

# QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF NOUNS, VERBS AND ADJECTIVES IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF THE NEW BRAZILIAN RIGHT WING IN TEXTS COLLECTED ON TWITTER

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- **ABSTRACT:** This study aims to develop a quantitative analysis of the most used nouns, verbs and adjectives in 4,523 tweets posted by President Jair Bolsonaro on his profile on the social network Twitter between March 31, 2010—when the profile was created—and March 7, 2019. We focused on assessing the most frequent lexical items in order to perform a linguistic-discursive analysis of the lexical chain in these discursive formations, according to Pêcheux (2009). To do so, we organized the text as follows: in the first section, we defined the concept of new Brazilian right wing or present-day Brazilian far right; in the second one, through statistical research, we defined the main characteristics of the Brazilian society that may be associated with this political field; finally, in the third section, we presented our theoretical and methodological assumptions in data collection and carried out the analyses.
- **KEYWORDS:** quantitative analysis; new Brazilian right wing; texts; Twitter.

## Introduction

The objective of the present study was to perform a quantitative analysis of the most frequently used nouns, verbs and adjectives in 4,523 tweets posted by President Jair Bolsonaro on his Twitter account between March 31, 2010—when the account was created—and March 7, 2019. Using this data, we carried out a linguistic-discursive analysis, prioritizing the most utilized lexical-semantic aspects in his discourse. We selected the quantitative data in our corpus which concerned the far right, also known

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as the new Brazilian right wing. In addition to the first section, where we discussed the historical and sociological construction of these ideas in Brazil in the last decades, the second and third sections present quantitative characteristics impressive either by the sociological statistical data shown or by the computational analysis data of the collected tweets.

## Who is speaking? The new Brazilian right wing as a political subjectivity (1983-2019)<sup>1</sup>

According to Casimiro (2018), it is not possible to understand the “reactionary reflux” experienced in Brazil at the present time if we focus our analysis only in the recent years. Casimiro produces a detailed mapping of the political and business groups associated with this movement, as well as of the organic linkage between them in the ideological formation of the contemporary Brazilian State and its national elites. His conclusions show how the recent, primarily neoliberal political extremism in Brazil was established in the concreteness of institutional relations and became, as we shall see, fundamental to our understanding of this phenomenon.

According to his perspective, the current socio-political dynamic in Brazil originates from the reorganization of the national dominant classes in the 1980s. In the wake of the political opening of the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964 to 1985), a new form of political-ideological action emerged from these groups, mainly linked “to the political representation of the liberal-conservative groups, which were modernized, militant and often violent, but unaffiliated to any political party” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 41, our translation)<sup>2</sup>. Since then—the author adds—their actions have spread, intensified and radicalized.

To support his thesis, Casimiro (2018) assesses the process of creation and organization of the civil groups—think tanks—dedicated to defending, debating and spreading liberal and neoliberal ideas in the country. They became responsible for harmonizing the political thinking of the national elites with that of the international ones. The first of them, the *Instituto Liberal* (Liberal Institute, conventionally shortened to IL),<sup>3</sup> was founded in 1983, in Rio de Janeiro, institutionally linked to *Fundação*

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<sup>1</sup> The text is structured so we can intertwine the concepts of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. We hence organize the sections trying to understand “who speaks?”, “who listens?” and “how is it spoken?”. Since it is not the main objective of this text, we will not go into a deep reflection on these three argumentative concepts, defining them here as: Arguing is, therefore, building a discourse that has the objective of persuasion. As any type of discourse, the argument is an utterance, resulting of a process of the utterance that features the elements: the one who speaks, the one who listens, and the discourse, or, as they were called by the orators, the orator, the auditorium and the argumentation itself, the discourse. these three factors result in the persuasive act” (FIORIN, 2017, p. 69).

<sup>2</sup> Original: “*a representação política não partidária dos segmentos da direita liberal conservadora, atualizada, militante e, muitas vezes, truculenta*” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 41).

<sup>3</sup> Political and Educational institutions in Brazil normally have their full name abbreviated to their initial letters and then referred to as such. We will present the shortened versions to which these groups are normally referred alongside the translation of their names in the parenthesis.

*Getúlio Vargas* (Getúlio Vargas Foundation, FGV) and ideologically aligned with the Chicago monetarist school of thought. In 1984, the Instituto de Estudos Empresariais (Institute of Entrepreneurial Studies, IEE) was created, in the city of Porto Alegre, capital of the southernmost state in Brazil: Rio Grande do Sul. It holds a strong conservative presence and is responsible for the organization of the Brazilian editions of the Liberty Forum, one of the main events of discussion of the Brazilian right-wing political agenda, in collaboration with international think tanks such as the Mont Pelerin Society and the Atlas Network.

In the 1990s, what could be called the entrepreneurial tendency of the Brazilian State was strengthened. It would increasingly adjust its functions based on the market model. In the same decade, the *Grupo de Institutos, Fundações e Empresas* (Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies, GIFE) and the *Instituto Ethos de Empresas e Responsabilidade Social* (Ethos Institute for Companies and Social Responsibility) were created in São Paulo, with the objective of “articulating and establishing the directives for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and non-profit foundations and associations” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 42, our translation)<sup>4</sup>. With these organizations, the right wing was able to expand its platforms in order to systematize and control their methods of collective action, so that, outside of state structures, they could operate the spread of their political-ideological thought more efficiently (CASIMIRO, 2018).

Still according to Casimiro (2018), with the foundation of the *Instituto de Estudos para o Desenvolvimento Industrial* (Institute of Studies for Industrial Development, IEDI) in 1989, in São Paulo, and of the *Instituto Atlântico* (Atlantic Institute) in 1993, headquartered both in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, these economic groups started to advance a long-term political agenda inside the Brazilian State’s bureaucracy. For Casimiro, “if, on one side, their discourses are anchored on the ideas of a market economy, on the other side, their idea of nation (class domination) is essentially ingrained in the institutional structure of the state.”<sup>5</sup> (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 42, our translation)

Over time, the collaborative expansion between those groups consolidated an interconnected chain of think tanks. The Atlantic Institute is associated, for example, to the *Grupo de Líderes Empresariais* (Group of Business Leaders, LIDE), formed in 2003, and to the Millennium Institute (IMIL), created in 2006 during the XIX Liberty Forum, in Porto Alegre. To be a member of LIDE, one must represent a Brazilian or multinational company with a minimum yearly turnover of R\$200 million, as well as intend to participate in electoral campaigns. In 2004, the *Movimento Brasil Competitivo* (Movement for a Competitive Brazil), founded three years earlier, became the first *Organização da Sociedade Civil de Interesse Público* (Civil Society Organization

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<sup>4</sup> Original: “*articular e definir as diretrizes das chamadas organizações não governamentais (ONGs) e das fundações e associações sem fins lucrativos (Fasfil)*” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 42).

<sup>5</sup> Original: “*Se por um lado seus discursos estão amparados em valores de economia de mercado, por outro seus projetos de nação (dominação de classe) estão essencialmente entranhados na estrutura institucional do Estado*” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p. 42).

for Public Interest, OSCIP) in Brazil, obtaining, on one side, four permanent chairs appointed by the Brazilian President's Chief of Staff in four ministries and, on the other side, pleading for the reduction of state structure. Therefore, it both integrates itself into the public administration to advance the agenda of having the state run like a business—calling it a “modernizing” agenda—and works for the ideological alignment of the nation's dominant economic groups (CASIMIRO, 2018).

In 2005, a radical turn of business groups and the spread of their discourse in civil society was more clearly noted, pointing to a significant advance of the political right in the country, associated with the development of new media, such as social networks. Thus, there was a resurgence of the liberal-conservative ideology, of revisionist narratives and of the systematic use of fake news in the country, which contributed to normalizing hate speech in the Brazilian public scene (CASIMIRO, 2018).

More recently, at the 2010 Liberty Forum, in a coalition with IL and IMIL, the Mises Institute was organized in Brazil, associated with the Austrian School of economic thought—particularly to what has since become known as libertarianism. In its political agenda, we may observe the aversion to any form of state-provided public service, the advocacy of market economy as the main tool for the management of social life and the focus on moralistic conceptions of social standards. Finally, regarding the most expressive groups, Students for Liberty (SFL) was created at the 2012 Liberty Forum to represent the younger public, in general university students. Associated with the Atlas Network, it became a kind of national version of the United States group Students for Liberty. “SFL organizes, finances and establishes guidelines for action, mainly through its political and ideological action arm, the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL)” (CASIMIRO, 2018, p.45).

For Miguel (2018), the Brazilian far right organizes itself alongside three political groups, interacting and forming alliances among themselves, hence transforming each other: (1) the libertarian groups: associated with the ultraliberal Austrian School, advocating for minimal state and defending the idea that the free market and its mechanisms are constitutively fair. This view understands all social relations through a contractual perspective anchored in the right to property, abolishing any kind of solidarity in favor of individual competition. For those groups, liberty—represented by the market—has equality—represented by the state—as its main enemy; (2) the religious fundamentalist groups: organized as a political force since the 1990s, their growth seems to stem from the expansion of some sectors of the neo-charismatic churches which are based on the “perception that there is a revealed truth that nullifies any need for political debate”<sup>6</sup> (MIGUEL, 2018, p. 21, our translation), opposing especially the legalization of abortion and gender equality policies, and giving religious leaders political power on state and business structures. Their “moral agenda” and their deep penetration in the poorest areas of large cities allowed them to gain a significant part of the electorate

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<sup>6</sup> Original: “*percepção de que há uma verdade revelada que anula qualquer possibilidade de debate*” (MIGUEL, 2018, p. 21).

of left-wing groups; lastly (3) the *anti-communist groups*: existing since the Cold War period, when Cuba was perceived as the main threat in the Americas, they gained a new enemy in the form of the Venezuelan “bolivarianism”. Recently, communism started being associated with PT-loyalists, i.e. supporters of the Workers’ Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores = PT*), in power between 2003 and 2016.

According to Gallego (2019), despite their differences, far right voters share these characteristics: (I) they reject politics and have corruption as the main argument against all sort of political activity; (II) they are Anti-PT and anti-left, as those are the representatives of communism, of people who do not want to work, of the state apparatus, of the LGBT agenda and the defense of criminals; (III) anti-intellectualism—they are readers and spreaders of fake news through digital media, such as WhatsApp; (IV) they hold politics as a set of dogmas/absolute truths, often confusing opinions with factual information, using a fundamentalist and hyper-personalist concept of knowledge; (V) they defend the militarization of public life, perceiving the armed forces as providers of social order, opposing the chaos they see in the current public life, as, in their view, the military represents values such as hierarchy, discipline, authority, strength, masculinity, and charisma; (VI) they praise hate, transforming their opponents in enemies (GALLEGO, 2019).

Thus, “the new right is strengthened in the online world, where they acquire their new aesthetics and present themselves in a youthful, playful, ‘cool’, fun way, even including the search for political ridicule, using a pop, seducing, light language, in the form of jester”<sup>7</sup>, asserts Gallego (2019, p. 130, our translation). Taking that theoretical reference as a basis, we now advance towards the analysis of Brazilian society as an audience for the political *imaginarium* (or knowledge) of the new Brazilian right wing.

### **Who is listening? Brazilian society as a political auditorium (1989-2019)**

According to Cerioni (2019), citing a study from Burson, Cohn & Wolfe company entitled “World Leaders on Facebook”, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has surpassed the United States president Donald Trump as the most active country leader on Facebook, obtaining the expressive mark of one hundred and forty-five million interactions on the period from April 2018 to April 2019, almost twice as much as the United States president, who, in spite of having 2.5 times the number of followers, had eighty-four million interactions. Bolsonaro got an average of one hundred thousand interactions per post on the social network Facebook, while Trump got an average of fifty-three thousand interactions per post.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Original: “As novas direitas se fortalecem no mundo online, nele adquirem sua estética e se apresentam com uma forma jovial, lúdica, ‘bacana’, divertida, explorando inclusive o ridículo político, fazendo uso de uma linguagem pop, sedutora, leve, no formato da palhaçada” (GALLEGO, 2019, p. 130).

<sup>8</sup> It is important to point out, however, that there is an intense interaction made by bots in the profile of the Brazilian president. For comparison, it would be interesting to evaluate the proportion of the same occurrence in the profile of

Further demonstration of the Brazilian president's efficacy in the use of digital media can be seen in a list of the one hundred global publications with the highest number of interactions. On this list Bolsonaro features with sixty-one posts, followed by ten of the Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, and nine from Donald Trump. For the analysis, 962 Facebook Pages of leaders of state, government and ministers around the world were assessed. The analysis also points out one of Bolsonaro's remarkable characteristics, in contrast with the other leaders: politics is not necessarily the main theme of his posts. He thus takes advantage of the historical disengagement of a significant part of the population on that matter (CERIONI, 2019).

Besides the lack of interest in politics, the electorate of the Brazilian far right was shown to be fairly susceptible to believing fake news, which seemed crucial for the election results in 2018. According to a study from the Avaaz organization (PASQUINI, 2018) conducted by the company IDEA Big Data between October 26–29, 2019, on Facebook and Twitter, 98.21% of Bolsonaro voters had contact with one or more types of fake news during the 2018 elections, and 89.77% of them said they believed what was reported on such news. The most notorious cases of fake news were the alleged fraud and manipulation of Brazilian voting machines—seen by 93.1% of these voters and believed by 74% of them—and the alleged attempt by Fernando Haddad to adopt the so-called “Gay Kit” at Brazilian public schools during his tenure as Minister of Education—85.2% of the respondents said they had seen it, while 83.7% said they believed it. In sharp contrast, among Haddad voters, 61% said they had seen it, but only 10.5% said they believed it had happened.

These numbers may be linked to low levels of reading and literacy in the country. Coscarelli (2017) evaluated the data from the 2011 “Indicador Nacional de Analfabetismo Funcional” (“National Indicator for Functional Illiteracy” – INAF), admitting for that the following levels of literacy: (i) illiterate, when the person cannot do simple tasks such as reading words and phrases, but can read some familiar numbers, such as telephone numbers, prices etc.; (ii) rudimentary, when a person is able to locate information in short, familiar texts (e.g. signs and letters), read and write numbers in their usual form and perform basic mathematical operations (such as handling money for small payments or measuring things with a ruler or measuring tape); (iii) basic: the individual can be considered functionally literate, since they can read medium-sized texts, find information and make small textual inferences, read numbers on the scale of millions, solve simple problems and have a clear idea of proportions; (iv) fully literate, when the person's capabilities are not a restriction to reading texts and retrieving information, consequently enabling them to read long texts, analyze and report parts of texts, compare and evaluate information, distinguish facts from opinions and make inferences and synthesis. “As for mathematics, they solve problems that demand more planning and control, dealing with percentages, proportions and the calculation

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Donald Trump. According to Lago, Massaro and Cruz (2018), linked to the InternetLab and using a software tool developed by the Indiana University called Botometer, it is estimated that 400 thousand followers of the profile of the then candidate Jair Bolsonaro on Twitter were bots, 33.8% of the total of followers.

of areas, also understanding double-entry tables, maps and graphs”<sup>9</sup> (COSCARELLI, 2017, p. 155-156, unofficial translation). According to this conceptual framework, the situation of education in Brazil is alarming, as Coscarelli (2017) points out that 73% of the population is not fully literate.

The relation between functional illiteracy, the use of social media and the spread of fake news in Brazil is the main theme of a BBC Brazil story done by Fajardo (2018), which considered the most recent INAF data. As reported by the journalist, INAF distributed the literacy levels in five groups: illiterate (8%); rudimentary (22%)—these levels compose the functionally illiterate group, up to 30% of the population between ages 15-64—elementary (34%); intermediate (25%) and proficient (12%)—ranked as literate.

Despite the low levels of literacy, the groups considered functionally illiterate also use social media heavily, as texts circulate accompanying pictures, videos and audio files. For more precise numbers: 86% of the population in this group uses WhatsApp, 72% uses Facebook and 31% has an Instagram profile. Also, 12% said they have the habit of sending messages and commenting on Facebook publications, 14% said they read messages and 13% said they “like” posts. The level of access to Facebook by literate groups is fairly similar to those of the other groups: 89% of them said they have the habit of accessing Facebook, but the quality of their experience in this medium is significantly different; out of those who are proficient, 44% said they send messages, 43% said they comment on publications and 47% read messages and “like” publications (FAJARDO, 2018).

In regard to WhatsApp, there was not a significant difference between groups. 92% of the illiterate respondents said they use the App to send written messages, while 84% said they use it to share texts received from other people; these compare to 99% of the literate respondents, who affirmed they send messages, and 82% who said they share content, a number curiously similar to the illiterate group. Also, according to the story, given the difficulties in interpretation of an expressive part of the users, the most spread fake news was shared in audio format (FAJARDO, 2018).

The lack of literacy in the Brazilian society was recently confirmed by a study about reading habits that indicated 74% of the population had not bought a book in the last three months and 30% had never bought a book. Among those who read, religion was the main theme, with the Bible featuring as the most read book at any level of education. The reading habit was in 10<sup>th</sup> place when researchers asked participants what they liked to do in their free time, after watching television (73%), listening to music (60%), surfing the web (47%), socializing with family or friends (45%), watching movies at home (44%), using WhatsApp (43%), writing (40%), using Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (35%) and practicing sports (24%). Newspapers, magazines and other forms of news

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<sup>9</sup> Original: “*Quanto à matemática, resolvem problemas que exigem maior planejamento e controle, envolvendo percentuais, proporções e cálculo de área, além de interpretar tabelas de dupla entrada, mapas e gráficos*” (COSCARELLI, 2017, p. 155-156).

and books, whether in digital format or hard copies, obtained the preference of 24% of participants (IBOPE, 2016).

The groups originating in the “C Class”, i.e. the lower middle class, do not use the internet with the same goals as those of higher classes. That is Spyer’s (2017, p. 2, our translation) conclusion, for whom: “The internet can be and is used in the local power dispute, either as a tool to show achievements or to attack rivals, but not to discuss their political views, as the more educated segments of society do. The ‘C Class’ does not use Facebook for political mobilization”<sup>10</sup>. Spyer continues: “Residents do not discuss politics because they think politicians see them as second-class citizens”<sup>11</sup> (SPYER, 2017, p. 3, our translation). Other interesting statements for our study are

[...] what circulated a lot in 2014, especially via WhatsApp, was content mocking politicians and reinforcing this pessimist idea of the politician being essentially a selfish being [...] This anger against the political class is similar to the political climate here in the UK that led to the Brexit victory and, in the United States, that elected Trump, and that manifests itself today in the Brazilian masses, with their support of Bolsonaro<sup>12</sup> (SPYER, 2017, p. 4, our translation).

For residents of poor communities, it is more important to check how the internet or social media can help in more practical problems, such as the search for employment, the local political disputes, the access to public services etc., which actually works to improve their reading and writing literacy. Therefore, these groups seem to perceive national politics as uninteresting and the entire political class as one group that does not care about them, because they are present in their lives only during the electoral period. That generates a feeling of indifference about the dynamics of politics and popularizes the idea of using the vote as a form of protest, as seen in the election of congressman Tiririca, the most voted candidate in the 2010 elections, with the slogan “*Pior que tá, não fica*” (“It can’t get any worse than this”) (SPYER, 2017).

The comparison between internet usage data and the data about violence in Brazilian society allows us to understand the vast spread of hate speech in virtual spaces. In 2010, a research conducted by the Center for the Study of Violence, University of São Paulo, in eleven Brazilian capitals compared the data obtained with the data of a research done in 1999 about subjects such as torture and police violence. The research found that

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<sup>10</sup> Original: “A rede pode ser e é usada no jogo local de poderes, como ferramenta para mostrar conquistas ou atacar rivais, mas não para discutir visões sobre a política como fazem os setores mais escolarizados. A classe C não usa o Facebook para mobilização política” (SPYER, 2017, p. 2).

<sup>11</sup> Original: “Os moradores não discutem política por entenderem que os políticos os veem como cidadãos de segunda categoria” (SPYER, 2017, p. 3).

<sup>12</sup> Original: “[...] O que circulou muito em 2014, principalmente via WhatsApp, foi conteúdo ridicularizando políticos e concordando com essa ideia pessimista sobre o político ser essencialmente um interesseiro” [...] “Essa raiva contra a classe política lembra o clima aqui do Reino Unido, que levou à vitória do Brexit, e nos Estados Unidos, que elegeu Trump, e que se manifesta hoje, nas camadas populares brasileiras, pelo apoio a Bolsonaro” (SPYER, 2018, p. 4).

47.5% of Brazilians were generally in favor of the use of torture to obtain evidence, and its acceptance varied according to the type of crime committed: 43.2% for rape, 38.8% for drug trafficking, 36.2% for kidnapping, 32.3% for drug use and 32.1% for theft, while 52.5% of respondents said they were completely against any kind of torture. That demonstrates a significant growth in torture acceptance in comparison to the data obtained in 1999, when 71.2% of those interviewed said they were completely against any kind of torture. Furthermore, the proportion of those who totally agree or partially agree with the use of torture jumped from 28.8% in 1999 to 47.5% in 2010. The age of the respondents was important in determining their answer: the younger the audience, the higher the level of torture acceptance (STOCHERO, 2012). That may be related to the fact that this age segment is more exposed to violence.

However, both in 1999 and in 2010, the majority of respondents affirmed being against the use of force or violence as a means of conflict resolution. The proportion of those who agreed that a person had the right to kill to defend their property decreased from 19.38% in 1999 to 12.75% in 2010. There was also a drop in the proportion of those who agreed that a person was allowed to kill in self-defense, from 38.95% in 1999 to 30.17% in 2010 (STOCHERO, 2012). These numbers suffered some variation in recent years. The disbelief in politics seems to allow the transference of the need for the ideals of force and order to other institutions—such as the judiciary, the army, the police and the church—as well as the desire for a figure in the executive power who holds an image of centralization and authority.

In a survey carried out by Datafolha in 2018 (XAVIER, 2018), 32% of respondents agreed—either fully or partially—that the Military Dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) had done more good than harm; 24% thought the government should have the right to outlaw strikes; 41% understood that the government had the right to intervene in labor unions; 33% agreed that the government should be able to ban political parties (as a symbol of the fragmentation and lack of trust in parties, the phrase “*Meu partido é o Brasil*”—“Brazil is my party”—was one of the common slogans in the right-wing political manifestations in the last couple of years); 23% thought the government should be allowed to censor newspapers, TV and radio; 21% accepted that the government should have the right to dissolve Congress (the institution that congregates political parties); 32% understood that the government should be allowed to arrest suspects without court order; 16% agreed that the government should have the right to torture suspects in order to obtain information or confessions; and 43% accepted that the government should be allowed to control social media.<sup>13</sup>

The 2018 Atlas of Violence (CERQUEIRA, 2018) attests the public security crisis in the country. 62,517 homicides were recorded in 2016, 71.1% of which happened with the use of a firearm. This situation creates a war scenario in a physical and symbolic sense, increasing the polarization between groups considered dangerous and groups considered victims, facilitating thus the “personification of evil”. In these situations,

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<sup>13</sup> In this regard, see Morais (2018).

enhanced by extremist discourses, fear and hate, the basic emotions of authoritarianism (CASTORIADIS, 2004) are more likely to be present in social relations. The personal experience of violence and the circulation of such information via collective experiences, media and political discourses help lower the levels of social empathy toward minority groups, commonly associated with crime and disorder.

Minority groups are, in general, more affected by violence, as the data from the Atlas (CERQUEIRA, 2018) shows: of the total number of deaths by homicide, 33,590 were people between ages 15 and 29, an increase of 7.4% in comparison to the numbers of 2015, totaling a rate of 65.5 young people dead per 100 thousand inhabitants; the homicide rate among black people was 40.2 per 100 thousand, in comparison to a rate of 16 per 100,000 among non-blacks. The black homicide rate grew by 23.1% between 2006 and 2016, while there was a 6.8% decrease in the rate among non-blacks, i.e. the number of black people killed is 2.5 times the number of non-black people killed; in the case of women, the consolidated rate is 4.5 per 100 thousand inhabitants, but if we calculate separately, this rate is 5.3 per 100 thousand for black women and 3.1 for non-black women. That represents a growth of 15.4% for black women in the period between 2006 and 2016, and a decrease of 8% for the group of non-black women.

If we consider violence against LGBTs in Brazil, ethnic and racial characteristics do not seem to indicate a bias against black or mixed-race people, as we can observe in the study *Violências LGTBfóbicas no Brasil: dados da violência* (LGBTfobic Violence in Brazil: Violence Data) (BRASIL, 2018). The white group was indicated as the main target of violence among all the groups studied (25.7% of gays; 17.5% of transsexual; 1.8% of lesbians; 0.9% of bisexuals; 1.2% of heterosexuals). Given that the research does not present more specific data regarding the income of these groups, it is inferred that the victims' professions range over the Brazilian middle class spectrum, including teachers and students (14% and 16% respectively). Therefore, the LGBT group seems to be victim of a more transversal violence in Brazilian society, which also affects groups supposedly endowed with certain status and other types of social protection. It is worth noting that white people and/or people with higher educational levels tend to be more able to report homophobic violence to authorities, as well as to suffer non-fatal types of violence.

Overall, this mass experience of violence, especially among the poorest population, can be seen as one of the main factors that explain the growth of authoritarian discourse in the Brazilian society. Let us see, as an example, the results of an online survey commissioned by Human Rights in 2018 - Global Advisor to IPSOS, which gathered data from 28 countries. As an online survey, it was restricted to Brazilians that have internet access, about 116 million people or 64.7% of the population over the age of 10 (FRANCO, 2018). It showed that 69% of Brazilians affirmed knowing "something or a lot" about Human Rights, and 30% affirmed they knew "little or nothing about the matter". Among these, 74% agreed that some people take an unfair advantage of human rights. Brazil was behind only a few countries, such as Saudi Arabia and India, on the agreement with the following statement: "human rights mean nothing in my

daily life”, with 28% of respondents somehow agreeing with it, even though 69% said they considered the existence of laws to protect Human Rights important and 34% agreed with the statement “everyone in Brazil enjoys the same basic human rights”<sup>14</sup> (FRANCO, 2018, p. 2, our translation).

Among the groups that, according to the survey, deserve greater protection of their Human Rights, Brazilians picked: children (56%), the elderly (55%), people with disabilities (46%), women (39%) and poor people (38%). This demonstrates that the public policies that favor the last two groups are not as prestigious as those associated with the first three ones. In the case of the Human Rights that had to be protected, they answered: right to be safe (38%), right to life (36%), children’s right to education (32%), right to freedom from slavery or forced labor (29%) and right not to suffer discrimination (28%) (FRANCO, 2018). Again, minorities seem to have less of an appeal to the empathy of the respondents.

More recently, on October 3 and 4, 2018, Datafolha (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p. 4) carried out a survey in which 69% of those surveyed agreed with the statement “democracy is always better than any other form of government”; 13% agreed with “it does not matter if it is a democracy or a dictatorship” and 12% with “in some circumstances, it is better to have a dictatorship than a democracy”. In the group of Jair Bolsonaro voters, the proportion of those that agreed that in some circumstances it is better to have a dictatorship was 22%, a rate higher than all other presidential candidates. Moreover, among the less educated, 45% did not agree with the statement “democracy is always better than any other form of government”, in contrast with only 13% of the more educated groups. In relation to income, 63% of the poorest groups agreed that “democracy is always better than any other form of government”<sup>15</sup>; that rate is 84% among the richest groups (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p. 4, our translation).

The popular support for democracy has oscillated significantly since 1989, when Brazil held its first free elections after the Military Dictatorship. Put into perspective, (i) the statement “democracy is always better than any other form of government” had 43% of support in September 1989 and reached 66% in December 2014 (after the protests of June 2013 and near the re-election of President Dilma Rousseff); (ii) the statement “it does not matter if it is a democracy or a dictatorship”<sup>16</sup> had 22% of support in September 1999 and its statistical peak in June 2000, with 29% of support (in 1999 there was a deep economic crisis in Brazil); (iii) the statement “in some circumstances, it is better to have a dictatorship than a democracy”<sup>17</sup> started with an 18% support rate in 1989 and peaked at 23% in September 1992 (when President Fernando Collor was impeached) (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p.2, our translation).

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<sup>14</sup> Original: “*todos no Brasil desfrutam dos mesmos direitos humanos básicos*” (FRANCO, 2018, p. 2).

<sup>15</sup> Original: “*democracia é uma forma de governo sempre superior a outras*” (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p. 4)

<sup>16</sup> Original: “*tanto faz se é uma democracia ou uma ditadura*” (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p 2).

<sup>17</sup> Original: “*em certas circunstâncias é melhor uma ditadura do que um regime democrático*” (ELEIÇÕES..., 2018, p.2).

Paradoxically, none of the governments elected in the moments prior to past democratic crises in Brazil presented any blatant threats to democracy, unlike it happened in 2018. That is, when we reached the highest acceptance of the democratic model, the electoral campaign that defended the Military Dictatorship (1964 to 1985), torture, the persecution of minorities and opposed human rights won with 57.7 million of votes, which constitute 55.15% of all votes (except blank and null votes) and 39.3% of the total electorate (PRAZERES, 2018).

In April 2019, for example, a Datafolha survey showed that 57% of the respondents agreed that the date of the 1964 Military Coup (March 31) should not be celebrated, while 36% affirmed the contrary—a proportion similar to the 2018 election. In the 16-24 age group, 64% were against celebrating the date. 67% of those who had university degrees and 72% of those earning more than 10 times the monthly minimum wage were also against it. Among those favorable to the celebration, 42% were 60 or older, 43% had only primary education and 39% earned up to twice the minimum monthly wage (MARQUES, 2019). The last two groups represented a significant part of the underprivileged population.

Moreover, the relation between religion and politics is clear in a country in which 28% consider that religious faith is the main way for improving life; education is considered to be so by 21%; access to healthcare, by 19%; work promotion, by 11%; earning more money, by 8%; being able to retire, by 6%; financial support from family, by 5%; and access to leisure and culture, by 2% (FERREIRA, 2019).

The data do not indicate, however, an automatic association between the poorest, less educated people and hate speech. They point toward Jair Bolsonaro's discourse gaining more support in the whitest and richest cities in Brazil. Llanera (2018) exposes the clear contrast between the 10 richest and the 10 poorest cities, and between the 10 whitest and 10 non-whitest cities in Brazil, noting the clear correlation between the richest and whitest groups and the new Brazilian right wing, and also highlighting the fact that ethnicity has a stronger correlation than class. "If we take two cities with similar levels of income, Bolsonaro is stronger in the cities with more white voters"<sup>18</sup>, asserts Llaneras (2018, p. 7, our translation). In relation to the preference of non-white groups: "According to Datafolha, Bolsonaro will get twice as many votes as Haddad (68% versus 32%) in the white segment, while Haddad is the favorite among the colored population"<sup>19</sup> (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 7, our translation).

In the regional perspective, those aspects are more general, so that "in every region, the support for Bolsonaro grows as the average income of the city rises"<sup>20</sup> (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 8, our translation). The researcher adds "when we compare the cities in a

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<sup>18</sup> Original: "[...] se pegarmos dois municípios com renda semelhante, os resultados de Bolsonaro tendem a ser melhores naqueles em que há mais eleitores brancos" (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 7).

<sup>19</sup> Original: "Segundo o Datafolha, Bolsonaro receberá duas vezes mais votos (68%) do que Haddad (32%) entre os brancos, enquanto Haddad é o preferido pela população de cor" (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 7).

<sup>20</sup> Original: "dentro de cada região os apoios a Bolsonaro crescem conforme a renda dos municípios" (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 8)

given region, we find that Bolsonaro has more support where there is a larger white population. That does not happen in the Northeastern region, but in the Northern and Southeastern regions”<sup>21</sup>. (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 9, our translation)

Topics concerning immigration have also gained importance in the present public debate in Brazil. A Datafolha survey (MANTOVANI, 2018) showed that 67% of Brazilians think that “Brazil should tighten the entrance of immigrants”. 42% fully agree with that statement, 24% partially agree, 1% neither agree nor disagree, 12% partially disagree, 18% fully disagree and 2% do not know. These numbers increase according to income (74% of those who earn more than 10 times the minimum wage and 62% of those who earn less than twice the minimum wage), gender (men with 72% and women, 62%), and political alignment in the latest elections (73% among Bolsonaro supporters, 58% among Haddad supporters).

Curiously, in Brazil, immigrants represent less than 1% of the population, although people on the survey demonstrate an overestimated perception of the matter, estimating that number to be 30% of the total. It is clear with these facts that Brazilian xenophobia is based more on imaginary aspects than on concrete reality (RIBEIRO; ORTELLADO, 2019).

We will now analyze the specific characteristics of Bolsonaro voters. Through this analysis, the varied data presented can be cross-checked in order to trace a profile of a voter/public/ideal public for the new Brazilian right wing, as well as give us signs of the new actions of this group in the political scenario in the medium and long-term future. According to Ribeiro and Ortellado (2019), 61% of this electorate consider themselves very conservative, with 47% being Catholic or Protestant; 65% do not have any party preference, showing a distrust in the political system and the feeling of not being represented; 53% consume political news on a daily basis, mainly through the television (31%), news websites (27%), and Facebook (13%), in what apparently means a domination of the traditional media among the sources of information of this group.

However, a curious finding by Ribeiro and Ortellado (2019) is a strong anti-system sentiment in the respondents, a strong distrust of both mainstream media and traditional political parties, immersed in generalized corruption, according to them. The data: 85% think the internet allows the discovery of truths that traditional media wants to hide; 53% agree that mainstream media is the great enemy of the people; 69% believe that all political parties are corrupt; and 43% agree that social media is a way of forcing politicians to listen to the people. Regarding the perception of these voters of social programs, 61% stated that the *Bolsa Família* Program encourages people not to work and 44% think that racial quotas for blacks in universities affect people who “deserve it more”.

About the fight for gender equality, 39% said that feminists are against family values. Concerning LGBT rights movements, 37% think that “the gay movement”

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<sup>21</sup> Original: “quando comparamos os municípios de uma região entre si, descobrimos que Bolsonaro recebe mais apoio onde a população branca é maior. Isso não ocorre na região Nordeste, mas nas regiões Norte ou Sudeste” (LLANERAS, 2018, p. 9).

corrupts children. Artists and teachers were also considered generally against family values, exposing an anti-intellectual tendency in this particular group of voters, 47% of whom said teachers approach subjects contrary to family values in the classroom. 59% said actors who work for Globo (Brazil's biggest television network, famous for its soap operas) do not respect moral values. There is also among these voters a tendency to support punitive measures. 79% agree that Human Rights are a hindrance to crime fighting, and 90% say that stricter penal sentences for all types of crimes are needed. Finally, 53% agree that the immigrant flow to Brazil must be better controlled and 30% say that, for everyone to have jobs, it is necessary to relinquish labor rights (RIBEIRO; ORTELLADO, 2019).

Nevertheless, after only three months in office, President Jair Bolsonaro has significantly lost his political capital, becoming the president with the worst approval ratings in the first term since 1989. According to Gielow (2019), a survey conducted by Datafolha revealed that 30% of Brazilians rate the current government as "bad" or "very bad", 32% rate it as "excellent" or "good" and 33% rate it as "regular". The same survey shows that 59% still believe that his government will be "great" or "good". For Bramatti and Sartori (2019), the president lost the support of the poorest population, with a significant deterioration of his support coming from capital cities (-36%) and their poor neighborhoods (-18%); among Protestants (-25%); people who earn up to the minimum wage (-34%), between 1 and 2 times the minimum wage (-31%), 2 and 5 (-23); voters with elementary education only (-27% voters with only 4 years of elementary school; -40% voters with only up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade); voters with a high school degree (-26%); voters with college education also support Bolsonaro less (-22%); the drop among men was of 28%, 27% among women.

A survey from *Ibope Inteligencia* showed that, from January to April 2019, the proportion of Brazilians who affirmed that a military government would be "good" or "great" fell from 62% to 49% and the proportion of those who said it would be "bad" or "very bad" rose from 32% to 45%; the support for a strong leader that ignored Congress or elections fell from 66% to 56%—still an expressive number—and the proportion that considers it "bad" or "very bad" grew from 30% to 39% (PREFERÊNCIA..., 2019). Among other factors, the neoliberal agenda pursued by the government seemed to work as a divider in an electorate built more on an emotional level, through moral values and a desire for tougher crime fighting measures, than through a hegemonic political-economic ideal.

In virtual environments, the greater agility in the circulation of information and an apparently more direct contact between representatives and the represented, in comparison to the traditional tools of dialogue between institutions and civil society, have been fundamental in building the current public opinion. It brought about at the same time a sensation of more political representation through personal actions and the deeper fragmentation of society in ever more isolated groups. Such circumstances were fuelled by an environment of massive circulation of false accusations and fake news.

In the next section we will carry out a quantitative analysis of the collected tweets, observing the lexical organization of this political thought.

## **How is it spoken? Twitter as a digital tool for the political interaction of the new Brazilian right wing (2010-2019)**

With the intent of analyzing the way President Jair Bolsonaro expresses himself on social media, we collected all the messages published on his official Twitter account from March 31, 2010, the day his profile was created, to March 7, 2019, totaling 4,523 tweets. We discarded retweets and replies in this collection, i.e. we did not consider the re-posting of old tweets and Jair Bolsonaro's replies to some tweets or discussions on a specific tweet.

The software for gathering the tweets was written in Python programming language. This programming language works with modules, files with various predefined functions grouped in libraries. It is widely used around the world. Among many others, there are Python modules for mathematical operations, text analysis, image manipulation and statistical analysis. For this work, we used the NLTK module (Natural Language Toolkit) to generate images<sup>22</sup> which allow the identification and classification of words. This collection procedure can be used on any Twitter profile and all the programming tools involved are free and available on the internet.

To extract the data, we wrote a code using the Selenium module to automate the following procedure: i) open Firefox internet browser; ii) go to Twitter's search page<sup>23</sup>; iii) identify and store the IDs (identification numbers) of the tweets on Jair Bolsonaro's profile in the given period; iv) after collecting all the IDs of the target tweets, we wrote another code based on Python using Tweepy, in order to use Twitter's API (Application Programming Interface) and the IDs of the collected tweets to extract all the information from the target tweets. This procedure was not directly done using Twitter's API because it limits the extraction to the last 3200 tweets of a given account.

With the data, professors Erneson Oliveira and Pablo Morais wrote a code using the NLTK module to identify, extract and count all the words in the analysed tweets. The following stop words were left out:<sup>24</sup>

'à', 'às', 'a', 'e', 'o', 'ao', 'as', 'os', 'aos', 'um', 'uma', 'uns', 'umas', 'sem', 'me', 'em', 'no', 'na', 'nos', 'nas', 'mas', 'de', 'do', 'da', 'dos', 'das', 'se', 'ou', 'com', 'como', 'são', 'tem', 'meu', 'seu', 'sua', 'meus', 'seus', 'pouco', 'muito', 'suas', 'por', 'pelo', 'pela', 'sobre', 'com', 'que',

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<sup>22</sup> Available at: <https://www.nltk.org/>. Access on: 7 out. 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Available at: <https://twitter.com/search-home>. Access on: 7 out. 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Stop words are lexical items not considered in this analysis because their elevated frequency renders them unimportant. There are no universal parameters for their definition, which will depend on the type of data the researcher wishes to generate. Articles, vocatives, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions are usually excluded.

embora', 'para', 'há', 'até', 'entre', 'q', 'd', 'mais', 'nosso', 'nossa', 'hoje', 'via', 'n', 'só', 'não', 'vamos', 'já', 'sim', 'não', 'sempre', 'quem', 'isso', 'dia', 'bolsonaro', 'obrigado', 'abraço'.

The names Jair, flaviobolsonaro and carlosbolsonaro were added to the stop words. *Obrigado* (thank you) and *abraço* (hug) were also added because they are normally used at the end of a text, while the word “via” was discarded because it is used to reference other profiles on Twitter.

NLTK also enables the classification of words in categories such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. This task is performed through machine learning (a specific model of supervised learning in the area of machine learning was chosen) which uses a database to “train the machine” in data analysis—in this case, in categorizing words correctly. The bigger the database, the better the precision of the categorization. For the English language, the NLTK module uses a fairly robust database and hence is able to produce very precise results in word categorization. For the Portuguese language, that database is not as large as the English one. The categorization is therefore less accurate.

For our analysis, bar graphs were created considering the words as general lexical items—not dividing them in categories—and admitting the noun, verb and adjective categories. The graphs show the 10 most used words and their respective frequencies. For the word maps, the 100 most used words were selected. As previously explained, stop words were left out of all the graphs and maps generated. In short, A) we extracted the tweets; B) identified the words; C) excluded the stop words; D) placed the words in categories, if needed; E) counted the number of times a word was used; and F) generated the charts and the word maps.

Evidently, however, every methodology has its potential and limits, since it is based on assumptions from previous researches and depends on what one intends to demonstrate, rendering other aspects secondary. In this sense, before moving on to the analysis of the charts and maps, we present some of the limitations of this methodology, as well as indicate its potential.

1) This research is based on interdisciplinary presuppositions. It couples computational procedures with discourse analysis to produce a quantitative analysis able to process a larger scale of information than a single researcher is able to do. It will lack, however, an analysis of the context of utterance of the utilized words. Although it is hard to analyze all signifiers individually, those lexical terms that stand out in the data can be analyzed according to their context of use. After generating the data, the researcher may go in the opposite direction and try to qualitatively analyze the function of the terms at the moment they appeared (top-down and bottom-up approaches). Moreover, a recurring word does not necessarily mean that it is more important semantically in a given discourse, although the frequency can be an indicator of an ideological preference of the target audience. In an intradiscursive aspect, one may generate files with the sentences that show the contextual use of each word, while analyzing the posts that brought about more interaction. Our plan for the future is to develop lexical maps that

demonstrate the relations between words and their contexts of use, the organization of bigger propositions and their relations with the most popular posts. This will allow us to identify the words that are more central for the connection between the text and the utterance conditions. We also aim to compare the lexical/propositional uses of the semantic chain of the new right wing with both a corpus composed of opposing discourses (such as the left wing) and a corpus composed of non-political groups of texts. This will take significant research time.

2) More advances in the definition of criteria for the list of stop words are needed. Let us take, as an example, some words that were excluded from our analysis: "ñ" (a short form of the word "*não*", which means "not"), "*obrigado*" and "*abraço*". The adverb "*não*", in its abbreviated form, demonstrates at the same time informality towards the reader, the principle of the smallest effort in the written language and the denial of a subject with which one disagrees. Its frequency could also help clarify the axiological constitutions of a subjectivity marked more by the denial of something than by the affirmation. "*Obrigado*" ("thank you") and "*abraço*" ("a hug", an informal salutation, commonly used in informal Brazilian Portuguese), as signs of politeness, allow pragmatic connotations in social media that end up working, in the case of a political discourse, as a means to bring closer representatives and the people they represent. This closeness between a speaker and their audience would enhance, on the one hand, the process of persuasion and, on the other hand, would guarantee relations to be more frequent and durable, since it would act both as a kind of friendship relation (highlighting personal interests and emotions) and as an institutional representation (highlighting professionalism and political rationality). We chose to privilege the analysis of the words that are more ideologically marked, possibly allowing a future contrast with other competing political discourses.<sup>25</sup>

3) The classification of words as nouns, verbs or adjectives was automatic, utilizing Machine Learning (henceforth, ML). In technical terms, we can say that the Part-of-Speech (POS) tagging issue is a problem of supervised learning in ML, i.e. given a labeled database (with the data already categorized), we can make the algorithm better in predicting the label of similar data, since we use a database and an algorithm to enhance the machine's capabilities in categorizing words. This process may lead to some mistakes, which can be reduced by adjusting the list of stop words and improving the classification of data in other Python libraries. There is, for example, scikit-learn, an ML library that also has a very efficient tagger for Portuguese. Another issue is that, outside of its intradiscursive (co-textual) relations, it may be difficult to identify if a lexical term works as a noun or an adjective. Despite that, we tried to simplify the

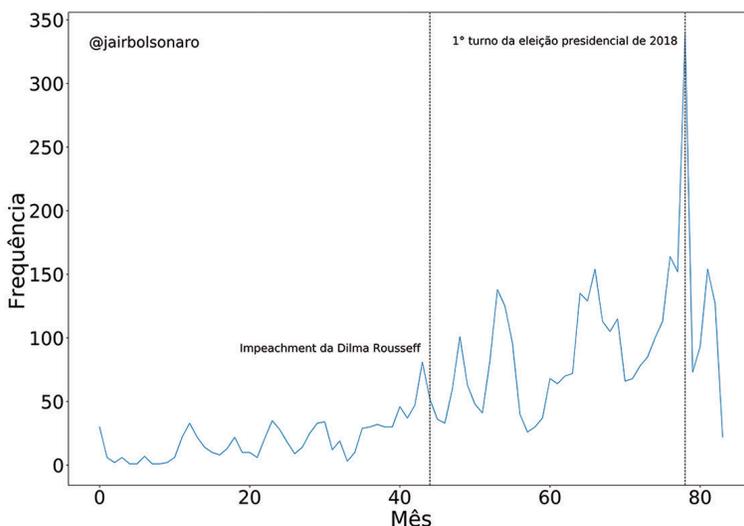
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<sup>25</sup> Maingueneau (2005) analyzes the contrast between the discursive religious formations of devout Humanism and Jansenism through quantitative analysis and lexical valence, as indicated in the first topic. We will approach this work methodology more closely in the next steps of the research.

procedure in order to present the first results, which already show significance for the analysis. Let us now move on to the data analysis.

In the graph below, we can see the evolution of the monthly tweets sent by Jair Bolsonaro throughout the analyzed period. The vertical dotted lines highlight the months of the impeachment process of President Dilma Rousseff (Workers' Party = *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, henceforth PT), conducted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives at the time, Eduardo Cunha, on December 2, 2015, and the second round of the Brazilian presidential elections, between October 7 and 29, 2018.

**Image 1 – Bolsonaro's Monthly Tweets**



**Source:** Authors' elaboration.

There was a notable growth in the activity of the profile @jairbolsonaro since the start of the impeachment process in the House of Representatives, when Bolsonaro began to stand out as the ideal representative of the far right in Brazil, an ideal point of convergence for neoliberals, conservatives, Christians, militarists and big farmers. For example, on April 17, 2016, he gained new admirers and adversaries with his favorable vote to the opening of the impeachment process, in which he paid tribute to Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra (acknowledged in multiple stances as the main torturer of the Military Dictatorship) and the Brazilian Army. He also positioned himself against a supposed attempt by the PT government to introduce a so-called “Gay Kit” in schools, denounced and opposed an alleged communist organization in Brazil—the left-wing think tank “*Foro de São Paulo*”—and took a general Conservative Christian stance in an institutional speech (MORAIS, 2019).

He ended his vote saying what would become the slogan of his presidential campaign and condensed his whole ideology: “*Brasil acima de tudo, Deus acima de todos*” (“Brazil above everything, God above all”). He thus demonstrated efficiency in personifying the image of the anti-PT sentiment, directly associated with anti-communism. During the campaign and after he was elected president, he became closer to the ideals of libertarianism and neoliberalism. The month of December 2015 was, therefore, a “watershed moment” in the projection of Jair Bolsonaro’s national image. Until then, he had been restricted to the politics of his home state of Rio de Janeiro. His activity on Twitter corroborates our hypothesis, peaking during the second round of the 2019 presidential elections. The significant drop in the number of tweets after the elections may be explained by the fact that he possibly started to engage more in replies and retweets, not considered in our analysis.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the linguistic organization of his utterances, according to Saussure (1959 [1916]), human language organizes itself in two axis: the associative one, related to thought, as it organizes itself *in absentia*, and the syntagmatic one, related to the use of language as discourse, as it organizes itself *in praesentia*. Saussure affirms that “in discourse, on the one hand, words acquire relations based on the linear nature of language because they are chained together. This rules out the possibility of uttering two elements simultaneously” (SAUSSURE, 1959 [1916], p. 142); “[...] Outside of discourse, on the other hand, words acquire relations of a different kind. Those that have something in common are associated in the memory, resulting in groups marked by diverse relations. [...] Those formed outside of discourse are not supported by linearity. Their seat is in the brain.” (SAUSSURE, 1959 [1916], p. 143)

For Pêcheux (2009), associative relations point to the interdiscourse (or transverse discourse), and syntagmatic relations indicate the intradiscourse (or articulation). Both are symbolical materiality produced in the concreteness of the historically contradictory human relations that allow the emergence of imaginary formations. In other terms, between the sign (the concreteness of language) and the imaginary (the concreteness of history), the ideological nature of language is constituted, in which the senses emerge according to the material relations they establish with social groups.

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<sup>26</sup> According to Pinto (2006, p. 105, our translation), the concepts of “dislocation” and “condensation” are fundamental to Discourse Analysis. The first one expresses the metaphor, the understanding of a term/concept as something else, and the second one, the hegemony, that is, the way how a discourse or meaning may go through a process of over-determination, overriding a group of others that cross it but are not reduced to it, giving it an ideological coherence. “Dislocations and condensations - are two very interesting ways of organizing religious, political, mystic discourses in those discourses that wish to impose or hide some kind of truth. The work of the dreams, according to Freud, is that of the dislocation of meaning. That is a metaphorical work. You dream of something, but when you analyze the symbol you dream of, it does not necessarily have something to do with the explicit dream content, that is the dislocation process. [...] In the political discourse there are numerous examples of dislocation processes, such as: the centrality of the discourse about crime to the detriment of the discourse about fighting inequality; attributing to nature catastrophes that are a result of agricultural policies; attributing a worker’s unemployment to their lack of qualification. The concept of condensation is distinct. [...] Hegemony is a strong moment of condensation. We may have a fight for democracy [in our case, a “fight against it”], for example, and this fight bring together many different groups, because the term democracy condenses many meanings [since 2013, the term corruption has taken this place]”.

Pêcheux (2009) also states that individuals become subjects (a process of over-determination) by their language actions (speeches, gestures, images etc.). He affirms there is no subject without ideology, as there is no ideology without subject. When we speak, we do it from a specific standpoint, i.e. the articulation of what a given subject utters has the utterance conditions that make it possible to take it into consideration, given that the chaining of the discourse refers to the symbolical aspect (language), which is organized itself from what is pre-constructed and signified by the imaginary (historical/ideological) construction of human knowledge.<sup>27 28</sup>

In Discourse Analysis, discursive formations (historical and institutional rules that govern utterances) allow/authorize speeches, in a sense that a non-subjected instance (“a speech in a given language”) institutes itself in the subject (“the one who says it”). That means the subjectivity has to be understood in the immanency of non-linear causal relations in the language, without a strictly logical concatenation, because it is not determined biologically or mathematically (PÊCHEUX, 2009).

For Orlandi (2013), a discursive analysis assumes, necessarily, the passage from the discursive surface (text/discourse) to the discursive object (discursive formation) and from that to the discursive process (ideological formation), allowing us to understand how the symbolical aspect is capable of producing meaning. Scientific utterances are also an interpretation effort. Both the construction of the corpus and the analytical process represent the researcher’s rigorous theoretical exercise, which must include a “constant relation between theory, corpus consultation and analysis”<sup>29</sup> (ORLANDI, 2013, p.67, our translation); i.e. a continuous process of description-interpretation of the discursive object analyzed and how it works in society.

In this study, tweets are the textual materiality through which we can describe the characteristics of the discursive formation in/by which Jair Bolsonaro speaks and how they influence the ideological formations of other groups in the Brazilian society. Piovezani (2015, p. 291) argues that “politics does not stop with a speech act, but starts with it. If what is said reflects them in a privileged way, it most fundamentally generates the different human consensus and conflicts.”<sup>30</sup> He adds, “a distinctive feature of the political discourse is its condition of a public speech whose more or less

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<sup>27</sup> According to Pêcheux (2009, p.151, author’s italics, our translation): “We will thus affirm that the ‘pre-constructed’ corresponds to the “always there” of the ideological interpellation, which forces on us the ‘reality’ and ‘its meaning’ under the form of universality (‘the material world’), while the ‘articulation’ constitutes the *subject in its relation to the meaning*, in a sense that it represents, in the interdiscourse, that which *determines the domination of form-subject*”.

<sup>28</sup> According to Pêcheux (2009, p. 146-147, author’s italics, our translation): “*words, expressions, propositions etc... change their meaning according to the ideological positions maintained by those who use them*, which means that they acquire their meaning in reference to these positions, that is, in reference to their *ideological formations* [...] in which these positions take part. We call, then, *discursive formations* something that, in a given ideological formation, that is, coming from a given position in a given conjuncture, determined by the state of the class struggle, *dictates what can and has to be said* (articulated under the form of a harangue, a sermon, a pamphlet, an exposition, a program etc.) [that is, articulated under the form of a discursive genre, we may add]”.

<sup>29</sup> Original: “*um ir-e-vir constante entre teoria, consulta ao corpus e análise*” (ORLANDI, 2013, p. 67).

<sup>30</sup> Original: “*a política não se encerra na fala, mas começa por ela. Se o dizer os reflete de modo privilegiado, ele mais fundamentalmente engendra os diversos consensos e conflitos humanos*” (PIOVEZANI, 2015, p. 291).

manifest purpose is to maintain or obtain ideological support” (PIOVEZANI, 2015, p. 291, our translation)<sup>31</sup>.

Taking that as an assumption, the researcher performs an archaeological analysis of public speeches in Brazilian politics, highlighting the relation between rhetoric, eloquence and mass communication media such as mass rallies, radio and television. This demonstrates how the “distant presence” of the politician on a stage becomes the “close distance” allowed by the popularization of television. If, with the radio, the voice started being propagated without a body, with the television, the body is turned primarily into a face (PIOVEZANI, 2015).

Our analysis of the role of Twitter in public discourse allows us to describe the characteristics of the Brazilian political discourse in the digital media era, what has changed in it and what has not. Such characteristics are: (i) a growing personification of politics, with a growing sensation of being close to the leader, the prominence of the *ethos* above the *logos* in the current political thought and a continuous dissociation of the difference between public and private positions; (ii) the radical replacement of the classical argumentative organization of politics, more formal in nature, for the articulation of speech based on common sense, diminishing the importance of eloquence to persuade voters (As Piovezani (2015) described) and segregating social groups under their followers’ way of thinking. At some points, there is a tendency to support only what appeals to one’s primary feelings and reject an attempt to question or debate ideas.

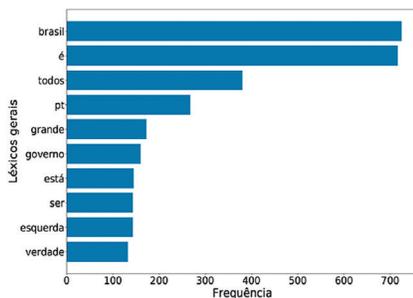
Furthermore, our methodological procedure helps us to literally create an image of an associative, paradigmatic or interdiscursive field, more than that of a syntagmatic or intradiscursive one. If the latter is generally the starting point of a qualitative analysis, the first, as a more abstract theoretical construction, is more difficult to visualize. Thus, it is as though we could, through a computational analysis, create some sort of “photography” of the discursive memory of the investigated political group. Shared as words, it acquires logic by its articulation and circulation on social networks (digital or not). With this vocabulary and its imaginary relations, therefore, subjects may recognize themselves and communicate, affirming themselves in virtual spaces, as in the case of our research.

We will now analyze the graphs and word maps in images 2, 3, 4, and 5, showing the ten most utilized general lexical items, nouns, verbs and adjectives by Jair Bolsonaro in his tweets, as well as their respective frequencies. Along with each graph we show its correspondent word map, made from the 100 lexical items—general, nouns, verbs and adjectives—most utilized in those messages. The size of the words is proportional to their frequency.

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<sup>31</sup> Original: “*uma marca característica do discurso político é sua condição de fala pública cujo propósito mais ou menos manifesto consiste em manter ou em adquirir adesão ideológica*” (PIOVEZANI, 2015, p. 291).

Image 2 – Word frequency



Word map 1 – Lexical items



Source: Authors' elaboration.

Among the ten most frequently used lexical items are the nouns “Brasil” (“Brazil”), as the most used; “*todos*” (“all”, or “everyone”) in third, “PT” in fourth; and “*Governo*” (“government”) in the sixth position; among the adjectives, “*grande*” (“big”) is the fifth most used word, “*esquerda*” (“left”, in the sense of “left wing” or “leftist”) is in ninth and “*verdade*” (“true”, although the same word works as the noun “truth”) is the tenth most frequently used word. Lastly, two occurrences of the verb “*ser*”: “*é*” in second and “*ser*” in eighth; and one of the verb “*estar*” in seventh place (both verbs and their conjugations in English may be translated as the verb “to be” and its conjugations).

Considering the nouns, it is interesting to note how the lexical item “Brasil” is predominant over all the others, probably because of its association to the militarist and nationalist discourse and the attempt to appear above partisan politics and in favor of a national unity, a hypothesis reinforced by the third most frequent signifier, “*todos*”, conveying a message of national union and common interest. However, the political discourse is strongly institutional, meaning that there are many lexical items and expressions that tend to be present in all discourses, no matter their ideology. “*Brasil, um país de todos*” (“Brazil, a country for all”) was, for example, the slogan of the first Lula Government (2002 to 2010), from PT. The ideological mark when it comes to words such as “*Brasil*” and “*todos*”, therefore, may be better assessed when one contrasts Bolsonaro’s discourse with other discourses, such as the left-wing political discourse. *A priori*, we have as a hypothesis that these words will be predominant in discourses of the new right wing<sup>32</sup>.

The other lexical items we are interested in analyzing are “PT”, “*grande*”, “*esquerda*”, and “*verdade*”. The signifiers “PT” and “left wing” demonstrate their relevance for being the names of the opposition and political enemies, groups the far

<sup>32</sup> As previously indicated, the analysis of isolated lexical items makes the understanding of their grammatical functions difficult. To circumvent this immediate problem for this analysis, we considered that “*todos*” may take the position of noun, indefinite pronoun or the pronominal phrase “*de todos*” (as in Jair Bolsonaro’s presidential campaign slogan “*Brasil acima de tudo, Deus acima de todos*”). Something similar occurs with the lexical item “*verdade*”, which may be both a noun or an adjective.

right needs to justify its legitimacy and the authority of its ideas, in a perennial fight with its antagonists, inciting hate and fear. There is a tendency in these groups to use the metonymical analogy “from the part to the whole” between those signs to delegitimize the whole left-wing political spectrum based on attacks to one specific party/group found there. Curiously, the term “*direita*” (“right wing”) does not appear on this list, being, hypothetically, “dislocated” in an implicit way as the nationalist discourse uses lexical items such as “Brasil” and “*todos*”, trying to cast itself as neutral (of national unity) and to hide its ideological aspects (its individual or group interests), always attributed to the “other”. “*Grande*” may be associated both to a nationalistic view, highlighting the grandiosity (political, economic, and moral) of the hegemonic groups in the country and to the characteristic of exaggerating the negative aspects of the adversaries.

The term “*verdade*” has ever more featured in the Brazilian public debate, either due to the attempts of constituting “new truths” via the historical revisionism of the narrative about the Military Dictatorship and other authoritarian/conservative movements, or as an attempt to deconstruct and refute the “other’s truth”, a relativization that denounces the other/opposition/enemy as an agent that tries to impose their particular truth as the whole truth (“indoctrination”). These phenomena are, fundamentally, the mechanism by which a “post-truth regime” has been put in place in the organization of political life in Brazil; i.e. on the one hand, there is an attempt to “reveal the truth” in itself, hidden by the groups that had taken the power, dominated the country and are responsible for the persecution of “law-abiding citizens” (rich/middle class, whites, heterosexuals, from the far right), the semantic pillar of the “normality” in the discursive formation of the present-day Brazilian far right; on the other hand, there is also an attempt to destroy “established facts” and “objective truths” associated with the political expression of the interests of ideological groups seeking to control the country, who are, therefore, the true oppressors and dominating transgressors. In this process, there is the mass spread of fake news.

Commonly, the ideological neutrality of extremist groups is based on concepts with alleged ahistorical/metaphysical content such as “God”, “nature”, “nation”, “tradition”, and “moral”. Groups not aligned with these ideas are accused of trying to impose a cultural domination against the “order”, a transdiscursive concept that crosses the political, religious, economic and militarist discourses (MORAIS, 2018). In summary, there would be the truth in itself (of union and peace) and the political truth, of ideologies, fragmentation and conflict. Let us now move on to the analysis of the nouns.





In this image, we are able to notice how this grammatical class is privileged for an analysis of the lexical fields if we use the idea of semantic chains (MORAIS, 2018, 2019). The reader is able to observe almost automatically the possible meaning of each signifier. Pêcheux (2009) explains this by using the relation between literal and natural meaning, associating the evidence/obviousness as an ideological force over the symbolic in a given society. Moreover, the fact that adjectives attribute qualification gives them an intrinsic axiological characteristic. In image 2, the lexical items “*grande*” and “*esquerda*” appear, respectively, in the fifth and ninth position; in Figure 5, they are in the first and fourth positions. “*Boa*” and “*bom*” (both meaning “good”) are clearly two markers of moral quality, presenting themselves implicitly in the metaphor that defines the typical supporter of the new right wing: the “law-abiding citizen”.

Both “*brasileiros*” (“Brazilians”) and “*brasileiro*” (“Brazilian”), when used as adjectives (they may also be nouns), may implicitly become qualifiers of what belongs to “*brasileiros*” (“Brazilian people”), due to their metaphorical association to the idea of “nation”—found, for example, in the signifier “*nacional*” (“national”). These terms indicate an idea of majority and hegemony, linking it to an idea of “people”. The lexical item “*federal*” (same meaning in English) is related, primarily to state “bureaucracy” and its “institutions”, as it is the case of “Federal Police”, an institution that took an active role in the current state of affairs. The chain association of the adjectives “*grande*” → “*boa*” → “*forte*” → “*militar*” → “*bom*” → “*nacional*” → “*brasileiro(s)*” would form a semantic chain affirmed in this discursive formation, while “federal” may be both associated positively to a “government” or “institution” or as a denunciation of the “left wing” in power or in prison, either as a noun or as an adjective.

We complete our analysis indicating once more that the methodological and interpretative path here is just the beginning, and that the experiment throughout these texts show the potential of quantitative analysis regarding the political discourse of the new Brazilian right wing. In regard to the conclusions we reached in this study, our next steps are: creating a better filtering process for stop words and data processing, reducing the ambiguity of lexical items in relation to their grammatical classes; building a corpus with the theme of intolerance in Brazil, so our data can be more precise and expressive and we can better understand the intertextual and interdiscursive interrelations; elaborating more complex graphs that can identify the multidimensional relations of the lexical items through the distribution of the connections (valence) they establish; developing a data processing model to consider expressions, phrases and bigger propositions, so we can try to assess the functioning of the other analytical categories such as metaphors, metonyms, nominalizations and slogans; assessing ways to produce comparative analyses of the uses of these lexical items and expressions in other political groups, such as the left wing or even in intolerant discourses of other cultures, demanding a methodology of language translations and adaptation of the analytical categories. With this data, we aim to produce deeper, ever more relevant qualitative and quantitative analyses throughout the years.

## Final considerations

This work aimed to develop a qualitative analysis of the most frequently used nouns, verbs, and adjectives in 4,523 tweets president Jair Bolsonaro posted on his Twitter profile from March 31, 2010 to March 7, 2019. The data analyzed was better understood using what Saussure (1959 [1916]) calls associative relations and what Pêcheux (2009) calls interdiscourse. While those data point clearly to the lexical and semantic fields of the political discourse of the new Brazilian right wing, the absence of phrasal structures and co-textual demarcations presented some problems to the analysis. Nevertheless, we understand that these theoretical and methodological aspects demonstrate potential for developing research in the linguistic-discursive field in different perspectives.

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MORAIS, A.; OLIVEIRA, E.; MORAIS, P. Análise quantitativa de substantivos, verbos e adjetivos do discurso político da nova direita brasileira a partir de textos coletados no Twitter. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.65, 2021.

- *RESUMO: no presente trabalho, temos por intuito realizar uma análise quantitativa dos substantivos, verbos e adjetivos mais utilizados em 4 mil 523 tweets postados pelo presidente Jair Bolsonaro em seu perfil na rede social Twitter entre 31 de março de 2010, momento em que inicia o seu perfil, e 07 de março de 2019. Como foco, avaliamos a frequência de uso desses itens lexicais e fizemos uma análise linguístico-discursiva da cadeia lexical dessa formação discursiva, nos termos de Pêcheux (2009). Para tanto, organizamos o texto do seguinte modo: na primeira seção, definimos o conceito de nova direita ou extrema-direita brasileira na atualidade; na segunda, através de pesquisas estatísticas, expomos as principais características da sociedade brasileira que podem estar associadas a esse campo político; e, por fim, terceiro, apresentamos os nossos pressupostos teórico-metodológicos de coleta de dados e realizamos as análises.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: análise quantitativa; nova direita brasileira; textos. Twitter.*

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