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'How does the other half tweet?': Analyzing the construction of 'Otherness' during the 2022 Brazilian Presidential Campaign

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Introduction

To understand how discourse enables and legitimizes exclusion, it is important to understand how it operates through otherness. This has become increasingly important in recent years, as populism, and particularly, far-right populism, is on the rise (Greven, 2016; Scott, 2019). Looking at Brazilian politics, particularly the 2022 election, can shed some light on how populism is mobilized in political discourse. This was an extremely polarized election (Tarouco, 2023), which consolidated profound changes in the political scenario in the country.

In this presidential election, the incumbent Jair Bolsonaro (Liberal Party - PL) faced the former president Lula da Silva (Workers' Party - PT) in a tight dispute which Lula won by a difference of less than 2% of the votes. The election happened in two rounds, one on

October 3rd of 2022 and the second, on October 30th of 2022. Lula da Silva won both rounds.

Bolsonaro represented a lot of the far-right populism (Guimarães, 2021), often through a "macho" image where masculinity and violence were praised (Cioccari, 2018). He was also associated with frequent threats to democracy and to Brazilian institutions, scientific negationism, conservative views on human rights and so on. Lula da Silva, although a traditional representative from the left in the country, ran with the support of a "Coalition for Democracy", which comprised several parties from the left, the center and the moderate right-wing. It was an union against Bolsonaro and his administration.

Bolsonaro's administration was marked by many controversies, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, as they used disinformation about the disease, the virus and the vaccines to fight a political crisis in 2020 (Soares et al., 2021). Bolsonaro himself defended unproved drugs for Covid-19 to criticize preventative measures such as lockdowns and social distancing (Casarões & Magalhães, 2021), and his anti-vaccine discourse resulted in vaccine hesitancy in the country (Gramacho & Turgeon, 2021). These actions had an impact also in his campaign, as Brazil became one of the countries with the highest death rate from Covid in the world.

Bolsonaro's administration frequently attacked the electoral process in the country (Ruediger, 2022), claiming that the electronic ballot box was prone to fraud, and that there was a conspiracy from the left-wing and the democratic institutions. In July of 2022, just weeks before the official beginning of the presidential campaign, Bolsonaro made a public speech to the ambassadors of several countries accusing the Electoral Supreme Court and claiming the election would be corrupted.

One of the favorite spaces for Bolsonaro and his supporters to share their claims was social media platforms. In fact, since Bolsonaro's 2018 campaign to presidency successfully happened mostly online, these platforms became one of the key spaces for the discursive disputes (Maia; Spaniol & Klein, 2022; Piaia & Alves, 2020, Cioccari, 2018).

The role of these platforms became increasingly important during the campaign in 2022 and the Brazilian Electoral Court frequently issued orders to take out disinformation content to these campaigns. By the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023, the discussion about platform legislation grew in the country, as these tools became key for the Bolsonaroists to organize protest after the election results by blocking roads and threatening attacks and, finally, to attempt a coup with the invasion of the Praça dos Três Poderes, in January of 2023.

In this context, we want to explore and compare if and how both candidates used social media platforms during the second round of the election to create otherization and to build populists discourses. Therefore, we aim to understand (1) the similarities and differences of how each campaign mobilized and legitimized the idea of 'Otherness' as part of their political discourse; (2) how the construction of this 'Other' was used to reinforce the polarized environment; and (3) how it is connected to populism in this context.

To do so, we created a dataset with all tweets published by the official accounts of both candidates using Social Feed Manager (Prom, 2011). We collected 391 tweets from @jairbolsonaro's account and 1014 tweets from @lulaoficial's account during the second round of the campaign. We focused on the second round, as it was the final one and concentrated the dispute among the two candidates.

In the next sections, we provide an overview of how concepts related to polarization, populism, and otherness are relevant for our specific case study, describe the methods used for data collection and analysis, report the findings of our analysis, and discuss our results.

Polarization

The political context in Brazil has been following a highly polarized structure in the last few years (Santos Junior, 2023), especially when we look at conversations on social media during elections (Recuero et al., 2020; Soares & Recuero, 2021). This is similar to

what has been seen in other countries around the world, such as the United States (Benkler et al., 2018; Young et al., 2022), Canada (Gruzd & Roy, 2014), Australia (Graham et al., 2021), and many others (Tornberg, 2018).

Polarization on social media has been linked to coordinated actions to spread partisan and misleading content (Gruzd et al., 2022; Giglietto et al. 2020), increased toxicity and antisocial behavior (Vogels, 2021), and overall spread of misinformation (Recuero et al., 2020; Young et al., 2022). Polarization can also negatively influence how individuals perceive important public discussions, as previous studies have identified in discussions about the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Calvillo et al., 2020; Stecula & Pickup, 2021) and climate emergency (Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018).

Much of the misperceptions caused by political polarization are due to how partisans interact with in- and out-group individuals, as the polarized political structure can lead to increased affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019). Affective polarization particularly refers to the animosity between individuals from opposite partisan sides. This type of partisan hostility affects how individuals perceive those in the other side of the ideological divide beyond the political sphere (Iyengar et al., 2019), lead to misperceptions about various topics to hold their positive in-group reasoning (Druckman et al., 2021), and undermine support for democratic norms in contexts where they end up being politicized (Kingzette et al., 2021).

Affective polarization is particularly relevant for this study as it tends to reinforce the differences between in- and out-groups. This makes partisans more likely to see the world, particularly political discussions, in a divisive structure between us and them. This type of structure favors populist discourse and the construction of otherness through it, as we discuss in the following sections.

Populism

Populism is a complex concept, within several theories in political science. What most of these theories have in common is the image of a "strong leader (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). In this work, we will focus on Mudde & Kaltwasser's (2017) concept, which states that populism is "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people". This concept is interesting as it focuses on populism as a malleable concept, which can be associated with other ideologies. At the same time, Mudde's (2004) ideas about populism allows us to connect populist articulations to otherness. His concept is defined based on the discursive articulation between "us" (the pure people) and them (the corrupt elites) which is, mostly, the key element of otherness. Populism, to these authors, is based also on polarization, as it frequently uses discursive dichotomies and exclusion as operations to build their ideologies. So, for example, populism can appear within both right wing and left wing ideologies.

Mudde (2004) makes a distinction that is important for this study. He explains that there are two forms of populism, one that he calls "thin-centered" and the other, "thick-centered" populism. While both are characterized by the division of society in two groups, the "pure" people and the "corrupt" people (elites), thick centered populism incorporates a strong ideological agenda based on nationalism and otherness. Thick-centered populism, thus, is more radical. Mudde argues that it is also the most dangerous form, as it may lead to authoritarian governments and the oppression of minorities.

Wodak's work (2011; 2019; 2015) focuses on how populist movements use discursive strategies to build their narratives. To the author, populism is also a way to use language and to construct meaning and legitimation to power relations. In her work, she found different discourses connected to populism, mostly the use of simplified language, appeals to emotion, nationalism (particularly connected to the binarism of the "true people" versus the "others"). Like Mudde's, her work also brings the connections to discourse and "otherization" as key to populism around the world. More than that,

Wodak's work (2015) also connects right-wing populism with nationalism, exclusion and patriarchy as key values and the articulation of "the other" through narratives of fear.

These works show some important points as they understand otherness as a strategy of populism to build social cohesiveness in their platforms. As populism is a concept often connected to polarized political contexts (Roberts, 2022), it is an important discursive context to understand the Brazilian campaigns.

Otherness

"Otherness" is a concept that refers to the discursive process where a dominant group creates another stigmatized group ("the others"), using the proposed "difference" (between us and them) to justify discrimination and, sometimes, violence (Staszak, 2008). These groups are qualified through the process where good values are associated with the "us" group, whereas "the others" are the cause/producers of negative values. In this process, the "us" category is also constructed, in opposition to "they" or "the others". Otherization, thus, is a process of constructing and representing the "other" in negative or inferior terms to justify discrimination, exclusion, or even hostility towards them. It can take various forms and is often utilized to maintain social hierarchies, power imbalances, and stereotypes. The "other" in this process is someone to whom negative characteristics are attributed by discourse (Yetkiner, 2021). Language, in these cases, is used to create and reinforce divisions between social groups, as it produces and legitimizes the social identities and the power associated with them (Wodak, 1995).

Wodak's (2011; 2019; 2015) work focuses on otherness from the point of view of the construction of social identities, as discourse plays an important role in defining and categorizing different groups and how they are labeled and perceived by others in a certain society. These discursive strategies are important ways to establish and reinforce power relations and social hierarchies. One of these strategies is, thus, otherization. Through otherization, dominant groups construct and impose negative stereotypes and narratives of marginalized groups, which are legitimated and perpetuated by the same

discourse. Wodak (2011, 2015) also explains how otherization is a common feature of populist's discourses and, particularly, the far-right, often, together with nationalism and racism and how it is directed to create exclusion through fear.

On political discourse, several studies investigate the strategies used to construct otherness. Sakki & Peterson (2015) for instance, studied the nordic populist radical right discourse on blogs and found out three main forms of otherization on immigration issues: representations of a deviant group of people, of a threatening ideology and of inner enemies. The far-right has been linked to different strategies to legitimate otherization, particularly, through exclusion and fear (Wodak, 2019, 2015). Finally, othering has also been linked, as a strategy, to political polarization (Keyvanfar & Shayegh, 2022; Creutz-Kömpfi, 2008).

In a highly polarized election, much of the discourse produced during the campaigns aimed to reinforce a division between us and them (the Other). Therefore, it is key to understand how these strategies that create "the other" are shared and legitimated on social media platforms, particularly, during political campaigns.

Methods

In this chapter, we focus on how the Brazilian presidential campaigns of 2022 built otherness in their social media discourse. The proposed case study is based on Twitter, as it was largely used as a public space for political campaigns in the country. Our work is focused on three objectives: (1) the similarities and differences of how each campaign mobilized and legitimized the idea of 'Otherness' as part of their political discourse; (2) how the construction of this 'Other' was used to reinforce the polarized environment; and (3) how it is connected to populism in this context.

Data Collection

To better understand these issues, we collected all tweets published by the two major candidates, Jair Bolsonaro and Lula da Silva during the second round of the campaign (from October 4th to October 31st, 2022). During this period, both candidates were

running against each other. We collected 1257 tweets from the official accounts of the candidates. We then read each tweet and looked for the messaged that contained otherization. Table 1 summarizes the data.

Table 1: Summary of the data

	Total number of tweets	Tweets with otherization	Percentage
Bolsonaro	246	76	30.8%
Lula	1011	234	23.1%

Through Critical Discourse Analysis lenses, we further examined how these tweets constructed the idea of the "other" and through what types of discursive strategies. Critical discourse analysis is a framework that studies "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 2001). To CDA, it is important to understand that social practices are a product of discourse (Fairclough, 1989) and it is key to understand how discourse shapes these practices and effects, as language, context, and linguistics structures are understood as instruments of power. In this context, otherness is a discursive strategy to create and legitimate oppression and violence.

Fairclough (1989; 1995) also proposes a model for CDA. In his proposal, the analysis is based on a three step process, which is textual analysis, the interaction analysis, which is based on the text's production/consumption and distribution, and the social context analysis, which is the contextual/effects analysis.

Based on this process, we look into our dataset for the strategies used to create otherness in the tweets. We first read and categorize the texts, asking ourselves: "Is there otherness in this text?" and further "Who is 'the other' in this text?". We further move to the discussion of how much of these texts make the same connections in discourse to create otherness. We then categorize these strategies. Finally, we also ask what are the

contextual clues in these tweets, that help us understand how these otherness strategies are crossed by other discursive contexts, which may point to populist views.

Strategies of otherization from Bolsonaro's Campaign

As Table 1 presents, Bolsonaro's tweets often used otherness as a strategy, with roughly a third of his tweets including it. But who is the "other" in these tweets? Mostly, the other is constructed as the category "adversaries". This is important because the "adversaries" as a general category, including everyone who was not explicitly supporting Bolsonaro. Thus, while othering Lula da Silva and "the left" is a process that appears in a few tweets from Bolsonaro's campaign, the majority of othering tweets talk simply about "adversaries" or make it implicit that "others" are the ones who are not supporting them. This operation validates not only Lula's "Coalition" and his supporters as the Other, but also, everyone who didn't explicitly support Bolsonaro. Therefore, while not all of Lula's supporters were actually from left-wing parties, to Bolsonaro's campaign, everyone who wasn't with Bolsonarom was a "leftist". We found 73 tweets (96% of Bolsonaro's tweets that included otherization) that focused on adversaries associated with the left as the "other". There were also otherization of the media, the scientists/specialists, and the polls institutes (one tweet each), which were indirectly associated with the left.

Examining the tweets from Bolsonaro's campaign to understand the discursive operations through which othering was created, we found five major strategies. We will further explore these categories and their presence on these discourses.

a) Association with violence and crime - Many tweets from his campaign connected his adversaries to crimes, violence and corruption. Out of the tweets with otherization, 39.4% (30 tweets) used this strategy as a form of describing Bolsonaro's adversaries, the leftists and Lula. In fact, Lula himself was strongly associated with corruption and crime in Bolsonaro's discourse. The following text exemplifies these associations.

"In Lula's administration, organized crime grew and strengthened tremendously. The legalization of drugs, which destroy families and lead parents to bury their children, is only

a matter of time. In Bolsonaro's administration, there has been a record number of drug seizures and significant setbacks for trafficking."

In the text, Lula's administration is portrayed as implicitly supporting crime, in opposition to Bolsonaro's. There is a moral evaluation of the adversaries connecting them not only to the growth of crime, but also, to the death of children. Adversaries, thus, by supporting Lula, support the destruction of the "good" society.

b) Moral Panic - In Bolsonaro's tweets, the left was also clearly associated with the destruction of the "important values" of society, such as religion, family and morality. In this case, the moral values were strongly associated with the conservative values. We identified 20 tweets that used this strategy (26.3%). One example from the corpus is the following tweets.

"What's at stake are clearly opposed and well-defined paths. On one side, socialism, abortion rights, the victimization of criminals, drug legalization, the relativization of crime, the demonization of police, systemic corruption, and the destruction of the family."

In this case, there is an articulation between politics and moral values. Bolsonaro's campaign created the opposition between "us" and "them", but also connected the others (adversaries) to the degradation of society and the destruction of values.

c) Disinformation and lies - Another category found in the data were tweets claiming that content shared by Lula's campaign and his supporters were disinformation and lies. In total, 11 of Bolsonaro's tweets were included in this category (14.4%).

"The left claims to take pride in their ideals, but hides them during election years. They know that if they spoke the truth about their beliefs, they would never be accepted, so they lie without remorse. They could be honest and let the people decide, but greed and ambition take precedence."

In this example, the "othering" is created through the opposition between "truth" and "lies" as "others" are connected to the immorality of "lying without remorse". Again, we see a strong connection to values and morality.

d) Incompetency/Inability to lead - Another strategy observed in Bolsonaro's tweets was to establish that the left and Lula da Silva were incompetent. In this case, they were criticized based on the claim that Bolsonaro's government was superior to Lula's and other leftists . We found seven tweets in this category (9.2%).

"Last 2 years of the PT's government (2015/2016): 2.87 million jobs lost . 2015: -1.55 million jobs . 2016: -1.32 million jobs"

The example shows how othering is created through portraying the "others" as either incompetent (in the case of Lula's administration) or supporters of this incompetency (in case of Lula's supporters or adversaries), through data and compared to Bolsonaro's administration. In this case, there is a rationale applied to the othering.

e) Enemies of democracy - Finally, using this strategy, Bolsonaro portrayed his adversaries as supporters of dictatorships (and associated dictatorships with the left), and authoritarianism. We found five tweets in this category (6.5%).

"Stay alert! One of the main and most challenging objectives was achieved yesterday. We already have what is necessary to free Brazil from authoritarianism, blackmail, and the injustice that so deeply infuriates us. The most profound change in the country has already begun! It's not the people who should fear."

In this example, othering is created through the call for attention, because "others" are planning to bring authoritarianism, corruption and injustice back to the country. In this case, authoritarianism makes a direct reference to dictatorships and the call "stay alert" to the frequent insinuations about fraud that Bolsonaro's campaign made, asking supporters to send their own "registers" of this fraud. The discourse about "the people"

as "us" also points to the idea that the elites are corrupt. This tweet was published immediately after the end of the first round.

Transversal discourses

To better understand how these strategies of "othering" occurred, we also categorized the contextual discursive marks that allow the interpretation of these texts. We called them "transversal discourses" to point out that they create the effects and conditions to interpret the othering strategies we found. These discourses are used to reinforce strategies of otherization and they end up influencing the perception of both Bolsonaro's discourse and who are the others.

a) Nationalism - Bolsonaro's campaign often made remarks to patriotism, the love for the country, the flag and the "national values", Bolsonaro often tweets with the image of the Brazilian flag or its colors. These references often placed these tweets as patriotic and focused on the country.

"Everyone is free to choose what path the country will follow, knowing that the consequences of each are clear. That being said, I am confident that crime will not regain control over our Brazil, because we have Brazil above all and GOD ABOVE ALL!"

In this example, we see how the text makes nationalist references, claiming "the people" are the ones who value the country and consider "Brazil above all". At the same time, "the others" are the ones who don't and are also connected to crime. In this case, we see the connection to crime strategy over the nationalist context built by Bolsonaro's campaign. It also makes a religious connection to values and morals to "us", the "good" people, Bolsonaro's followers, as they also consider "God" should be above "all".

b) Militarism - Bolsonaro's tweets also often brought up the army in a "good light", claiming they were the only ones able to "save the democracy" in the country. It was also common to suggest that the Brazilian dictatorship never existed and that Brazil went through a "good" militar government.

"I make my own the wise and strong words of Lieutenant Silvia Waiãpi, the first indigenous person to become an officer in our glorious Brazilian army, elected Federal Deputy. As far as we are concerned, we will give our lives to protect our people and our sovereignty. BRAZIL ABOVE ALL!"

The exemple shows how othering also bring the "good" people discourse, the "us" to a position of support of militarism. In this case the "good" people are also the army, who are willing to sacrifice in the name of the country. These are the "virtuous" people, who protect others and protect sovereignty. Consequently, the adversaries don't follow this good example, because they are not "us". This strategy is connected to moral panic and the exaltation of the "virtuous" people.

c) Religion and Morals - Finally, Bolsonaro's campaign frequently made references to God and to religion, as part of "the good" values. Religious discourse is always key to to produce connection with the audience, and it is transversal to several tweets.

"'Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness...' Ephesus 6:11-12 - GOD BLESS OUR BELOVED BRAZIL! BR"

Again, in this example, we see both militarism and religion as a context for othering. As previously discussed, in this example moral panic is the discursive strategy used for othering, as adversaries are seen as the ones who are connected to "the devil" and will bring "darkness". This context was frequently used to validate Bolsonaro's campaign claims about how they represented the "virtuous" people through religion and morals, even though Bolsonaro himself didn't have a strong connection to religion.

These transversal discourses are important because they set the context where otherization happens. Others are not only the ones who don't share the "good values",

such as patriotism and love for the country. Thus, they are a threat to democracy - as Bolsonaro often claimed, an idea that was used to construct the fear from Lula and his supporters similar to what Wodak observed in other contexts (2019, 2015). The victory of the adversaries was framed as the victory of the corruption of the institutions, the end of morality and good values and the destruction of the country. As the adversaries were built as "the left", which included everyone who wasn't supporting Bolsonaro, the idea of a "communist conspiracy" was also present.

These strategies and characteristics were key to the framing of Lula's victory as illegitimate, frauded and corrupted and thus, that it was grave enough that justified Bolsonaro's supporters to rebel, block roads and use violence to protest and claim for a military coup (as a military "intervention") to save the country.

Strategies of otherization from Lula's Campaign

The percentage of tweets with otherization strategy on Lula's campaign was lower than Bolsonaro's. While Lula had many more tweets published during the analyzed period, only 23.1% of them had some type of discursive construct of "other". These 234 tweets mostly talked about the other as Bolsonaro (160 - 68.4%) and Bolsonaro's supporters (65 - 27.8%). In this case, the words "Bolsonaro" or "Bolsonaro's supporters" were explicitly used, contrary to Bolsonaro's campaign, in which "the enemy" was often implicit. Only 12 tweets (5.1%) spoke more generally about "adversaries" or criminals as "the others". Lula's campaign, thus, focused their discourse in creating a strong separation between him and his supporters and Bolsonaro and Bolsonaro's supporters.

a) Disinformation and lies - The most used otherization strategy in Lula's tweets was the association of Bolsonaro's campaign with disinformation and lies. While Bolsonaro's campaign also claimed that Lula's supporters were spreading lies, this strategy was much more prevalent in Lula's messages. One of the main traits of Lula's discourse was to fact-check Bolsonaro's declarations and associate his campaign with disinformation and lies. There were 92 tweets relying on this strategy (39.3%).

"The "Auxílio Brasil" ends on December 31. For it to continue, Bolsonaro would have had to include it in the LDO (Law of Budget Guidelines). He didn't do it. Another lie from a citizen who lies 8 times a day. We will bring back the Bolsa Família with R\$ 600 per family and R\$ 150 per child."

In this tweet, Bolsonaro is explicitly called a liar, with a rational explanation. In this case, the strategy is used to othering Bolsonaro explicitly and his supporters, as supporters of lies, implicitly.

b) Association with violence and crime - This strategy was used to associate Bolsonaro and his supporters with violence. Differently from Bolsonaro, who associated Lula with corruption, Bolsonaro's followers were mostly connected to political and physical violence and often, hate. Bolsonaro was associated with the far-right and fascist governments, based on hate, as well as racism. There were 79 tweets using this strategy (33.7%).

"A government that protects families cannot be in favor of guns. Guns kill, destroy families, and make women the biggest victims of this cowardice. Let's join together with Lula to take better care of families."

This tweet makes an implicit connection and criticism to Bolsonaro's government, as Bolsonaro frequently spoke for less gun control and the "right" to have guns (Cioccarri, 2018). However, it also connects these claims to cowardice and claims that to "take care" of families (another "value" that Bolsonaro frequently defended), one needs to be pro gun control. Othering, in this case, again, is focused on Bolsonaro.

c) Incompetency/Inability to lead - Similarly to Bolsonaro's campaign, Lula's tweets also associated Bolsonaro with incompetency and inability to lead. However, Lula's campaign framed Bolsonaro and his supporters as negationists, as they refused the Covid-19 vaccine and often criticized institutions and science. This strategy was used in 56 tweets (23.9%).

"When he was trying to buy the vaccine, São Paulo and several countries around the world were already administering vaccines. He set up a crisis committee that advised him to deny COVID. He disregarded the people dying due to lack of oxygen in Manaus."

d) Enemies of democracy - Lula's campaign also associated Bolsonaro and his supporters to fascism, and to military coup and threats to democracy. This association was increased at the end of the campaign. There were 7 tweets pointing to this strategy (3%).

"Those who are going to vote, whether young or old, must know that they are choosing the future of the country. It's either the return of democracy or the beginning of a fascist government."

Similar to other examples, this excerpt of the dataset shows how this strategy was enabled by Lula's campaign. Here, Bolsonaro and his supporters are the enemies of democracy, the ones who represent a fascist government. Voting for them means voting against democracy,

Transversal discourses

Lula's campaign had fewer transversal discourses, differently from Bolsonaro. We found two major transversal points:

Union - Part of Lula's campaign tweets used the idea of an union, or a coalition against Bolsonaro and his supporters. This means that the context for these tweets strongly marked the idea of plurality of support against a common enemy, Bolsonaro and his supporters. This gives the othering process an appearance of inclusion and union. This association, however, was also based on the association of Bolsonaro and his election to a possible dictatorship and to fascism, and thus, both the strategies of association with violence and crime and enemies of democracy.

“I was received by the chancellor of Germany, the presidents of Spain and France, without being president. He is not received by anyone, only the president of Saudi Arabia, which he thinks is democratic.”

In this example, Lula highlights the solidarity he received internationally, while international leaders did not host meetings with Bolsonaro during the campaigns. By doing so, Lula's campaign argues that on top of a national coalition backing Lula, there is also international support for his campaign. Bolsonaro, on the other hand, is isolated with just a few supporters who are not in the democratic field.

Fear - To reinforce claims against Bolsonaro and portray him as a main threat to Brazilian democracy, fear was often mobilized in Lula's discourse. This was often also present when fact-checking Bolsonaro's claims, which portrayed him as a liar and unreliable, and especially in tweets that reinforced Bolsonaro's association with violence, crime and hate. In many tweets, Bolsonaro and his supporters were linked to guns, as well as various types of discursive and physical violence. Furthermore, a potential second Bolsonaro's administration was portrayed as potentially disastrous for the future of the country.

“In support of Lula, New York Times' editorial, the main newspaper in the US, declares that a second Bolsonaro's administration is a threat not just to Brazil, but to the entire planet Earth.”

In the example, an foreign newspaper claims Bolsonaro is a threat to Brazil and the world, and thus that Lula is the only option for democracy and survival. The idea that Bolsonaro is a threat was connected to his attacks on the electronic ballot, the election and democratic institutions.

Discussion: Bolsonaro and Lula's campaigns as different populisms

There are some important points to our analysis. First of all, there are similarities in how both campaigns construct "the other" and the strategies used to othering. Both Lula's and

Bolsonaro's campaigns had their adversary and their followers constructed as "others". However, while Lula's campaign focused mostly on othering Bolsonaro and his followers, Bolsonaro's campaign, on the other hand, used "othering" to construct the idea of "adversaries". For example, Among the tweets with otherization, 67% of Lula's messages mentioned Bolsonaro, while less than 25% of Bolsonaro's messages mentioned Lula and his party. Therefore, to Lula's campaign, the other was Bolsonaro. To Bolsonaro's, all adversaries were "leftists". Since "the left" embodies everything that is despicable in this discourse, he manages to create a very strong "us" versus "them" opposition.

The categories of othering found are also similar. Both candidates try to associate each other and supporters to crime and violence, for example. This was an important category, as it is based on the creation of fear of the "other", discussed by Wodak (2015). In this case, the context of militarism, presented by Bolsonaro's campaign, offers the army as the solution to these "violent others", which could justify and even provoke the support for a military coup. In Lula's case, however, the militarism is not present but the idea of "union" against Bolsonaro, which portrays Bolsonaro as a main threat to democracy.

It is only in Bolsonaro's campaign that moral panic is a relevant form of othering. This is associated with the conservative moral discourse that is connected to the far-right and particularly to Bolsonaro (Maia; Spaniol & Klein, 2022; Piaia & Alves, 2020, Cioccar, 2018). The religious context in which often this othering happened also gives strength to this form of othering. In this case, othering happened through the process of creating a stereotype of impureness and immorality to Bolsonaro's adversaries. In this case, there is also fear, but it is not fear of violence but of the degradation of the moral values of this vision of society, which is also discussed by Wodak (2015). Other categories, such as the association to disinformation and lies, and the construction of the other as an enemy to democracy were also present in both campaigns. In Lula's case, this construction is reinforced by the contextual discussion of coalition and union, where everyone is together against Bolsonaro's threats.

Bolsonaro's campaign also embodied more strongly the values of nationalism, conservative moral values and often used transversal discourses associated to otherness, such as nationalism ("the unpatriotic adversaries"), militarism ("the ones who don't recognize the value of the army") and religion ("the impure ones") to othering their adversaries. Coherently with a far-right ideology, Bolsonaro's campaign often connected "the leftists" with moral decadence and the end of the "good values". These strategies are similar to the ones presented by Wodak (2011, 2015) as examples of far-right forms to frame populism and to establish the connection to "fear" of the other. Bolsonaro's campaign, in these cases, worked with fear. This fear was particularly focusing on the possibility of leftists being back in power in the country.

Bolsonaro's campaign, thus, could be more associated with what Mudde (2014) calls a "thick centered populism". Bolsonaro's campaign focused strongly on othering and on creating fear of the "other" (the "left", but also, all the adversaries who were also stereotyped as "leftists") and in a general campaign with strong traces of nationalism, conservative values and dichotomy between his followers and adversaries. The association of the transversal discourses, such as militarism, religion and conservative values and nationalism, points directly to a far-right populist discourse (Wodak, 2015; Scott, 2019), but with specific strategies used by this campaign (similarly to what Guimarães & Silva, 2021, found).

Lula's campaign, on the other hand, while also connected to othering and other populist's strategies, presented a more of a "thin centered" populism (Mudde, 2004). In this case, the campaign also used othering, mostly focusing on Bolsonaro and his supporters as associated with crime and violence, incompetence and enemies of democracy. These strategies were associated with an effort to create fear, as Bolsonaro could become a dictator and his supporters were described as violent. However, these tweets responded for much less than half of the total (around 37%).

Lula's most used strategy of othering was connecting Bolsonaro and his supporters to disinformation (39.1%). In fact, Lula's campaign was very much focused on

deconstructing and fact-checking Bolsonaro. This explains also why Bolsonaro frequently accused Lula and "the leftists" of spreading disinformation, as they tried to change focus on the criticism. The majority of Lula's othering strategies, thus, focused on discussing Bolsonaro as incompetent and his campaign as disinformation. However, as we pointed out, fear of a coup or attempt against democracy was a transversal discourse in many of Lula's tweets, thus, also a strategy of fear (Wodak, 2015).

These differences are important as they increase polarization and particularly, affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019), as they tend to reinforce animosity against those on the other side of the political divide. The hostility against the other party was often mobilized by the discourse of fear (Wodak, 2015). In Bolsonaro's discourse by claiming that having leftists back in power could lead to a communist administration, and in Lula's discourse by claiming that a second Bolsonaro's government could lead to an even weaker democracy, the threat of another military dictatorship and increased cases of violence and hate.

Finally this study suggests that Lula and Bolsonaro are both constructed as strong leaders and one is the only possible answer to the other. While part of this phenomenon is connected to the extremely polarized context of the 2022 election, this is not the only reason. Polarization is also the form through which these campaigns worked on Twitter, particularly through discursive strategies of otherness. This extremes may also be the cause of the increase of violence in the country in the aftermath of the election. Following Bolsonaro's defeat, many of his supporters protested across the country. They often engaged in violent behavior, which might have been fueled by Bolsonaro's discourse based on otherization and increased hostility against the other side during the campaigns. The unrest of Bolsonaro's supporters was motivated by the fear of another left-wing administration and claims that there was a coup from the leftists in place. While this case is specific to Brazil, the construction of otherness in discourse has the potential to fuel affective polarization in other countries and lead to similar incidents.

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