



PASTOR IN THE URN: THE PROFILE OF THE EVANGELICAL PRIESTS IN DISPUTE TO THE CHAMBER OF MEMBERS (1998-2018)

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Abstract: The article analyzes the candidacies for the Federal Deputy that used the title of pastor in the electronic voting machine between the elections of 1998 and 2018. The objective is to verify the social profile and the party preference of these evangelical priests. We work with two hypotheses. The first is that the main profession declared is the priesthood itself and that most of them do not have higher education. The second refers to the defense of conservative moral values made by a large part of this segment. Thus, we believe that the predominant ideology is that of the right-wing. The results show that most of them are men, married, without higher education, and with professional occupations outside the priesthood. The predominant ideology is right-wing, but the big parties are losing space to small confessional and physiological groups.

Keywords: Pastors candidates; Evangelicals; Elections; Urn name; Party preference.

1. Introduction

IBGE data reveals that 95% of the Brazilian population was Catholic in 1940. In 1990, the percentage dropped to 83.3%; in 2000, to 73.9%; and in 2010, to 64.6%. Meanwhile, the number of Evangelicals has only grown, jumping from 2.7% to 22.2% in 50 years. If the current pace of religious transition continues, projections indicate that by 2030 Catholics may represent less than 50% of the population and be overtaken by Evangelicals by 2040 (ALVES *et al.*, 2017, p. 217). However, the social presence of this segment goes far beyond the four walls of churches. Their participation in public life transcends pulpits and increasingly influences the media, culture, and political institutions (FERNANDES, 1998).

Several studies have addressed the rise of Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals in politics, especially in Congress. One of the strands is dedicated to the profiles of the leaders occupying representative positions and the form of churches' organizations (ORO, 2003; BORGES, 2007; SILVA, 2016). Another concern involves the Evangelical voters, mapping their social, cultural, and economic characteristics (FREESTON, 2008; BOHN, 2004). The third focus of studies is aimed at analyzing the behavior of evangelical caucuses in Congress (PRANDI; SANTOS, 2017; MACHADO, 2017; QUADROS; MADEIRA, 2018; SILVA, 2012). We also found studies involving the supply of candidates (GERARDI, 2016; LACERDA, 2017), as this research proposes. However, we did not find any that specifically analyze the social profile and party preference of pastors, a phenomenon increasingly present in elections.

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In general, Silva (2015) identified the main nomenclatures with religious references used by candidates for Federal and State deputy and found that the title pastor concentrated 61.2% of the cases in 2014. This movement is also observed in other disputes. TSE data for the 2020 Municipal Election summed up the registration of 8,700 candidates with religious titles. Of these, 4.4 thousand carried the name of a pastor on the ballot, representing 51% of the total. Given this context, this paper aims to map the social profile and party preference of candidates for the position of Federal Deputy who used the name pastor on the ballot between 1998 and 2018.

For the empirical research, we work with two hypotheses. The first is related to the social profile of the candidates. In this case, (H1) we expect that the main profession declared is the priesthood itself and that most of them do not have higher education, since the formation process of a pastor does not require graduation in some denominations. The second hypothesis deals with party preference. According to the literature (GONÇALVES, 2011; MACHADO, 2017; SANTOS, 2020), the evangelical segment has the habit of defending conservative moral agendas. Thus, (H2) we believe that most pastors are recruited by right-wing parties and that candidacies are spread across different legends due to party and evangelical denomination fragmentation.

To test our hypotheses, we used electoral data from TSE applied to the model of the Observatory of Social and Political Elites of Brazil (UFPR) and the typology of parties proposed by Codato, Berlatto, and Bolognesi (2018). Before, we address in more detail the rise of Evangelicals in politics, the relationship of Brazilian parties with religious institutions, especially the confessional legends headed by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) and the Assembly of God Church (IAD), and the use of ballot box names to identify candidates. Finally, we present the data and analyze the results of the research.

2. Between God and politics

The presence of Evangelicals in Brazilian politics was residual until the second half of the 1980s. The Pentecostals managed to elect their first representative in the National Congress in 1963 (CAMPOS, 2005). Pastor Levi Tavares, from Igreja Brasil para Cristo (Brazil for Christ Church), occupied a federal congressional seat in São Paulo, being elected by the Social Democratic Party (PSD), extinct during the Military Regime. However, Freston (1999) notes that the Constituent Assembly (CA), formed in 1987, marked a new era for Evangelicals in political power. At the time, they elected a total of 32 constituents, 18 of them Pentecostal. This group was also formed by some leftist congressmen, such as Benedita da Silva and Lysânias Dias Maciel. But it was in the 1990s that the Pentecostals gained strength.

For Campos (2005), the Evangelical ascension in politics was possible thanks to the context of spreading Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal presence, which allowed its members “to leave the marginalized territory where they were located, to assume a more systematic and calculated action in the political scene” (CAMPOS, 2005, p.7). He points out that one of the

greatest pieces of evidence of this expansion is the Evangelical bench. In 2003, the group was made official as the Evangelical Parliamentary Front (FPE) and is formed by representatives from different parties to act in an organized way in Congress.

According to Prandi and Santos (2017, p. 187), FPE “is neither politically nor ideologically homogeneous, but is, in general, conservative.” In this sense, the work of the bench “brings to the political struggle moralistic demands that are real claims of the popular sectors, not used to separating the spheres of politics and private morality” (PRANDI; SANTOS, 2017, p. 187). On the other hand, Gonçalves (2011) understands that “there is not an Evangelical bench, that is, something that guides these deputies to vote as a bloc” (GONÇALVES, 2011, p. 198). The fact is that the group began to gain body in 1994 when 32 Evangelical Federal Deputies were elected. In 1998, the number reached 49, and in 2002, it jumped to 68.

The growth of the bloc was halted after successive corruption scandals involving Evangelical legislators. In 2005, the “Mensalão” scandal affected the support base of Lula’s government in the Chamber and had great repercussions in the Media. Among those involved were FPE’s names, such as deputies Bishop Carlos Rodrigues (PL-RJ) and Wanderval Santos (PL-SP), both from the UCKG. In 2006, the Federal Police launched Operation Leech, against a fraud scheme in health care bidding. A CPMI (Joint Parliamentary Inquiry Committee) was created in Congress and revealed the involvement of 72 Congressmen. Of these, 28 were Evangelicals. Because of the attrition, the bench was reduced by half, with 30 names. In 2010, FPE was rebuilt with the election of 63 Congressmen. Since then, it has not stopped growing. In 2014, there were 74, and in 2018, 91.

The Literature has been trying to find answers since the 1990s about the type and degree of support that this group gets from the church members and how this behavior materializes in votes. Some works point to the existence of patronage relations between the church and its members. For Machado (2015), the UCKG’s church members and voters are part of its “political clientele” (MACHADO, 2015, p. 95). Sousa (2009) believes that the Universal Church’s welfare projects “propitiate a patronage of a new type - institutionalized and religiously legitimized - serving as a political springboard for emerging church leaderships” (SANTOS, 2009, p. 14).

3. Political party representation

Malfatti (2017) identified three necessary conditions for the emergence of Christian parties. The first of these is Democracy itself, that is, the existence of a representative regime and a parliament. The second demands that the State must be religiously neutral since it would make no sense to have a Christian party where the Church is already part of the State apparatus. Finally, the last condition is that religious groups constitute a minority politically or that there is a party that discriminates against them. “This is what happened in the period, especially in the 19th century, when Catholics in Italy had lost space to the Liberals and therefore it was necessary to

regain their place” (MALFATTI, 2017, p. 3).

Panebianco (2005) proposes the parties’ analysis based on the distribution of power. In his understanding, these associations can follow different paths with the same institutional stage. For him, what matters is not the hierarchical structure, as Duverger (1980), but looking at who controls and what controls inside the party. One of the three factors that constitute the genetic model deals precisely with the sponsorship of the party by an external institution, such as a church. This support is what defines its legitimization. In this sense, the Universal Church plays a central role in the electoral process of its party, the Republicans. Fonseca (1996) states that the Council of Bishops is responsible for providing the geographical distribution of candidates and providing the Media and assistance structure to promote their names.

According to Oro (2003), UCKG’s political organization process includes a census of its followers before the elections, intending to know precisely how many potential voters it has. The data is later forwarded to the national leadership to assess how many candidates it should launch in each region. For Silva (2015), this model seeks to avoid internal competition, so that “UCKG’s candidates” do not have to compete for the same votes, increasing the chances of electoral success (SILVA, 2015, p. 7).

Universal Church’s successful model led the Assembly of God Church to adopt some of its strategies, such as nominating official candidates and commanding a party through PEN (National Ecological Party), renamed Patriot in 2018. However, the church accepts candidates from different parties. Unlike UCKG, the choice process is decentralized and not subordinated to a single instance. AGC recruitment allows for the voluntary submission of names from any church member. After screening, the pre-candidates are submitted to a vote in the electoral college of pastors and workers, which then forwards a shortlist of names to the pre-nominations.

Otto Kirchheimer (2012) has studied modern party systems and points out that confessional parties were able to fulfill both the function of social integration in the industrial age and political integration within the party system itself. However, he points out that the “confessional nature gave them a character strength that severely restricted their potential growth” (KIRCHHEIMER, 2012, p. 360). In the Brazilian context, these parties act as satellites of larger right-wing parties or are physiological, composing the support base of governments of any ideology.

Coppedge (1997) proposed in the late 1990s a new ordering of Latin American party systems based on an analysis that considers the performance of ideological blocs in a more complete and complex way. The model looks at two dimensions simultaneously, the first focusing on the opposition between “confessional” and “secular”, and the second on the classic “left-right” dimension, including subdivisions between center-right, center, and center-left. The combination of the two dimensions makes it possible to analyze several different categories. From the religious point of view, it transitions from the Christian right-wing to the traditional secular left.

Codato, Berlatto, and Bolognesi (2018) applied Coppedge's concept to define a typology for Brazilian political parties. In this classification, the confessional right-wing parties would be the Christian Democrats, defined as those that “base their ideology or program explicitly on religious conceptions and/or are linked to churches and movements with strong conservative appeal,” such as “pro-life” or “pro-family” (CODATO et al. 2018, p. 879). In addition to the Republicans, from the UCKG, and the Patriot, from the Assembly of God, also part of this group are the Christian Social Party (PSC); the Liberal Party (PL), known as the Republic Party (PR) until 2019; and the Christian Democracy (DC), formerly the Christian Social Democratic Party (PSDC).

4. Ballot name

In Brazil, the ballot name was established by Act 9,504/1997, in its Article 12, and subsequently regulated by TSE in Resolution #23,455, December 15, 2015, which provides for the choice and registration of candidates in elections. Article 31 defines that the name indicated “shall have a maximum of thirty characters, including the space between names, and may be the first name, surname, cognomen, abbreviated name, nickname or name by which the candidate is best known”. The condition is that “it does not establish doubt as to his identity, does not offend modesty and is not ridiculous or irreverent” (BRASIL, 2015, p. 10). Other than that, candidates are free to choose a ballot name different from their civil name.

Studies on ballot name are scarce in the Literature and are usually explored by the field of Linguistics. In this perspective, authors such as Amaral and Machado (2015) and Soares (2017) use anthroponyms typologies to understand the name used by candidates. However, Santos and Rocha (2020) seek to make an approximation of Linguistics with Political Science by analyzing the relationship between names and voting. They concluded that the title serves as a “kind of cognitive shortcut and that, in a way, it would compensate for the voter’s lack of knowledge about politics” (SANTOS; ROCHA, 2020, p. 15). For Boas (2014), ballot names aggregate ideologies and social categories and serve as a mechanism for associations by groups and stereotypes.

Rocha and Santos (2019) point out that in the 2016 Municipal elections there was a 25% increase in the use of the title “pastor” or “pastoress (female pastor)” on the ballots compared to 2012. In addition, variations such as “little pastor” and “big pastor” were also found. They claim that religious terms can be added by candidates to canvass votes among Christians, but that, unlike other banners, they can also divide the voters. “Identifying oneself as a priest, for example, can contribute to getting votes from Catholics, but not from Evangelicals” (ROCHA; SANTOS, 2019, p. 76). In turn, titles such as “doctor” and “teacher/professor” are broader and seek to associate a positive stereotype, as someone intelligent, competent, and takes care of people.

Gerardi (2016) researched the ecclesiastical designations of candidates for Federal Deputy between the elections of 1998 and 2014 and found that the title of pastor concentrates the

majority of cases, making an average of 64.6% in the period. In second place comes the title of brother, with 17% of the registrations. Concerning those who were elected, the proportion of pastors is even higher, reaching 70.4% of the total (GERARDI, 2016, p. 14). In 2018, the federal deputy who received the majority of the votes with the title of pastor on the ballot was Marco Feliciano. Linked to the Assembly of God church, he was reelected for São Paulo with 234,281 votes, being the ninth most voted in the country.

5. Methods

In the Literature, we find studies that survey the religious titles used in candidacies (GERARDI, 2016; SILVA, 2015). However, none of them specifically detail the pastors' social profile and party preference. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the participation of Evangelical priests in elections for the Brazilian House of Representatives between 1998 and 2018. The collection makes use of TSE's electoral databases. For the analysis, we apply the coding of the Observatory of Social and Political Elites of Brazil (UFPR) and the typification proposed by Codato, Berlatto, and Bolognesi (2018).

By citing the typification proposed by the three authors, Santos (2020) highlights the importance of subdividing the parties as a way to verify the growth of the conservative parties in recent elections, especially in the House of Representatives. When dealing with Evangelical politicians, she ponders that through these categories it is possible to verify which ideological strand has supported the rise of Pentecostals and Neopentecostals in the country. The author also believes that the classification allows one to estimate the direction and understand the meaning behind the growth of Evangelicals in Brazilian political representation.

The pastors were identified exclusively by the title used in the ballot names. We were careful not to include in the list any surnames unrelated to the ecclesiastical position. We chose to study here only the profile of the candidates who used the name pastor for electoral identification. With this, we intend to capture the phenomenon of candidates who associate their civil name with evangelical status and to contribute to research that makes use of the ballot name as an object of study. That said we present the results below.

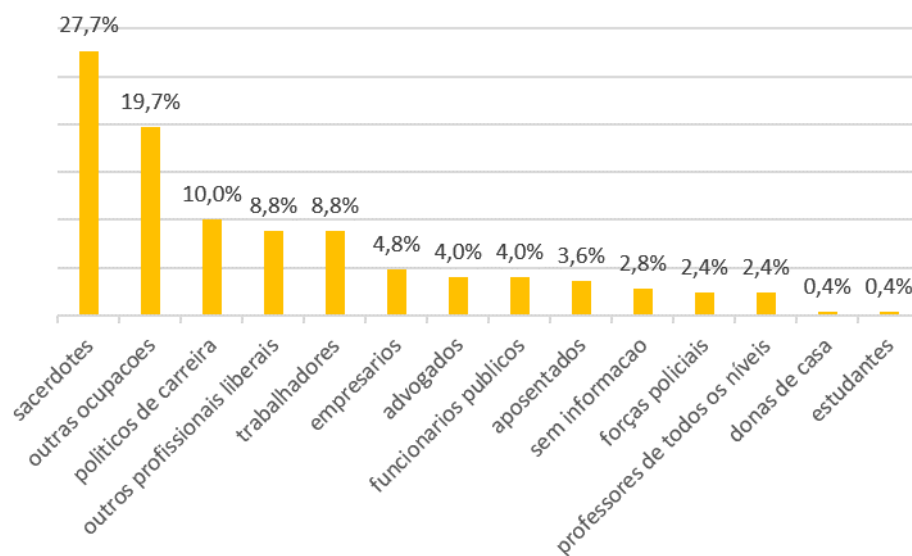
6. Results

The first category brings general data about the profile of the candidates that were analyzed. The gender difference draws attention. In 1998, no female pastors were candidates. In the following elections, they even appeared, but in a much smaller proportion than men. In 2018, the year with the highest number of female candidates, women pastors occupied 16% of the total, with 15 names. Pastors, on the other hand, made up 84% of the cut, with 79 names. Looking at the information on the marital status of these priests, we find no surprise regarding the defenders of the traditional family model. In all, 89.8% declared themselves married, against 3.5% who

were divorced and 1.2% who were legally divorced. The single ones are only 3.2% and the widowers, 1.2%.

By filtering the pastors in our sample by ballot name and not by profession, we can verify what other occupations they perform. According to **Graph 1**, although most of them have declared that the priesthood is their main occupation, this index reached only 27.7% of the corpus. Therefore, most of them have other attributions or depend on other sources of income. In all, 10% declared themselves to be professional politicians. The proportion of employees was 8.8%, against 4.8% of entrepreneurs. Public employees totaled 4%, the same percentage as lawyers. In our coding, we chose to group some professions altogether. The other liberal professionals, which make up 8.8% of the total, include functions such as administrator, accountant, and journalist.

Graph 1 – Pastoral candidates by profession (1998-2018)



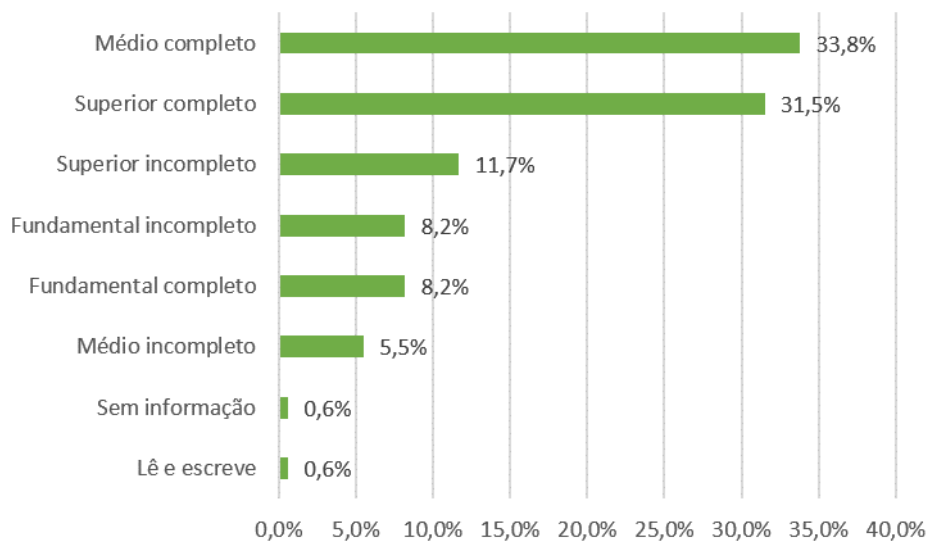
Source: Own elaboration based on TSE data.

Priests, other occupations professional politicians, employees, employees, entrepreneurs, lawyers, public employees, retirees, no information, law enforcement agencies, teachers of all levels, housewives, students

Although police forces represent only 2.4% of the total number of occupations, the group that includes candidates from the State’s repressive forces is another segment that has been increasing with each election. Like pastors, military personnel usually associate their functional insignia with their civilian name on the electronic ballot box. Another similarity they share is related to the defense of conservative agendas in terms of customs (BERLATTO; CODATO; BOLOGNESI, 2016). Some candidates chose to associate the religious and military titles, such as “Pastor Sergeant Isidório” and “Pastor Fireman Juvenal.” Teachers/professors recorded the same rate. Like the military, we also found ballot box names with both professional titles, such as “Professor Pastor Cordeiro”.

One of the reasons for the loss of Catholics is the shortage of priests. One of the reasons is the time required for their education. The process requires eight years of full-time study and includes two degrees (philosophy and theology). On the other hand, the formation of a pastor may not even formally exist. The stages vary according to the denomination. Neopentecostals, such as God is Love and the UCKG, follow hierarchical discipleship, where the more experienced pass on their knowledge to those below them.

Graph 2 – Pastoral candidates by education (1998-2018)



Source: Own elaboration based on TSE data.

Complete high school, Complet higher education, Incomplete higher education, Incomplete elementary school, Complete elementary school, Incomplete high school, No information, Read and write

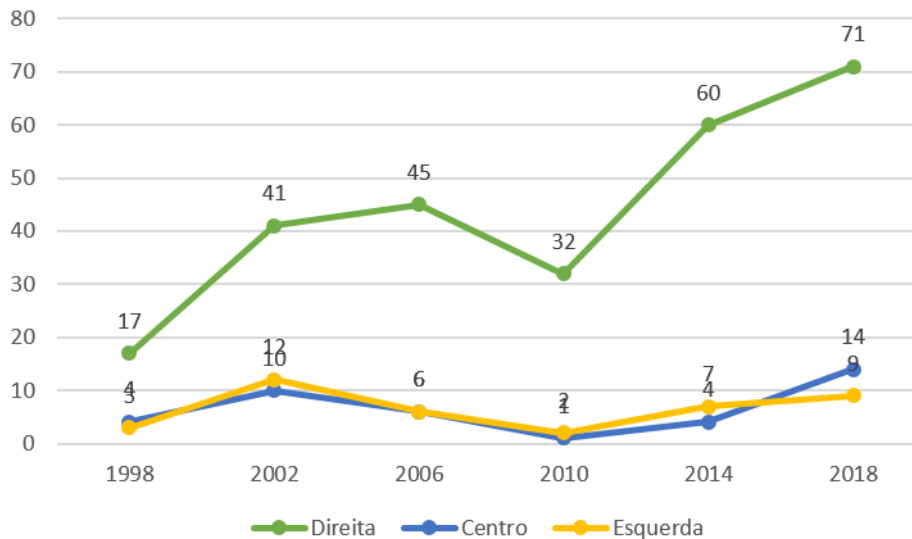
When we analyze the education of the self-designated pastoral candidates on the ballot, we find that 31.5% of them have completed higher education. **Graph 2** also shows that another 11.7%, did not finish their degrees. Therefore, most of them have only a basic education. Completed high school leads the list, with 33.8%. On the other hand, 5.5% said they had not completed this stage. Complete and incomplete Elementary School registered 8.2% each. However, 0.6% declared that they only read and write.

To test our second hypothesis, we analyzed the party profile of the pastors who launched their candidacies for Federal Deputy between 1998 and 2018. When we checked the classification by ideological block, we noticed that the vast majority of these Evangelical priests are affiliated with legends on the right-wing of the political spectrum, totaling an average of 77.3% in the six elections mentioned. The total of those enrolled in center and left-wing parties add up to the same 11.3% each.

When we observe in **Graph 3** the evolution over the last 20 years, we notice that the

right-wing parties have remained far ahead of the others in all elections. Only in 1998 was this difference smaller, but this was due to the small number of candidates. On the other hand, the blocs comprising the center and left-wing parties have hardly moved at the bottom. However, this classification is too aggregated and does not reveal much information beyond the protagonism of the right-wing. There are other institutional and social variables involved that need to be considered.

Graph 3 – Pastoral candidates by ideological bloc (1998-2018)



Source: Own elaboration based on TSE data.

Right, Center, Left

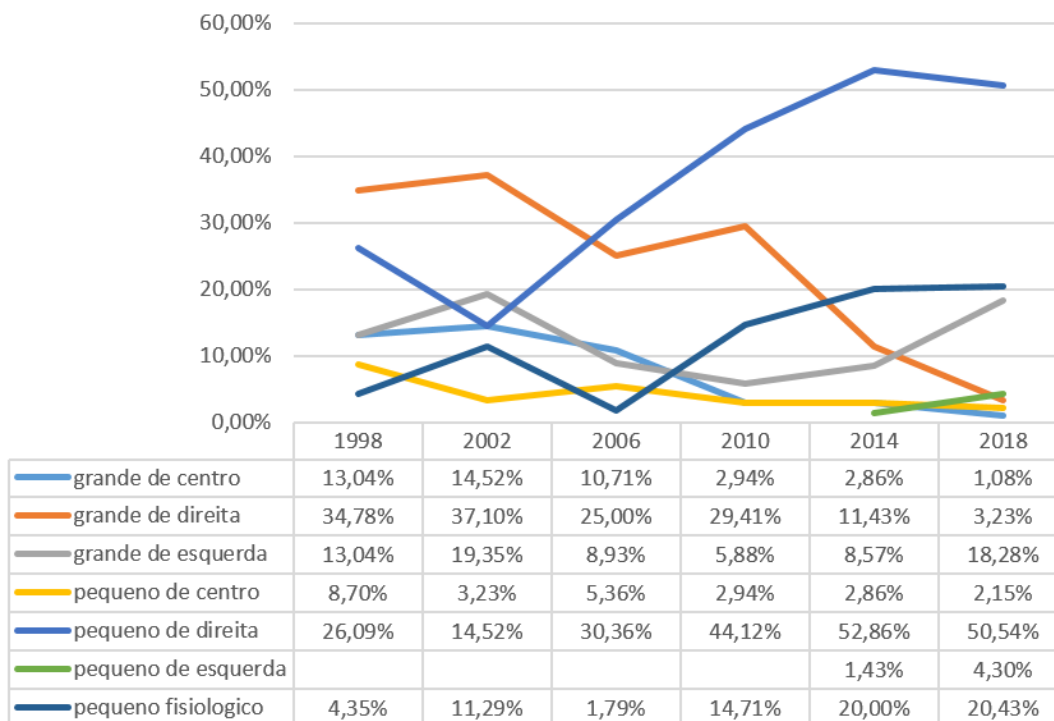
Although most of these candidates sought out right-wing parties to run for Federal Deputies, the right-wing did not remain static throughout the period. On the contrary, it moved according to political circumstances, which altered preferences, relevance, and electoral opportunities. So we now look at the size of each party and its ideology.

We can see in **Graph 4** the ascendancy of small right-wing parties among pastor candidacies. In this group are included legends such as PSC and PTC, which bring together a large number of priests. The decline of the big right-wing parties, such as PP and PFL/DEM, is also clear. In the last two elections, the small physiological parties have overtaken this bloc. Even the big left-wingers, such as PSB and PDT, outnumber the traditional right-wingers. Therefore, we observe a shift in recruitment, with pastors gradually migrating to the small physiological parties and legends.

We also estimated the ideological position of the parties using Coppedge's (1997) ordering for Latin America. Here we adopt Codato, Berlatto, and Bolognesi's (2018) categorization, which employs 6 of the 13 possibilities in this model. These are right-wing

confessional parties based on religious doctrines; personalist parties that appeal to a leader’s charisma and authority; center-wing seculars with vague, liberal programs in the economy; center-left seculars that advocate social policies; left-wing seculars with Marxist rhetoric; and right-wing seculars that are conservative in customs.

Graph 4 – Pastoral candidates by party size (1998-2018)



Source: Own elaboration based on Codato *et al.* (2018) and TSE data.

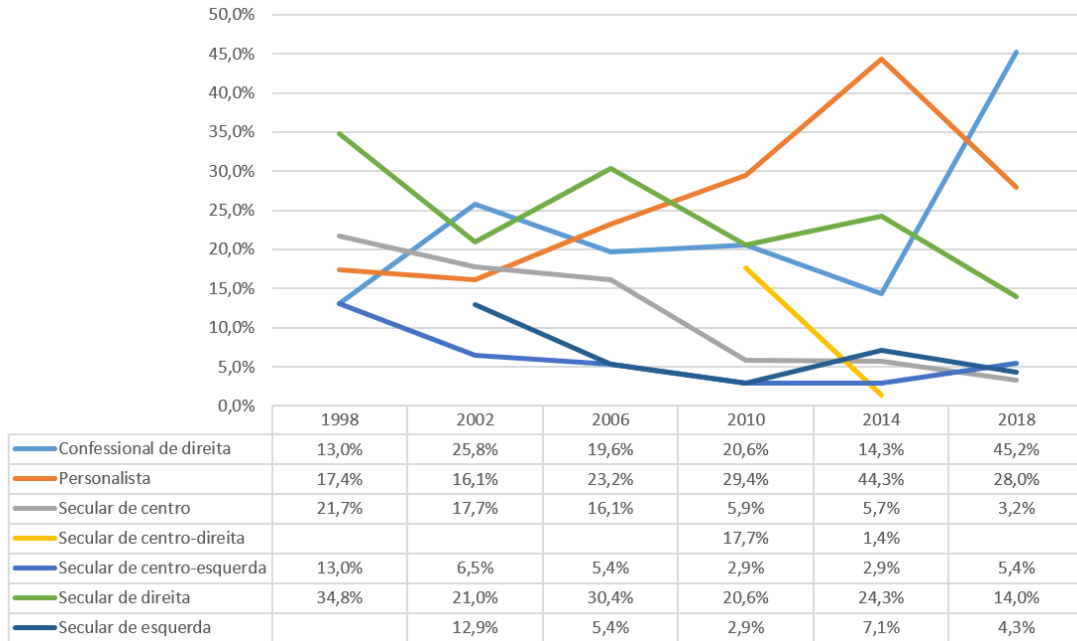
big center, big right, big left, small center, small right, small left, small physiological

When we apply the above variables, we see in **Graph 5** that the confessional parties took the lead in the preference of pastoral candidates. Soon after appearing the personalist parties, which lead the sum of all elections, with 28.9%. This group includes parties that act according to the personal and political interests of their leaders. In this category, we also noticed the decline of the right-wing secular legends in the last elections. The same has occurred with the center-wing secular associations. Further down the list are the left-wing and center-left secular parties, which have changed little over the last decade.

Concerning the overall party picture, PSC was the party that launched the most candidates for Federal Deputy with the title of pastor on the ballot. Between 1998 and 2018, it accumulated 11.6% of the total. The acronym is led by Pastor Everaldo Pereira, of the Assembly of God. Next comes PTB with 7.3%; PTC with 5.5%; and PHS (incorporated into Podemos in 2019) with 4.7%. PRB (now Republicanos), of the Universal Church, appears in fifth place with 4.7% of candidacies. PSB is the party further to the left-wing of the political spectrum with the most names

with 4.7%, one position above PL and MDB, both with 4.1%. PT launched only two names in the period.

Graph 5 – Coppedge ideology pastoral candidates (1998-2018) physiological



Source: Own elaboration based on Coppedge (1997), Codato *et al.* (2018), and TSE data.

Right-wing confessional, Personalist, Centered secular, Center-right secular, Center-left secular, Right secular, Left secular

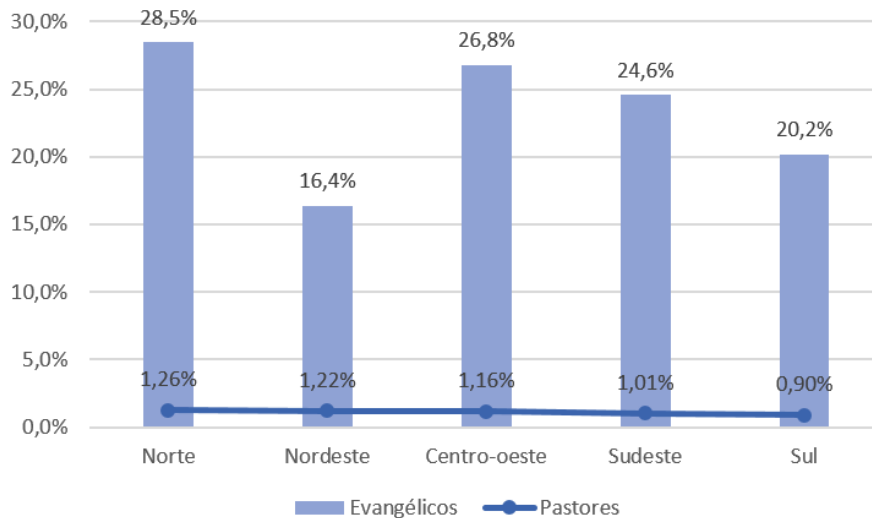
The pastors in our sample launched their candidacies for Federal Deputy in 45 different political parties, as a result of both the party reconfiguration (with changes in nomenclatures and mergers of legends) and the spraying of Evangelical priests by the various political parties in search of votes. Despite a large number of parties, the results show that most of them are concentrated in the same ideological core, more to the right, physiological and personalist-wing. Traditional right-wing parties, such as PFL/DEM and PP, received few names in the overall average.

We also compared the TSE's electoral data with information from the IBGE's 2010 Census on the distribution of Evangelicals in the five regions of the country. The numbers showed that most of this segment was concentrated in three regions: North, with 28.5%; Midwest, with 26.8%; and Southeast, with 24.6%. Therefore, the regions with the lowest proportion of Evangelicals in Brazil were the South, with 20.2%, and the Northeast, with 16.4%. As for the candidates, we calculated the percentage of pastors who used their ecclesiastical status on the ballot concerning the other candidates.

According to **Graph 6**, the result revealed that the North region, besides proportionally concentrating the largest number of Evangelicals in the country, also leads in the number of priests

who are candidates, with 1.2%. In turn, the Northeast, region with the lowest rate of church members, was in second place, with 1.2%. Then comes the Midwest with 1.1%; Southeast with 1%; and South with 0.9%. We also checked the total number of pastors by region. In this case, the Southeast concentrates the largest number of names, with 43.3%, well ahead of the Northeast, with 24.7%. Then, the North appears with 11.6%, almost the same rate as the South, with 11.1%. The Midwest region occupies the last place, with 9.3%.

Graph 6 – Pastoral candidates by region (1998-2018)



Source: Own elaboration based on Census 2010/IBGE and TSE data.

North, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, South
Evangelicals, Pastors

Although São Paulo is the State with the most candidates for the position of Federal Deputy, Rio de Janeiro registered the highest number of candidates with the title of pastor in the ballot box among the six elections surveyed, with 16.8% compared to 12.5%. In third, Minas Gerais registered 10.1% of the candidates, followed by Pernambuco with 5.5%; Bahia with 5.2%; Paraná with 4.9%; and Espírito Santo with 3.8%. Even though it is one of the least populous states in the country, Roraima occupies the eighth position on the list, with 3.5%, tied with Rio Grande do Sul, but ahead of states with more vacancies in dispute, such as Ceará, with 1, 7%; and Goiás with 0.9%.

Final considerations

This article sought to analyze the phenomenon of Evangelical candidacies from the mapping of pastors who used the ecclesiastical title in the electronic ballot box. Although this subgroup represents 64.6% of all religious titles used and 70.4% of those elected (GERARDI, 2016), it had not yet been studied in detail in the Literature. We sought to fill this gap by observing

six consecutive elections, between 1998 and 2018, for the position of Federal Deputy. The result showed that, despite fluctuations between 2006 and 2010, this movement grew 291.6% in the two decades, totaling 344 candidates. Since 2014, the curve is rising, jumping from 71 to 94 names in 2018, the highest level in the series.

Our first hypothesis contemplated the social profile of the segment. The expected result was that the priesthood would be the main occupation declared to TSE and that pastors would not have higher education. Contrary to expectations, we found that 72.3% of the candidates in our sample perform other functions or depend on other income sources. One out of 10 candidates already held an elective position, which reinforces the findings of Gerardi (2016) that having a political career increases the chances of electoral success for this group. Some of them also chose to associate a second occupation with the name of a ballot box, such as teacher/professor and military rank. The expectation on the level of education was confirmed. Altogether, 68.5% of pastors did not have complete higher education and two of them declared only knowing how to read and write.

The results indicate that the priesthood is not always seen as a profession and that exercising pastoral work does not require a degree, since access to the ecclesiastical hierarchy is not elite in some denominations. Concerning gender, women represented only 10% of the candidates. Between 1998 and 2018, there were 309 male pastors and 35 female pastors. However, we verified a slight upward trend in the last elections, contrasting with the obligation of the parties to fill the quotas of female candidates in proportional elections. However, although Evangelical churches allow the priesthood of women, female pastors still occupy little space on party lists to run for a seat as a Federal Deputy.

Our second hypothesis contemplated party preference and expected a predominance of right-wing candidacies and the pulverization of parties, which was confirmed. By refining the ranking, we concluded that the growth of pastors in the last elections was driven mainly by confessional parties, the small right-wing and personalists, which replaced the big right and center-wing ones. In the declining group, religious positions need to accommodate themselves with the defense of more abstract and liberal values, which tends to inhibit the more conservative ones. In turn, the small subtitles use as a strategy to launch many candidates to increase their directories.

Leftist parties attracted less than 25% of pastors over the two decades, but with a trend of growth in the last two elections. The fact that PT appears among the last placed on the list is noteworthy, with only 0.6% of names. The party did not attract priests even during the long period it governed the country. Between the 2002 and 2010 elections, when it was electorally strong, no evangelical priest ran for the legend using the religious title on the ballot box.

While our focus was on candidacies, we also measured electoral performance. Only 8% of self-declared pastors were elected between 1998 and 2018, totaling 30 seats. The best harvest

was in 2002, the year Lula was elected for the first time, with 13 elected. After a decline between 2006 and 2010, six priests emerged victorious in 2018. The election that also won Bolsonaro's victory registered the second-best result in the series. It should be noted that the number of candidates in this election was 49% higher than in 2002.

We believe that one of the contributions of this research was to explore the ballot name as an object of study in Political Science. For Soares (2017), the choice of candidate identification can vary according to the discourses that circulate in society, acting as an indication of changes in the social context and the collective imagination. In this sense, the increase in the number of candidates with the title of pastor coincides with the rise of Evangelicals in Brazil in the most varied strata of society. In politics, the growth of the right-wing and conservatism, enshrined in the election of Bolsonaro, boosted the group's initiatives to occupy more space in Congress and State institutions (SANTOS, 2020).

This study also had some limitations. Other elective positions could have been analyzed, also including the Municipal and State spheres. Some categories, such as age group and campaign expenses, were also left out. But we believe that the essential was considered taking into account our objectives and hypotheses. In addition, future research may include other ecclesiastical titles and the identification of churches and denominations to which they belong. Cutting out the ballot name can also be useful to study other occupations and social segments, in addition to being articulated with different theories and methodological approaches.

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