, in opposition to the military regime, women assume a fundamental role in movements, sometimes clandestine, having in their agendas the defense of amnesty for political prisoners, direct elections and better living conditions. Among the names of women who stood out in the struggle for redemocratization, we have the figure of Dilma Vana Rousseff.

With the end of the cycle of 21 years of dictatorship, in 1985, the process of redemocratization begins and with that, the feminist struggle gains greater recognition, making it possible for them to occupy more spaces of power. The 1988 Constitution is marked by advances in the parameters of equality between men and women, guaranteeing them political participation. Despite the advances, the election of women is relatively modest, compared to that of men.

Several advances have been made in electoral legislation with the aim of promoting women's political participation. Among them, the gender quota system, as determined in paragraph 3 of article 10 of Federal Law No. thirty percent) and a maximum of 70% (seventy percent) for candidates of each sex.

CHRONOLOGY OF FEMALE ACHIEVEMENTS IN BRAZILIAN POLITICS

The space for participation in political life was gradually conquered, and shaped through the awareness of the role of women in the construction of a democratic system. The need to represent the most diverse social groups guaranteed, after bitter struggles and conflicts, the right of women to be voted on.

Active participation in political life, through the manifestation of the vote and the possibility of candidacies, gives women the condition of citizens, capable of organizing and engaging in political parties and social movements of popular mobilization, in order to represent female interests, resulting in the development of citizenship and democracy itself.

An interesting point to be analyzed is that the electoral legislation prohibited women from voting, but there was no contraindication forbidding them to run as candidates. Taking advantage of this gap, "Alzira Soriano, 32, from the municipality of Lajes in Rio Grande do Norte, ran for mayor of the city by the Republican Party (PR) and became the first woman elected in the history of Brazil, in the year 1928, when he received 60% of the valid votes" (LOPES, 2020). (There's no page, it's a website).

"It was quite a feat to elect a woman to mayor in those times of intense misogyny. Furthermore, her election implied an explicit challenge to the legal framework of the time, which prohibited political rights to women", explains political scientist and professor at the Federal University of São Paulo (Unifesp), Antônio Sérgio Rocha. (LOPES, 2020).

At a time when Brazilian women wanted each other to have the right to vote and politics was an exclusive matter for men, Alzira took over the mayor of Lajes in January 1929, but unfortunately she lost her mandate the following year due to the 1930 revolution.

In 1933, the first election with universal suffrage and equality of vote took place in Brazil. In this election, 19 women ran, including Carlota Pereira de Queirós for the Constitutionalist Party of São Paulo. (PCP)² and Bertha Lutz for the Autonomist Party of the Federal District (PADF)³. "The São Paulo

2. Information taken from the Chamber of Deputies website. A Female Voice in Parliament.

3. Information taken from the Chamber of Deputies website: Bertha Lutz Opened the Way for the Female Vote and Other

doctor Carlota de Queirós was the first federal deputy in Brazil and Bertha did not reach the number of votes sufficient to be elected, remaining as an alternate” (Karawejczyk, 2010, p. 217).

In 1935, Brazil elected its first councilor for the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the music teacher, “Maria Felizarda de Paiva Monteiro da Silva, better known as Neném Paiva, in the city of Muqui in Espírito Santo, coming to preside the City Council” (Oliveira e Silva, 2019). Like Alzira, Neném’s mandate was interrupted by the military coup in 1937. Still in 1935, Maria Thereza Silveira de Barros Camargo left the city hall of Limeira, in the state of São Paulo, a position which had been appointed by the governor of Armando de Salles, both for the PCP, to assume her new post as state deputy in São Paulo, where she was elected with 223,091 votes. In addition to her, her party colleague, Maria Thereza Nogueira de Azevedo, was also elected.

After 44 years, in 1979, Brazil elected the country’s first senator from the Arena party, Eunice Michiles. In an interview given to the Federal Senate channel, Eunice says: ‘I realized that they didn’t feel like a colleague, they felt like a lady arriving there [...] I wasn’t the person who went there to work with tough and difficult issues like them. do, it was someone to decorate’. The first senator alleges that she faced difficulties in having her projects approved, especially those related to guaranteeing women’s rights. ‘There wasn’t even a women’s bathroom, you feel different, you don’t feel inserted!’ says Eunice, referring to the senate environment. In the same interview, she reinforces the three banners she took with her, which were Religious Freedom, Intransigent Defense of the Amazon and Women’s Cause, focused on family planning.

It was only in 1982, during the government of João Baptista Figueiredo, by the Social

Democratic Party (PDS), that a woman was appointed to be Minister of State, the lawyer Esther de Figueiredo Ferraz was invited to replace Rubem Ludwig in the Ministry of Education. and Culture (Fundação Getúlio Vargas). Esther’s choice for the head of the MEC made many feminist groups excited. A few years later, in 1989, there was the first candidacy of a woman for the highest post of the executive, Livia Maria Pio, for the National Party (PN), ran in the presidential elections with another 21 male candidates. Livia received 180 thousand votes, ahead of five candidates (ALEGRETTE, 2018).

In 1990, the then president of the republic, Fernando Collor de Mello of the National Reconstruction Party (PRN), appointed economist Zélia Cardoso, of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) to take over the Ministry of Economy, at the time there was a merger from the Finance, Planning, Industry and Commerce portfolios and, partially, from Agriculture. According to Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), with that Zélia became the second most powerful person in the country, with only the president at the head and making her the first and only woman to hold the position of Minister of Finance so far. of the publication of this work. In the 1993 elections, candidate Roseana Sarney, daughter of former president José Sarney, ran for governor of the state of Maranhão by the extinct Liberal Front Party (PFL), becoming the first woman to govern a federal state (Oliveira and Silva, 2019).

Finally, in 2010, Brazil elected its first, and until then, only, woman to the presidency of the republic, Dilma Vana Rousseff, by the Workers’ Party (PT). Without having ever contested other elective positions before, Dilma had entered politics at a young age and held the position of Chief Minister of the Civil House, during the government of her fellow

supporter Luís Inácio Lula da Silva. During her diplomacy, the president reinforced that her election is the result of an extraordinary social advance and the consolidation of democracy.

It was this same feeling of change and advancement that made the people now elect a woman president. In addition to myself, this fact demonstrates the growing maturity of our democracy. This fact breaks with prejudices, challenges limits and fills a suffering people with hope and, also, with pride for Brazilian women. (BRAZIL..., 2010).

During her term, in which she assumed the highest position in the federal executive, Dilma stressed several times that the feat of becoming president was a collective achievement of all women, and an evolution in the social role played by them. This view can be confirmed in her statement on International Women's Day:

"Today, International Women's Day, is an ideal date for a president to speak with her Brazilian sisters, with an open heart, from woman to woman. [...] My arrival at the Presidency meant a unique moment of affirmation for women in Brazilian society. I don't forget that for a minute, and I know none of you forget it when she looks at me. (BRAZIL..., 2012)

In the 2014 elections, Dilma is reelected to serve another four years in government. However, he had his term interrupted in August 2016, after suffering an impeachment process. Shortly after the approval of the impeachment of her mandate, the president stated:

To the Brazilian women, who showered me with flowers and affection, I ask you to believe that you can. Future generations of Brazilians will know that the first time a woman assumed the presidency of Brazil, machismo and misogyny showed their ugly faces. We have paved a one-way path towards gender equality. Nothing will make us back down. (ROUSSEF, 2016)

Dilma attributes the reason for her impeachment, among other reasons, to machismo and misogyny still strongly present in Brazilian society, since her mental and intellectual capacity to govern a nation was constantly questioned. "It is worth noting that, of the 513 deputies who approved the removal of the president in Congress, 464 were men. In that legislature, women represented less than 10% of parliamentarians" (PINA, 2016). Despite this, the historic achievement of a woman emerging victorious from the polls and occupying the highest position in Brazilian politics is undeniably significant for society, becoming an influence for the progress of female participation in elective spaces.

THE RISE OF WOMEN TO POWER IN THE CAPITAL OF NORTÃO

Located in the north of the state of Mato Grosso, Sinop is a city founded in the period of the military dictatorship, as a result of the occupation of the Brazilian Legal Amazon in the 1970s. With a mostly male political history, the municipality had for the first time a woman democratically elected only in 1993, when Teresinha Aparecida Tomelin Bogo assumed her position in the City Council. With 42 years since its political emancipation, Sinop has had a total of 9 councilors who have occupied seats in the legislature throughout its history. In the 2000 election, Sinéia Abreu was elected to the post of vice mayor, on the ticket that had Nilson Leitão as a candidate for mayor, both from the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). After leaving the vice mayor's office in 2004, Sinéia is elected councilor by the PSDB, with 1,290 valid votes, and becomes the first woman to assume the Presidency of the Municipal Chamber (Superior Electoral Court).

Finally, in 2017, the municipality of Sinop elected its first woman to the city hall. Rosana

Martinelli of the Partido da República (PR) took office on January 1, 2017 and her term lasted four years. The electoral dispute was fierce, in which Rosana won with 23,981 valid votes against 20,593 for Roberto Dorner (PSD).

In an interview with Rádio Marupá, Rosana tells about her journey from the interior of Paraná to Sinop. Her parents, Valentin Dallastra and Domeilde, came to the city in 1973. She and her brothers were already here when the city was founded. 'I am very proud of this pioneering spirit, of my father's boldness in believing in a frontier that opened up in a clearing. He believed and brought the family,' says the former mayor. With a spirit of leadership, Rosana has always been ahead of her father's business, and after she married Osmar Martinelli, together they managed the family's lumber mill and other businesses. Shortly after the wedding, her husband ran for councilor and ended up being elected, 'I always had a backstage job with him.'

In 2004, when her husband had meningitis, she took over the company in the timber sector and managed the family's rural properties. That same year, under Nilson Leitão, she was invited to be Secretary of Industry and Commerce, due to her vast experience in the field. Six years later, Rosana assumed the General Secretary of the Association of Creators of Northern Mato Grosso (Acrinorte), being the only woman among the 22 members who formed the board (PÁGINA RURAL, 2010). In 2011, she received the invitation to restructure the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), running for deputy mayor of Juarez Gomes, in the 2012 elections. Rosana and Juarez were victorious, winning the elections with a large advantage, taking 35,017 votes.

The candidacy for the Executive of Sinop took place in 2016, by the Republic Party,

through the "Amor por Sinop" coalition. The electoral process was very fierce. Rosana won the elections with 23,981 votes, or 39.55%, against 20,593 votes for Roberto Dorner (PSD), which gives a difference of only 4% between the two. In the same election, 15 councilors were elected, two of them women, Councilwoman Professora Branca (PR) and Councilwoman Maria José Ribeiro Toiller (MDB).

Certainly, having led a city that has a political scenario in which the absolute majority are men, has not been easy. When asked if she suffered prejudice for being a woman exercising the role of mayor, in the city that is an agroindustrial hub like Sinop, Rosana said:

'Look, being a woman and managing a large city is a big challenge. Of course, at times we had to be firm. Were there any moments that could have been more [firm]? Of course it could! But there is still a prejudice, yes, the lack of respect, which is what I suffered the most. Because many wouldn't if they were a man. To say what they said on social media, even authorities of our municipality, [made] speeches on the tribune, [with] disrespect as a woman.' [Interview 2021 – Rádio FM 93.1. excerpt that was highlighted by us.]

During her tenure, Rosana invested heavily in paving the city, prioritizing the most distant neighborhoods. In education, Sinop had a considerable growth in the IDEB score, due to the investment that was made. It is worth noting that during Rosana's term there was the transition of three Presidents, Dilma, Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro, and in the last year, there was the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite all the setbacks, the former mayor handed over the mandate feeling very satisfied with the accomplishments, as she herself said in an interview: 'I deliver with great tranquility, without process, with clean hands and head held high. What we did, what our team did, what they could.'

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The reflection of this work indicates the historical relevance of the female struggle for participation in political decisions in Brazil until the present time. The role of women was for years underestimated and ignored in the democratic sphere, depriving them of basic guarantees that allowed popular manifestation through the vote.

Conquered slowly and gradually, the right to vote and be voted on represented a significant advance in Brazilian society that seeks greater equality between genders. Thus, the election of Rosana Martinelli for the mayor of Sinop, although for many it may be considered a modest fact, it is the result of changes that have taken place in recent decades.

Despite the advances made, which culminated in the election of women, the process to achieve a participatory balance between men and women in politics is slow and difficult. Considering the path already taken and the achievements already obtained, the Brazilian political scenario demonstrates a patriarchal passivity that plagues the rise of women in elective public positions.

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