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**Brazilian Foreign Policy on Twitter:
Digital Expression of Attitudes in the early months of
Bolsonaro's administration**

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Brazilian Foreign Policy on Twitter: Digital Expression of Attitudes in the early months of Bolsonaro's administration

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ABSTRACT

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This work addresses the impact of social media interactions in Brazilian foreign policy attitudes, as these digital platforms appear to be not only open floors for spontaneous manifestations of opinion, but also important sources of information. Recent research has attested to the growing relevance of social media to the political universe, influencing electoral disputes and mobilizing citizens' approval or rejection of policies. Still, public opinion studies about Brazilian foreign policy have yet to include digital networks in this specific field. Through Twitter monitoring under a theme-oriented frame of reference, this study has verified the presence of a bulky debate about Brazil's foreign affairs in the social platform, from April to June 2019. Focusing primarily on a description of this debate and the ways in which foreign policy issues were presented, we were able to identify a significant amount of foreign policy-related interactions, as well as the expression of attitudes in original tweets and other forms of engagement. These discussions mobilized a large community of Twitter users, who often expressed their foreign policy attitudes in connection with domestic politics, and according to the side they took in a polarized political environment. The most engaging content was frequently propelled by political figures and the media, reflecting the traditional public opinion formation dynamics between elites and the uninformed public. Outsiders and Internet influencers who did not belong to the so-called foreign policy community also played an important role in driving the conversation - which suggested the emergence of a new kind of digital "elite" informing Brazilian foreign policy mass attitudes. The foreign policy attitudes expressed on Twitter during this period came across as conditioned to political ideology and domestic stances online, in a seemingly heuristic shortcut: foreign policy stances propagated by leaders on each side of the political spectrum appeared to be appropriated by their respective supporters, in consistence with the theoretical assumption that in the face of an informational disadvantage, people use cognitive shortcuts to form their opinion. Our findings raise questions about the possible effects of online discussion: they acknowledge the need to further investigate whether the digital debate might have increased the salience of foreign policy issues in the national public debate, and whether foreign policy attitudes might have been instrumentalized in a context of strong polarization of domestic politics, such as the early months of Jair Bolsonaro's administration.

Keywords: foreign policy, Twitter, social media, public opinion, policy attitudes.

RESUMO

MELLO, A. C. R., Brazilian Foreign Policy on Twitter: Digital Expression of Attitudes in the early months of Bolsonaro's administration, 2019. 118p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Relações Internacionais) – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2019.

Este trabalho aborda o impacto das interações nas mídias sociais sobre as atitudes em política externa brasileira, uma vez que essas plataformas digitais parecem não apenas abrir espaços para manifestações espontâneas de opinião, mas também firmar-se como importantes fontes de informação. Pesquisas recentes atestam a crescente relevância das mídias sociais para o universo político, influenciando disputas eleitorais e mobilizando a aprovação ou rejeição de políticas pelos cidadãos. Ainda assim, estudos de opinião pública sobre a política externa brasileira ainda precisam incluir redes digitais em seu campo específico. Por meio do monitoramento de interações no *Twitter* sob recorte temático, verificou-se a presença de um debate volumoso sobre as relações exteriores do Brasil. Concentrando-nos principalmente na descrição desse debate e nas maneiras como temas de política externa foram apresentados na plataforma digital, conseguimos identificar uma quantidade significativa de interações, bem como a clara expressão de opiniões, por meio de tweets originais ou outras formas de engajamento. Essas discussões atingiram e mobilizaram uma grande comunidade de usuários, que não raro expressaram suas atitudes de política externa em conexão com a política doméstica, de acordo com o lado que adotavam em um ambiente político polarizado. O conteúdo mais relevante era frequentemente impulsionado por figuras políticas e pela mídia, refletindo a dinâmica tradicional de formação da opinião pública entre as elites e o público desinformado. Surpreendentemente, no entanto, pessoas ‘comuns’ e influenciadores da Internet que não pertencem à chamada comunidade de política externa também tiveram um papel importante na condução da conversa - sugerindo-se, assim, o surgimento de um novo tipo de “elite” digital que informa as atitudes de massa da política externa brasileira. Nossos resultados levantam questões sobre os possíveis efeitos da discussão on-line: reconhecem a necessidade de investigar se o debate digital pode ter aumentado a relevância das questões de política externa no debate público nacional, e se as atitudes de política externa podem ter sido instrumentalizadas em um contexto de forte polarização da política doméstica, como os primeiros meses do governo Jair Bolsonaro.

Palavras-chave: política externa, Twitter, redes sociais, opinião pública, atitudes.

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INTRODUCTION - FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

On December 17, 2018, the then recently appointed Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo tweeted: “More than 100,000 followers on Twitter and 47,000 supportive ‘likes’ in the latest tweet; figures that demonstrate how interested Brazilians are in Bolsonaro’s foreign policy. This attention to international relations brings the population closer to Itamaraty - a radical novelty to be celebrated.”¹

As of February 21, 2019, this tweet had 31,493 Likes, 4,927 Retweets and more than 1,700 replies - some of which, not always so supportive. By then, the number of followers of the Foreign Minister’s official Twitter profile had amounted to over 210,000; figures went on rising to a current 371,500.² As to the profiles he follows, the discrepancy is striking: merely 36 users were accounted for in the first months of his term, rising to 79 in August 2019. Those included the President, fellow cabinet members, Olavo de Carvalho (the influential and controversial writer who came to be known as the major ideologue of Brazil’s extreme-right), and U.S. President Donald Trump.



Despite its populist strategy, the minister’s reference to a “radical novelty” resonates with a general understanding, in Brazil, about public opinion and foreign policy: the expectations of

¹ <https://twitter.com/ernestofaraujo/status/1074782025796763648>

² As of August 23, 2019.

traditional public opinion theory in the field long assumed attitudes on foreign affairs to be random, if not absent (Lippmann, 1932, Almond, 1950; Mueller, 2002). Allegedly unaffected by constituents' thoughts on the matter, foreign policy decision-making was thought, therefore, to take place within the virtually unattainable boundaries of the Foreign Relations Ministry and few other field-specific government bodies. Presumably distant from the general public and restricted to the thoughts and concerns of a well-informed and influential select elite, foreign policy was then regarded as exceptional, not withholding the democratic costs inherent to public policy. However, state-of-the-art research has shown these attitudes in Brazil to be consistent with a historical belief system - one that forges the overall aspects of the country's identity and its imagined or ideal role in the world (Almeida et. al., 2019). Furthermore, recent surveys have also shown attitudes to be pragmatic, suggesting a somewhat solid notion that foreign policy measures and stances bear consequences to the citizen's everyday life. These findings have corroborated a paradigm shift proposed by a community of Brazilian researches that advocate for a more grounded approach to foreign policy, treating it more like other public policy domains and acknowledging its susceptibility to changes in government and, ultimately, to public opinion effects on electoral prospects and incumbents' approval.

Mr. Araújo's tweet may not have considered these recent theoretical developments, but it points out to an important trend: the role of social media interactions in the diffusion of foreign policy debates among the general public. The minister's message raises the question of whether such a potentially wider reach of foreign policy discussions, along with allegedly more direct contact between public officials and the general public, has meaningful consequences on foreign policy making. Digital networks have become undeniably relevant political fora - to the point which even government officials use it to make official announcements, report to constituents and engage in professional debate outside official channels of communication. While mass media and foreign policy actors' interference in the public debate have been established as the main elements forming Brazilian public opinion on foreign policy, this research aims to show that online discussions are now pervasive. This digital debate be seen as both a reflex of mass attitudes and an additional element in their formation. Despite the recently acknowledged political importance of social networks, the role of social media in foreign policy attitudes has yet to be systematically explained.

Recent Brazilian foreign policy studies advocate that public opinion is consistent (i.e.: Almeida et. al, 2019; Guimaraes et. al., 2018; Onuki et. al. 2016), formed by a combination of two main factors: traditional media coverage and foreign policy actors' interference in the public debate. However, social media's influence throughout this process is not enough discussed, despite several Brazilian studies having testified to its relevance to the political universe – from electoral disputes to public policies' approval or rejection. It becomes pertinent, therefore, to perform a closer look at foreign policy attitudes from this perspective. This research addresses the need to include social media among the elements used in analysis of mass attitudes, and proposes a theme-controlled quantitative description of Twitter interactions during the first few months of President Bolsonaro's administration. Following the collection of tweets that alluded to some selected key issues in Brazilian foreign policy, the resulting data suggest significant public engagement with Brazil's foreign affairs. Moreover, a qualitative analysis of the most popular tweets suggests that, in addition to being consistent, foreign policy attitudes expressed online tend to be partisan, and have been used as instruments for either the endorsement or criticism of domestic politics, amidst a polarized public debate. These findings may have broader implications regarding the relative importance of foreign policy in Brazil, and the political consequences of its instrumentalization, as the country's international affairs are being actively discussed in digital fora by the general public, regardless of their informational level.

Over the past decade, the importance of social media to the political world has been at the center of the public debate (Boulianne, 2015). Online interactions, with respect to the relevance of their content, reach and power of influence, have been widely discussed and often perceived as powerful tools for public opinion framing - to the point where authorities and communication companies discuss and impose legal boundaries to the diffusion of political messages,³ or even investigate their abuse, as users' data may be unduly appropriated in order to influence electoral behavior.⁴ As the world witnesses the increased appeal of populist rhetoric amidst a so-called crisis of liberal democracy, scientific political analyses include social media communications as a

³ https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/10/18/tecnologia/1539899403_489473.html ;
<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/tec/2019/01/whatsapp-limita-reenvios-de-mensagens-a-5-destinatarios.shtml>

⁴ For further information about the Cambridge Analytica scandals in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the Brexit referendum, see i.e.: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/cambridge-analytica-files>

relevant, consequential variable to the phenomenon.⁵ Their impact on Foreign policy does not stand behind, having been under the scrutiny of serious political commentary in credible, specialized media⁶, and making its way into scientific analysis. Worldwide - and particularly in the United States, given President Donald Trump's communication habits and preferences -, academic research has been discussing the impact of quasi-official foreign policy statements and world leaders' online interaction. Dubbed *Twiplomacy*, this *modus operandi* has gone from a general, media-diffused impression/ public perception, to an original academic research agenda, which leans over questions about whether it bares a real impact on international relations (Su et. al., 2015; Sobel et. al, 2016; Twitplomacy, 2018).⁷

Brazil is one of the cases in which social media are thought of making strong political impact in the past few years, affecting the country's political life and modus operandi of public officials, as well as citizen's behavior. Political mobilization, for one, has been associated with digital interaction. Traditional media, political commentators, private companies and civil-society organizations all have been observing this relationship, which has materialized in frequent street protests and strikes, and whose evidence culminated in the 2018 pre-electoral period. The importance of social media has also been the object of research concerning voter behavior. Polls indicate that online campaigning through these networks - particularly instant messaging application WhatsApp - appeared to have outweighed television propaganda, previously

⁵ For references on the effects of digital interaction on the crisis of democracy, see: SHAHBAZ, Adrian, "The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism", Freedom House Report: Freedom of the Net 2018, available at: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTN_2018_Final%20Booklet_11_1_2018.pdf ; BENKLER, Yochai, FARIS, Robert, ROBERTS, Hal, "Can the Internet Survive Democracy?" in *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*, 2018. Oxford University Press, New York, NY; WARD, Irene. "How Democratic Can We Get?: The Internet, the Public Sphere, and Public Discourse." *JAC*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1997, pp. 365-379. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20866148; SUNSTEIN, Cass R. "#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media", Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018 and SAMUEL, Alexandra, "How Trump's Twitter Presidency Hijacked Hopes for e-Democracy", article available at: <https://daily.jstor.org/how-trumps-twitter-presidency-hijacked-hopes-for-e-democracy/>

⁶ <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/14/donald-trump-foreign-policy-twitter-223975>
<http://mediashift.org/2012/11/how-twitter-is-changing-the-face-of-foreign-policy319/>
<https://daily.jstor.org/how-trumps-twitter-presidency-hijacked-hopes-for-e-democracy/>

⁷See: SU, Shumin, XU, Mark, "Twitplomacy: Social Media as a New Platform for Development of Public Diplomacy", 2015. *International Journal of E-Politics*, Volume 6, Issue 1 (January 2015), 16-29; SOBEL, Meghan; RIFFE, Daniel; HESTER, Joe Bob. *Twitter Diplomacy? A Content Analysis of Eight U.S. Embassies' Twitter Feeds. The Journal of Social Media in Society*, [S.l.], v. 5, n. 2, p. 75-107, sep. 2016; TWIPLOMACY. Executive Summary - Twiplomacy Study 2018, July 10, 2018. Available at: <https://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2018/>. Access on Sept. 21, 2018. See also: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/17/keep-on-tweetin/>; <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/14/donald-trump-foreign-policy-twitter-223975>

considered to be decisive in Brazilian elections (Calil et. al., 2018).⁸ The PSL, President Jair Bolsonaro's party, has conquered 52 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, whereas in the previous legislature it held one single chair, and 4 in the Senate, where it had none. They have accomplished the largest congressional representation in the legislature by electing so-called newcomers: first-term candidates, whose electoral bases originate chiefly from their presence on the Internet.⁹

As the new presidential term and federal legislature began, in early 2019, Brazilian society began noticing changes not only in the electorate, but also in the behavior of public officials, with their professional activity increasingly permeated by unprecedented connectivity¹⁰. Newspapers have reported that, in addition to the President's tweeting and live-broadcasting habits, newly-elected representatives have entered Congress with a fresh operational capital: their direct communication with civil society over the Internet, rendering political activity and representation "significantly permeable to pressure coming from social networks".¹¹ These officials often broadcast their participation in Congressional meetings live onto digital platforms, reportedly disengaging from parliamentary discussion and focusing on personal visibility and online interaction with their social media followers. This has consolidated online social networks as channels of political participation, engagement and pressure - however questionable their effectiveness may be.

⁸ See: CALIL, Lucas, RUEDIGER, Tatiana Terra, MARTINS, Thamyres, CARVALHO, Danilo Silva, "Populism on Social Media: a Comparative Analysis of Brazil, France and the United States", Working paper presented at the 2018 IPSA World Congress of Political Science, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, July 21-25, 2018. The discussion was the object of both academic and public debates. From June to August 2018, a few weeks ahead of the presidential, gubernatorial and legislative elections, advertising and big data experts predicted that social media would have a fundamental role in the electoral campaigns, as they were "cheap and direct way to speak to the electorate"; see i.e.: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/nizanguanaes/2018/06/whatsapp-podera-ser-a-mae-de-todas-as-fake-news-nas-eleicoes.shtml?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newscolumnista ; <https://cultura.estadao.com.br/blogs/direto-da-fonte/vai-ser-a-eleicao-do-celular-contra-a-televisao-diz-mauricio-moura/>

⁹ Sources: i.e.: "Sem TV nem fundo partidário, novato usou redes sociais para chegar em 12º - 08/10/2019 – Eleições – Folha; accessible on <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/10/sem-tv-nem-fundo-partidario-eleito-pelo-novo-usou-redes-sociais.shtml> / "Refêm das redes sociais, bancada do PSL vira problema para o governo" - 25/03/2019 - Poder – Folha; accessible on <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/03/refem-das-redes-sociais-bancada-do-psl-vira-problema-para-o-governo.shtml/> "Deputados do PSL e da esquerda crescem em redes sociais e acirram polarização política" – 26/07/2019 - Piauí/Agência Lupa; accessible on: <https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/lupa/2019/07/26/deputados-psl-esquerda-redes-sociais/>

¹⁰ Relatório FSBIfluênciaCongresso 2019, Instituto FSB Pesquisa, Edição Especial - Abril e Maio 2019.

¹¹ <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/02/rede-social-surge-como-a-quinta-esfera-de-poder-na-nova-politica-do-pais.shtml>

Few months into the new government, this movement is being portrayed as a two-sided phenomenon: while it potentially empowers accountability and dialogue, it promotes new political dynamics, with consequences still to be reckoned. As of February 1st 2019, out of 549 incumbents, 100% were on Facebook, 99.3% were on Instagram and 87.5% on Twitter. On March 31st the same year, the percentage of Twitter users rose up to 92.9%¹². Public statements made by political actors and journalists, although often based on conjecture and intuitive perception rather than research, also point out to an exacerbated influence of digital interaction on the decision-making processes, to the detriment of well-examined, long-term considerations backed by consistent constituency response. Traditionally, and perhaps ideally, participation is expected to occur through less ephemeral and volatile channels, such as institutionally formalized forms of consultation and the direct contact with organized civil society associations and movements.¹³ In face of his peers' behavior, Congressman Daniel Coelho used Twitter to express his indignation:

“Sem desconsiderar honrosas e boas excessões [sic.], parte da renovação política trouxe caçadores de pokemons para o Congresso. Não atuam em plenário ou comissões, não participam de nada. Passam o dia todo fazendo selfs [sic.] e comentando os fatos como se nada tivessem para fazer ali.” -- @DanielCoelho23 April 5, 2019¹⁴

In addition, online content suggests that representatives are not only reporting to their constituencies, but taking online responses and trends into account when demonstrating their endorsement to policies and approval of political figures:

¹² <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/5796442-Release-FSBinflue-nciaCongresso-Marc-O-Fevereiro.html#document/p1>

¹³The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples showing how the media perceives the influence of social media in Congressional behavior: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/05/deputados-youtubers-irritam-colegas-e-escancaram-desordem-de-base-aliada.shtml> and <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2019/03/09/redes-sociais-norteiam-atuacao-de-parlamentares-no-congresso.ghtm>
<https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/republica/deputados-redes-sociais-youtubers-transparencia-camara/>
<https://www.gazetaonline.com.br/noticias/politica/2019/05/bancada-da-selfie-deputados-mais-atentos-as-redes-sociais-do-que-ao-plenario-1014182520.html>
<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/03/refem-das-redes-sociais-bancada-do-psl-vira-problema-para-o-governo.shtml>

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/DanielCoelho23/status/1114130546190356480>

“Mais cenas do plenário: deputada Carla Zambeli, da base de Bolsonaro, faz o monitoramento das redes sociais e diz à equipe de Weintraub que ‘98% das menções são positivas ao ministro’.” (@AndreiaSadi -- May 15, 2019)¹⁵

In resonance with observations made abroad, numerous voices in the Brazilian public debate have also been drawing attention to the presence of foreign policy-related discussions in social media. However, while extensive academic research on the ever-growing relevance of social media to the political world has ensued public debate, a more robust academic agenda has yet to examine their implications for the specific foreign policy context. Several Brazilian studies have attested to social media’s political impact on domestic politics, policy attitudes, civic mobilization and electoral dispositions (i.e.: Machado, 2018; Ortellado, 2017; Spyer, 2017; Ortellado et. al., 2015), but have not yet addressed questions regarding its possible transformations brought about by foreign policy actors’ and the public’s interaction in social media.



Source: https://twitter.com/Fabia_de_Aguiar/status/1058148867173171201

¹⁵ This tweet by journalist Andrea Sadi is a sign of meta-reporting on social platforms, as it was published on Twitter and referred to the influence of social media assessments over the behavior of representatives in Congress. Source: <https://twitter.com/andreiasadi/status/1128782337372774401?s=12>

The choice for Twitter was due to the platform's specific characteristics - from technical aspects, such as the kind of data made available for research, and a relatively easy access to the content shared by its users, and behavioral and communicational aspects of user interaction, such as the platform's growing tendency to work as an immediate channel for public debate. Twitter has been generally perceived as a digital platform with political relevance. (Recuero, 2017; Rossini, 2018). Although is not as popular among Brazilians as other platforms, it has been regarded as the most important source for political and judicial news: its community of users is largely made up of opinion influencers, journalists, analysts and political actors - and recently, its strategic use by politicians has been observed as a trend (Rossini, 2018).

By monitoring *Twitter* through a theme-oriented perspective - that is, by controlling tweets that refer to key-issues amidst the overall online conversation independently from the message senders' profile -, this study verifies the presence of Brazilian foreign policy discussions in the social network, and focuses on the ways in which the debate presents itself: first, by counting pertinent tweets and estimating the debate's volume; second, by analysing the most engaging content under each theme. The use of monitoring softwares enabled a real-time observation of the entire universe of Twitter data from April 2nd to June 2nd 2019. Out of that sample, the study retrieved 751,414 tweets containing words related to 10 selected Brazilian foreign policy themes, providing us with a base-sample. An additional descriptive layer was added by observing the content of the most engaging tweets. We could see who the main influencers are; attest that these messages, retweets, replies and likes express foreign policy attitudes; verify a coincidence between debate peaks and foreign policy events (suggesting that the online debate is driven by outside factors), and identify a consistent pattern of posting foreign policy comments in connection with the critique or endorsement domestic politics.

Questions as to whether social media have reflected or influenced public opinion, altered foreign policy's salience in Brazil, or ultimately provoked any significant changes to policymaking still remain to be answered, and will not be analyzed here. Still, in proposing an investigation of possible relations between digital debate and salience - or relative importance of Brazilian external affairs in the public sphere - this work raises thoughts about a likely instrumentalization of foreign relations in a context of strong polarization of domestic politics. While audience's

statements and interactions on the digital platform can be considered spontaneous manifestations of opinion, exposure to the debate on the networks may be yet another element in mass attitude formation. This is, therefore, a contribution to think about the role of social media in Brazilian public opinion on foreign policy.

This study works with the hypothesis that social media in general, and Twitter in particular - due to its particular influence and diffusion dynamics - worked as a shortcut for the transference of foreign policy attitudes from elites to the general public during the early months of Jair Bolsonaro's administration. The following pages will provide a description of the foreign policy debate on Twitter, focusing on the elements that corroborate this hypothesis. Chapter one provides a literature review of three main lines of study, namely public opinion and foreign policy; social media and foreign policy, and the influence of social media on general political attitudes. Chapter two will describe the methods here employed to offer an outlook of the foreign policy debate on Twitter, and explore these descriptive findings. Chapter three will address how these findings may contribute to the literature here reviewed, and point to questions still to be answered in future research.

CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The following pages in this chapter discuss three main lines of literature that are relevant to this work, namely (1) studies regarding public opinion about foreign policy and its effects over policy making; (2) the impact of social media on foreign policy, and how their frequent use by decision-makers can alter countries' international affairs, and (3) the influence of social media on general political attitudes in Brazil. As a relevant theoretical transformation took place, regarding how public opinion about foreign policy is perceived in Brazil – now seen as existent and consistent – research moves on to examining the extent of the public's influence. In parallel, studies about social media reveal their growing influence in the political world, having emerged as tools for attitude expression and sources of information.

For decades, Brazilian Foreign Policy was regarded as isolated from the public, irrelevant to the electorate's concern. It was therefore thought to be immune to mass attitudes, had they been positive or negative, if ever existent. As explained by Almeida et. Al.: "It has long been assumed that foreign policy attitudes of the mass public in Brazil are random, disorganized, and unconstrained if they exist at all." (2018 - working paper)

Building up from a decade-long trend in Brazilian academic research in the field, Almeida et. al. dispute and successfully disprove the common-place notion that "the Brazilian public have random, inchoate and volatile attitudes" with respect to foreign policy. Today, findings in state-of-the-art studies (i.e.: Almeida et. al, 2019; Guimaraes et. al., 2018; Onuki et. al. 2016) have shown that such attitudes are indeed consistent, tend to be stable and are widely expressed – even among a non-specialized public - possibly leading to electoral costs. Yet, the distance between policy and public, as well as the suggested consequences of such detachment between policy making and societal demands, were once endorsed by both Brazilian and foreign traditional literature on the subject.

For a long time, public opinion's inability to influence foreign policy held on as a paradigm. Lack of access to information and difficulty to grasp the implications of foreign policy for the constituent's daily life were listed as factors that deemed a country's external affairs as

unattainable and immune to accountability and political cost. However, the ideas that build upon numerous challenges to the Almond-Lippman consensus (HOLSTI, 1992) now find ground for development in the verification and measurement of the degree of general-public knowledge about foreign policy. According to Aldrich et al. (1989) and Destler (2001), the general public “can and does remain informed and active in the foreign policy arena.” Furthermore, to Page and Bouton (2006), public opinion has been increasingly characterized as a “relatively stable and consistent counterweight that policy makers must, or at least should, take into consideration”.

Stability and coherence being crucial to any possible clout over policy¹⁶, those consistent and stable attitudes towards foreign policy seem to be conformed despite knowledge asymmetries and disadvantages, and with some help from informational shortcuts. Regarding these, Baum and Potter (2008) find that research suggests a consensus around (1) citizens’ significant informational disadvantage vis-à-vis leadership elites regarding foreign policy; and (2) citizens’ compensation of this gap “by employing heuristic cues that allow them to make reasoned judgments with small amounts of information”, drawing mostly on mass media content and manifested elite preferences. The authors argue: “Recently, however, researchers have shown that public opinion is relatively stable and consistent in foreign policy perceptions across domestic and foreign issues. The general idea is that voters are able to develop and hold fairly coherent and structured views on foreign policy (Aldrich et al. 1989; Aldrich et al. 2006).

Page and Bouton (2006) argue that such a change in the understanding is due to a revolution in the cognitive sciences – that is, an overhaul on the scientific understanding of how citizens receive, retain, and organize political information, as well as on the degree of responsiveness to leaders preferences. According to this perspective, the international actions of a given country, as well as the decisions, strategies and guidelines that conform its insertion in the international system, are partially influenced by the foreign policy community’s ability to produce the

¹⁶ Aldrich et al. (2006) assess the overall scholarly understanding of public opinion in the context of foreign policy in hopes of resolving the debate concerning public competence. They conclude that a consensus has emerged that the public is able to develop and hold coherent views on foreign policy, that citizens can and do apply their attitudes to their electoral decisions, and that this leads politicians to consider the electoral implications of their overseas activities.

dissemination of certain beliefs and attitudes among the general public¹⁷. Therefore, a State's conduct in the global arena, and the results that may come from it, should no longer be considered as exclusively conditioned by a non-partisan, coherent bureaucracy - mostly insusceptible to changes in government¹⁸.

These contemporary acknowledgments reverberated in local scientific thought regarding Brazilian foreign affairs and the public's mass attitudes, found to be pertinent even when considered some particularities of the country's external relations and its identity or role in the international system.

On the one hand, it can be argued that, when compared to other issues in the country's public debate, foreign policy has had relatively secondary salience in Brazil for the largest part of the 20th century. The question of salience, as well as foreign policy's responsiveness to public opinion are especially intriguing when it comes to cases such as Brazil's - in which the nation's foreign affairs have not had, thus far, a central role in the public debate. Taking into account the well-established components of public opinion formation - traditional media and actors' interference -, Brazil provides an interesting case to the exam of public opinion mobilization and its influence over foreign policy decisions (BURNSTEIN, 2003). While "casualty aversion" and "rally" phenomena, considered by Baum and Potter (2008, p.45-48) as catalysts of mass attitude mobilization in countries such as the United States, Brazil has had no regional enemies nor has it taken direct part in wars or sensitive international contentious issues. The country can be considered a *sui generis* regional power: it can be regarded as a local leader and a regional power, but has had no pressing foreign policy conflicts with lasting prominence in the public debate - which in turn is often focused on domestic matters like violence and political corruption. Still, against expectations, the salience of foreign policy-related issues has increased over the last few decades, according to Lopes and Faria (2008), as the Brazilian public has proven to associate eventual positive results gained from the country's foreign relations to their feeling of "personal well being".

¹⁷ For concepts such as 'Comunidade de Política Externa' and 'Públicos de Massa' and their theoretical opposition, see Amaury de Souza, *A Agenda Internacional do Brasil: de FHC a Lula*, Ed. Campus, Introdução, 2009.

¹⁸ BRASIL, AS AMÉRICAS E O MUNDO, Opinião Pública e Política Externa, 2010 - 2011, p. 10-11.

On the other hand, while structured and coherent mass attitudes came to be perceived, the idea that foreign policy has become increasingly accessible and permeable to societal demands is supported by contemporary Brazilian literature. Milani and Pinheiro (2013), argue that, following the democratic transition in Brazil, Itamaraty's autonomy and - once esteemed - exclusivity in foreign policy making were challenged by the increased participation of different ministries and subnational entities, and also by multiple and diverse non-government actors. This plurality of actors and agendas led to the authors' regard of foreign policy as public policy, no longer singularized and immune to government and society compositions. In that sense, foreign policy in Brazil, once believed to be exceptional and disconnected from public life, is now inserted to some extent in the standard dynamics of democracy, thus being subject to approval or rejection by citizens, influencing the political scenario and reverberating in everyday life. Placing foreign policy into the realm of politics, that is, "recognizing that its formulation and implementation are inserted in government dynamics"¹⁹ brings into question the implications of societal responses and mass attitudes for foreign policy making. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume Brazilian foreign policy is too invested with democratic costs, to which public approvals and electoral responses bear significance. Once it is regarded as yet another State endeavor that aims at the public interest, foreign policy can then be brought to the level of other public policies/domestic issues – such as educational, macroeconomic, demographic and health-related policies – which are responsive to public opinion²⁰, on account of their embedded political/electoral costs.²¹

¹⁹ *Política Externa Brasileira: Os Desafios de sua Caracterização como Política Pública* Carlos R. S. Milani e Leticia Pinheiro / Contexto Internacional, Rio de Janeiro, vol. 35, nº 1, janeiro/junho 2013, p. 11-41.

²⁰ "Theories about responsiveness have been seen as implying that it is likely to be stronger on some issues than others, and the range of issues covered by the studies permits very modest tests of a couple of hypotheses. Responsiveness is hypothesized to be higher on domestic issues than on foreign policy, because the former will usually be more salient to the public than the latter. (...) The data on foreign and domestic policy provide no support for the hypothesis. Of the ten coefficients gauging the relationship between opinion and defense policy (nine on expenditures, one on the Vietnam war), all are statistically significant; on defense, government is more responsive to the public than on other policies, not less". BURSTEIN, Paul, The impact of public opinion on public policy: a review and an agenda, *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (1), 2003. p. 36. "Public opinion affects policy three-quarters of the times its impact is gauged; its effect is of substantial policy importance at least a third of the time, and probably a fair amount more". (Idem). "Salience does affect the impact of public opinion on policy". (Idem).

²¹ "Democracy works much as it is supposed to", with public officials consistently responding to shifts in public opinion", BURSTEIN, Paul, 2003. The impact of public opinion on public policy: a review and an agenda, *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (1), p.30. See also Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson, 1995.

In that sense, when foreign policy is conceived as public policy, its proposals and actions might be included among the factors that voters ponder, when endorsing a given political group's ascension to and permanence in institutional power. Lopes' and Faria's (2008) hypothesis goes even further, suggesting the influence of foreign policy outcomes on electoral results and incumbent's approval:

“Reconhecida a distância da população em relação aos temas internacionais no Brasil, tornar-se-ia compreensível a renúncia a discussões de política externa. Afinal, se o capital cívico do brasileiro médio já é comparativamente baixo, pior ainda será a posição relativa da política externa no universo das políticas públicas do Estado (...). Tradicionalmente relegada ao segundo plano das disputas eleitorais, a política externa começou a figurar, nas últimas duas décadas, como elemento importante do temário de candidatos à Presidência da República no Brasil. Se, em meados dos anos 1980, ouvia-se de um ilustre congressista brasileiro, em tom de galhofa, que “o Itamaraty só dá voto no Burundi”, agora a história parece outra. A hipótese que trazemos à voga neste ensaio é a seguinte: a política externa ganhou saliência na medida em que o eleitor médio passou a fazer conexão direta entre os resultados alcançados pelo governante incumbente nas relações exteriores do país e a sua sensação de bem-estar pessoal”.²²

This line of reasoning is also present in Faria's (2008) address of the insulated character of the decision-making process in Brazilian foreign policy. He argues that, although long-acknowledged, this traditional pattern of isolation has become increasingly susceptible to the interests, demands and political articulation of multiple social actors since the early 1990's. Faria seeks to explain the reasons for this insulation and explore the signs, then observed, of an ongoing subversion in the “top-down” foreign policy decision making in Brazil. Along with the progressive establishment of democratic rule, societal demands and expectations became

²² LOPES, Dawisson and FARIA, Carlos. (2008). Eleições Presidenciais e Política Externa Brasileira. in *Estudos Internacionais*, Vol. 02: 139-147.

important references to the domestic debate and interests regarding the country's foreign affairs, and the formerly established top-down process began to be systematically questioned. (Faria, 2008). The author points to an evident need for examining the likely impacts of public opinion in foreign policy making process, as an emerging consequence of these transformations, alerting that, in 2008, local studies dedicated to the interactions between public opinion and foreign policy were scarce when compared to foreign production, especially that of developed countries. There, according to Faria, research results had indicated relatively elevated levels of information, coherent and rational perceptions, and stable attitude patterns with respect to foreign relations - in contrast with previous theoretical assumptions on public opinion:

“(…) ao contrário do pressuposto realista, das descobertas dos estudos da primeira geração e dos argumentos muitas vezes esgrimidos pelas burocracias públicas e por formuladores da política externa, a opinião pública tem se mostrado, pelo menos nos países centrais, relativamente bem informada acerca das questões internacionais, apresentando padrões estáveis e percepções, valores e prioridades coerentes e racionais”.²³

Supported by these interpretations, a growing line of studies about the bureaucratic isolation in Brazilian foreign policy institutions (Cheibub 1985; Barros 1986; Faria 2008) has shown that those are becoming increasingly permeable to mass attitudes (Lima 2003; Milani, 2011; Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Oliveira, 2013), as new State and non-state actors gain clout (França e Sanchez, 2009), promoting what scholars have called “democratization” of Brazilian foreign policy (Pomeroy and Waisbich, 2017).

Also, a robust research agenda has been undertaken with the aim of verifying existence and consistency of foreign policy attitudes among the Brazilian general public - beyond elites and the foreign policy community. Studies Survey-based studies undertaken in the *Las Américas y el*

²³ FARIA, Carlos. (2008). Opinião pública e política externa: insulamento, politização e reforma na produção da política exterior do Brasil. in Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional, Vol. 51, No. 02: 80-97.

*Mundo*²⁴ project have materialized this recent perspective²⁵, according to which foreign policy can be subject to the accountability and approval dynamics in the democratic system. Their periodic results have been systematically showing that such attitudes are indeed consistent, tend to be stable and are widely expressed – even among a non-specialized public.

“Essa situação vem mudando nas duas últimas décadas. [A política externa] já não pode ser pensada como um caso bem sucedido de insulamento democrático, possibilitado pela indiferença das lideranças políticas e sociais e da opinião pública, ou daquela parcela mais envolvida na discussão política”.²⁶

Public opinion: existent and consistent

The Las Americas survey established a division between informed and interested public (PII) and non-informed and non-interested public (PDD), and sought to verify whether some contact with foreign reality, mainly through information provided by the media, enabled the public debate about foreign policy issues to transcend the elites and generate coherent attitudes towards within the general public. The results obtained in the 2014-2015 Las Americas report showed that among interested and informed respondents, a near 82% had either “strong” or “medium” interest in international matters, as did 54% of those considered uninterested and uninformed. Although the research acknowledges considerable lack of knowledge and precise information, it identifies a sense of importance and consequence given to foreign issues, regardless of how much Brazilians know about them: most consider that the country and their own individual lives are affected by global events (Brazil Report, 2015, p. 16-24). By comparing results from two rounds of surveys - 2010 and 2014 - the Las Americas initiative was able to verify some degree of coherence and stability in foreign policy attitudes of leaders, informed public and uninformed audience. Brazilians were then enthusiasts of globalization and believed their country should perform a

²⁴ <https://www.lasamericasyelmundo.cide.edu/>

²⁵ “Essa situação tem mudando nas duas últimas décadas. [A política externa] já não pode ser pensada como um caso bem sucedido de insulamento democrático, possibilitado pela indiferença das lideranças políticas e sociais e da opinião pública, ou daquela parcela mais envolvida na discussão política”. BRASIL, AS AMÉRICAS E O MUNDO, Opinião Pública e Política Externa, 2010 – 2011, p. 10-11.

²⁶ BRASIL, AS AMÉRICAS E O MUNDO, Opinião Pública e Política Externa, 2010 – 2011, p. 10-11.

leading role in international matters. They manifested their attitudes in resonance with the idea that Brazil was a welcoming country, with no rivals or enemies. This is consistent with the theoretical assumption that in the face of an informational disadvantage, people use cognitive shortcuts to form their opinion – possibly appropriating elites’ views expressed by the media. Albeit existent, coherent and relevant, attitudes expressed by the non-specialized/interested community are regarded as a reflex of ingrained perceptions that once originated within the elites. As stated by Almeida, Carneiro and Onuki (2011), “*indagar o que pensam os membros da comunidade de política externa e os brasileiros interessados nos assuntos internacionais torna-se relevante para entender as bases sobre as quais a política externa se sustenta, seu núcleo de visões compartilhadas, bem como as fronteiras para além das quais o consenso se dissolve*”.

Consistent public opinion and its influence on foreign policy

Evidence of coherent and stable foreign policy attitudes in Brazil brings about the question of whether and to what they reflect on the country’s political life, both domestically and internationally. Interpretations by Faria and Lopes (2015)²⁷ and Mouron et. at. (2016) suggest that foreign policy attitudes reverberate on electoral results and incumbents approval. According to Mouron, Onuki and Urdinez, “Public opinion has a specific influence on the formulation of public policy (Howlett, 2000) in democratic regimes where rulers rely on newer forms of public consultation, are accountable to voters, and need legitimacy (Echegaray, 2001). Hence, although foreign policy cannot be considered a "traditional" public policy (Lentner, 2006), the electorate’s perception has become a matter of concern for academics and policymakers (Faria, 2008)”²⁸. Additionally, Stuenkel (2017) assumes the impact of public opinion in the decision-making process when assessing the working mechanisms of the institutions responsible for foreign policy formulation and implementation at present.²⁹ Still, these conclusions bring about the need to clarify the mechanisms of public opinion’s influence over Brazilian foreign policy, its weight on political decisions and how it manifests through electoral choices and approval rates of

²⁷ The authors take into consideration the works by Dahl (2001) and Simone Diniz e Cláudio Ribeiro (2008) to corroborate the argument of an ever-growing resonance of foreign policy issues in Brazilian public debate. (2014/5, p. 141).

²⁸ MOURON, Fernando; URDINEZ, Francisco; ONUKI, Janina. Framing effects on foreign policy: experimental evidence from emerging countries and the Argentine-Brazilian rivalry. *Opinião. Publica*, Campinas, v. 22, n. 1, p. 195-218, Apr. 2016.

²⁹ (Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights, in 10 Desafios da Política Externa Brasileira, CEBRI, 2017, p 119).

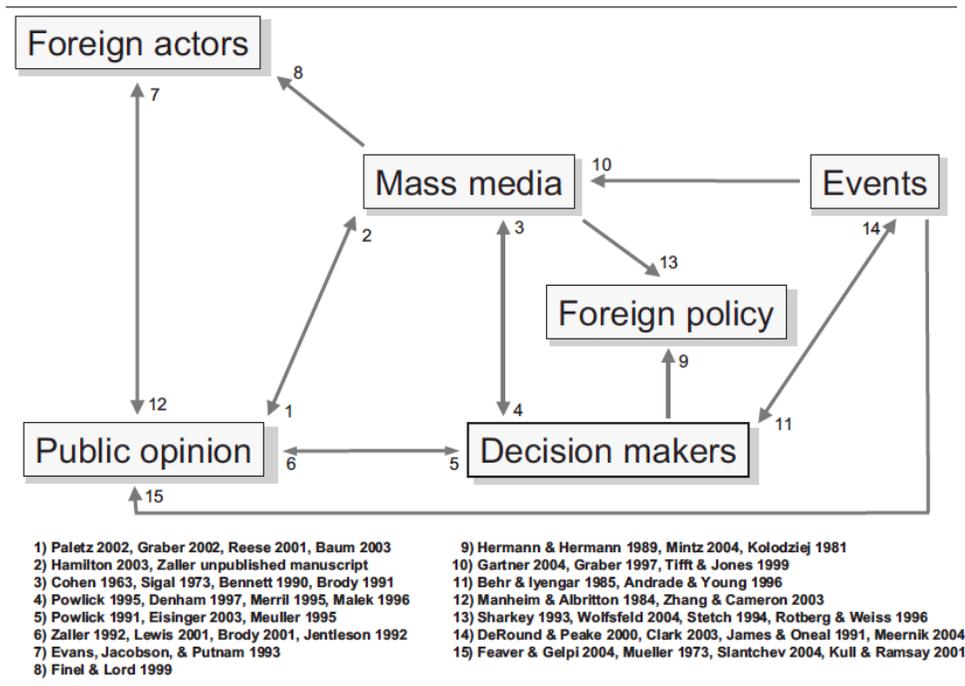
incumbents, especially in relation to domestic issues. The two available editions of Las Americas survey report asked what were the sources of information on which Brazilians relied to hear about what happens in their country and abroad. Researchers found that Television and Internet were the two most frequent means of daily contact with news among the interested and informed public, followed by Newspapers and Radio. Among the non-interested and non-informed public, Television stood out as a primary source. These results suggest that online content plays an important part, but leave room for specific investigation about the role of social media.

To that regard, Brazilian literature on the subject has not yet explored this role. Online networks have been working as accessible and immediate thermometers (accurate or not) of public's reactions to general political issues, sometimes orienting incumbents' and policy makers' rhetorical and practical responses, as they are provided with daily glimpses of spontaneous collective manifestations of opinion. Due to their particular influencer-follower dynamics, they have become a powerful vessel of attitude transference from cultural and political elites to the uninformed public. Often performing a parallel and complementary role to traditional mass media, social networks are likely to play a part in public opinion formation and framing in general, but academic research has yet to contemplate whether they affect the relationship between mass attitudes and decision-making processes in Brazilian foreign policy.

The outward diffusion of elites' perceptions is mediated by the complex relationship between the components of public opinion formation: the multiple elements through which how people acquire information and form their foreign policy preferences (Baum and Potter, 2008).³⁰ The existing literature – and especially its systematization, provided by Baum and Potter (2008) - allows us to understand a general and broad force field made up by the components of public opinion formation. Apart from the factual elements, whether the “facts on the ground” or policy guidelines, the narrative-building and framing elements combine the actions of policy makers, elites (which include an informed and interested public), the general public and mass media. The complex interaction between those actors includes a significant informational breach between

³⁰ BAUM, Matthew A., POTTER, Philip B. K. The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis, in *Annual Review of Political Science*. Vol. 11:39-65 (Volume publication date 15 June 2008).

each of the groups. This persistent breach (Baum and Potter 2008) varies over time, according to demands from the less informed groups in face of salient issues or events like conflicts and casualties. Mass media and governmental means of information diffusion act as a bridge - more or less effectively so, depending on the foreign policy context. The framework synthesis provided by Baum and Potter contemplates the role of the relationship between events, actors, leaders, the public and the mass media in “shaping the public’s attitudes about, and influence on, foreign policy”:



This framework was built before the emergence of digital social networks as platforms for information diffusion and interpersonal/ inter-institutional interaction. A present-day look suggests a gap, considering the disruption promoted by digital networks in the field of communications. As recent research suggests social media are likely to play an independent role, figuring as an additional element in public opinion formation. The dynamics of peer-to-peer³¹ influence and of ‘echo-chamber’³² systems – at the same time constitutive of and enhanced by digital network interaction -- are being discussed as to their capacity of incrementing and further enabling the public’s abbreviation-prone behavior. Thus, as informational shortcut providers,

³¹ One-to-many, many-to-many (Recuero, 2015).

³² GUESS et. Al., Avoiding the Echo Chamber about Echo Chambers: Why selective exposure to like-minded political news is less prevalent than you think, Knight Foundation, Miami: 2018.

social digital networks can be powerful elements to conform public opinion in the context of politics and public policy in general. They stand out as an open field, complementary to the somewhat general scholarly consensus about the framing capabilities and actions of traditional media.

A theoretical path followed by political communications literature suggests that there are no immediate, straightforward connection between policy outcomes and media-produced information (Graber, 2002; Paletz, 2002). Alternatively, political science research claims that the connection exists, even if indirectly, as media works as a conveyor of the opinions of powerful elites to the general public – thus legitimating the elite’s already existent influence over public policy by producing social acceptance (Bennet et. al., 2006). Notwithstanding the existence of a connection between public opinion and foreign policy outcomes; or regardless of either the ideological or pragmatic motivations and orientations of outlets, the framing capacity of the media and its reflexes on general public opinion is undisputed. According to Baum and Potter (2008), the media play “the crucial role of collecting, framing and distributing information”, influencing nearly every aspect of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy: “in addition to considering the relationship between leaders and the public, we incorporate a third strategic actor, the mass media, which we believe plays a critical role alongside citizens and elites in shaping the public's attitudes about, and influence on, foreign policy”. Based on this theoretical assumption, people’s attitudes about foreign policy are directly related to the media sources they consume and their framing of news and information.

When inserted in this complex force field of public opinion formation as mere receptors of information – that is, when not mobilized around a specific agenda or demand – the general public relies on mass media and official discourse to grasp the context. Assuming the public’s agency in searching for information, their interest and disposition to engage in a deep recollection of available facts and analyses may vary. As verified in the Brazilian case, despite a permanent informational gap and varying dispositions, audiences display somewhat coherent, consistent and verifiable attitudes towards foreign policy, relying on cognitive shortcuts, or heuristic cues that

connect their general beliefs, political stance and individual backgrounds. People thus act as cognitive misers.³³

Still, when empowered by the ability to interact with leaders and broadcast their views to potentially vast audiences, social media users are no longer mere receptors - or at least do not feel so. Since the advent of digital social networks, an additional layer of intermediation has been placed between the path between news outlets and the public. They do considerably more than to amplify the content produced by traditional news outlets: they provide a significant platform for both the acquisition of information and the free expression of attitudes about foreign policy. This environment of instant feedback produces a new interface to the connection between official discourse, media-based data and news on foreign policy, and the public. In addition, it creates the space for the regular user to become a political commentator.³⁴ And aside from having the ability to shape and transform media content, contributing to its absorption, interpretation and placement in the political spectrum, social media facilitate informational shortcuts. Interpersonal and inter-institutional online interaction provide heuristic cues with ease, with the support of the networks' format and functioning.

Social media and political attitudes

Increasingly used as primary or secondary sources for political information, digital social networks could be understood as mere diffusers of media content, if it weren't for their singular capacities as content-changing broadcasting channels of information. Social networks are not innocuous vessels for informative content produced by traditional agents in the communications system. Instead, they are platforms for the somewhat horizontal expression of attitudes and

³³ For reference on cognitive miser behavior theory: Barr, Nathaniel; Pennycook, Gordon; Stolz, Jennifer A.; Fugelsang, Jonathan A. (July 2015). "The brain in your pocket: evidence that smartphones are used to supplant thinking". *Computers in Human Behavior*. 48: 473–480. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.02.029; De Neys, Wim; Rossi, Sandrine; Houdé, Olivier (April 2013). "Bats, balls, and substitution sensitivity: cognitive misers are no happy fools". *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. 20 (2): 269–273. doi:10.3758/s13423-013-0384-5. PMID 23417270; Stanovich, Keith E. (2011). "The cognitive miser and focal bias". *Rationality and the reflective mind*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 65–71.

³⁴ ORTELLADO, Pablo, Los brasileños leen Facebook: Izquierdas y cultura política digital, in *Nueva Sociedad* N 269, mayo-junio de 2017, ISSN: 0251-3552; RECUERO, Raquel et al, Hashtags Functions in the Protests Across Brazil, *SAGE Open* April-June 2015: 1–14; MALINI, Fábio, O método perspectivista de análise de redes sociais, *Compós*, 2016. VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, E, GOLDMAN, M. Introduction to Post-Social Anthropology. Em *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2 (1): 421-433. 2012.

beliefs, and are ecosystems in which users interact, build connections and simultaneously display and build their identities. Those identities frequently include aspects such as the expression and exercise of citizenship, political beliefs and policy preferences³⁵. According to Recuero et. al. (2015), particular linguistic attributes and communicative functions of online communications – such as *hashtags* on Twitter – produce unique communicational effects to political content, thus enabling not only the curatorship and organization of news and disseminated analyses throughout the digital space, but also the user’s prerogative to share content and to opine and incite mobilization in doing so.

Aside from conveying traditional, mass media-produced political content (not without giving it some extra hermeneutical layers), social media diffuses content produced by individual users and less traditional organizations. This dynamic is pluralistic and democratic, on the one hand, and unaccountable and potentially harmful to democracy, on the other. In “Can Democracy Survive the Internet”, Nathaniel Persily discusses the role of social media in the rise of a so-called unmediated populist nationalism³⁶. Taking the 2016 American presidential elections as an example, he states:

“Fake news, social-media bots (automated accounts that can exist on all types of platforms), and propaganda from inside and outside the United States—alongside revolutionary uses of new media by the winning campaign—combined to upset established paradigms of how to run for president. (...) The prevalence of false stories online erects barriers to educated political decision making and renders it less likely that voters will choose on the basis of genuine information rather than lies or misleading “spin.” Given the conflicting definitions of “fake news,” a healthy debate exists concerning its impact on the 2016 election. If the concept includes all false, biased, or objectionable online statements, as some (perhaps even President Trump) would have it, then “fake news” simply becomes a charge to level at a media organization rather than a useful descriptor of a social phenomenon.”

³⁵ Castells, 2012; Malini, Antoun, 2017.

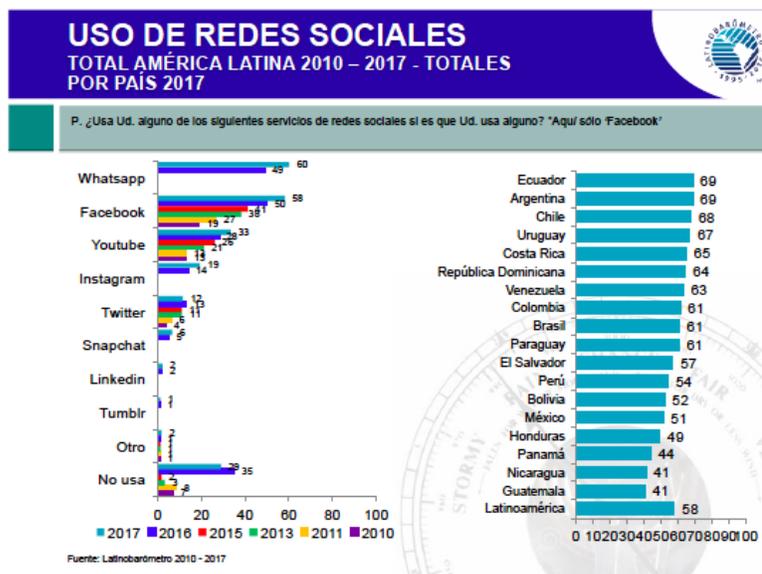
³⁶ Journal of Democracy, 2016.

When considering Latin-Americans' sources of contact with foreign issues, the Latinobarometro 2017 Report points out that: *“Hoy todo tiene influencia a través de los medios electrónicos, hasta el más alejado de los ciudadanos está conectado con su Smartphone con el mundo”* (2017, p.4). The survey offers a broad picture about the use of social media as a means of information in the region, and specific data on Brazil corroborates the importance of those digital networks: *“Las redes sociales se han convertido para un tercio de la población de la región en una fuente de comunicación política sustituyendo medios formales”* (2017, p.43). The study also identifies a correlation between a recent change in sources of political information – which includes an increasing participation of social media - and a behavioral shift regarding politics, political parties and the support of democracy (2017, p.42).



Also according to the Latinobarometro 2017 Report, 28% of the Latin-American public learns about political issues primarily through social networks, in an upward tendency between 2016 and 2017 – and Brazil is fully inserted in this prospect. This means that the news produced by media outlets reach the public via the communitary networks in which they are inserted through social media - the so-called virtual bubbles - invariably biased and with strong identification ties: *“La caída de los modos tradicionales formales (diarios etc.) así como los informales (amigos etc.) es*

notoria. Estamos en un proceso de cambio de la manera como los ciudadanos se informan de la política a la vez que con un cambio de comportamiento. No sabemos si hay una relación causal entre ambas, pero estos dos fenómenos suceden simultáneamente y la sospecha es que la forma de informarse influencia la opinión de los ciudadanos y su comportamiento. Esto se agrega, a los otros elementos que influyen la manera como el comportamiento político está cambiando”³⁷.



USOS DE REDES SOCIALES

TOTAL AMÉRICA LATINA 2017

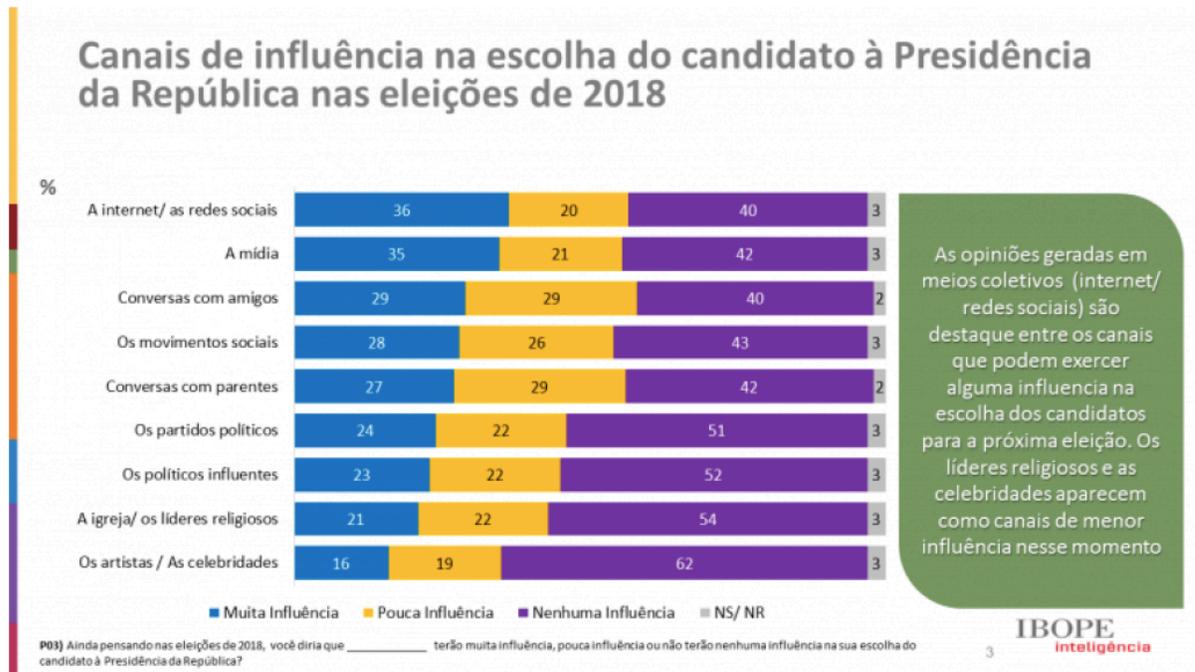
P. ¿Usa ud. alguno de los siguientes servicios de redes sociales si es que usa alguno?

	Facebook	Snapchat	Youtube	Twitter	Whatsapp	Instagram	Tumblr	LinkedIn	Otro	No usa
Argentina	69	3	45	12	75	22	1	3	-	18
Bolivia	52	3	28	8	56	13	-	1	1	40
Brasil	61	7	38	9	68	24	2	3	2	24
Colombia	61	7	44	14	67	24	1	4	1	26
Costa Rica	65	12	44	10	74	23	1	2	1	20
Chile	68	6	46	19	77	21	2	5	-	19
Ecuador	69	8	33	13	61	20	1	1	-	25
El Salvador	57	4	27	8	57	15	1	1	-	31
Guatemala	41	3	14	8	35	12	1	1	-	53
Honduras	49	7	21	7	54	14	1	1	1	40
México	51	6	39	10	58	14	1	2	-	33
Nicaragua	41	4	11	4	34	7	1	1	-	52
Panamá	44	9	27	12	66	30	2	2	1	28
Paraguay	61	8	29	16	68	22	1	1	-	31
Perú	54	5	34	10	46	12	1	3	-	41
Uruguay	67	6	48	12	75	22	1	4	-	20
Venezuela	63	5	29	21	43	25	3	2	33	-
R. Dominicana	64	17	36	15	67	29	2	2	-	28
Latinoamérica	58	6	33	12	60	19	1	2	2	29

Fuente: Latinobarómetro 2017. Respuestas múltiples. Porcentaje suman más de 100.

³⁷ Latinobarómetro 2017. p 42-45.

Specifically regarding Brazil, in 2017, 40% of Brazilians spent about five hours a day on the Internet, and 72% relied on social media as a source for journalistic content. (Ortellado, 2017). Also that year, in an assessment about the 2018 general elections, a poll revealed that 56% of voters believed that social media had some degree of influence in their choice for presidential candidate; 36% believed social media to be very influential (IBOPE, 2017).



Source: IBOPE Inteligência, Pesquisa De Opinião Pública Sobre O Clima Para As Eleições Gerais De 2018, 05/18/2017 – 05/22/2017.

Among a large – and possibly unaccounted for – variety of consequences, some inextricable phenomena emerge from the increasingly dominant use of social media as a primary source of information³⁸: (1) the tailor-made politically influential content based on user data³⁹; (2) the wave of the so-called ‘fake news’ as a political tool⁴⁰; (3) the subversion of traditional forces of social mobilization, and (4) the emergence of a debate that confronts the idea of social digital networks

³⁸ The majority of Americans have gotten news from social media. See: “News Use Across Social Media Platforms”, Pew Research Center, May 2016.

³⁹ The use of personal data to fabricate specially designed content with the aim of forging a person’s opinion or informing an individual’s political decision. This content is shared in social media.

⁴⁰ A quarter of respondents say in a recent Pew survey that they have shared a fake news story. See: “Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion”, Pew Research Center, December 2016.

as a new, optimized public square with the confinement of political stances into ideological bubbles, or echo-chambers⁴¹.

If electoral results - perhaps the ultimate, epitomical manifestation of public opinion - are proven to be influenced by social media user interaction and medium-specific content, so may be the connective capacity of the networks. Extensive literature seeks to connect the digital social networks to worldwide social protests in the last decade⁴². Aside from the wide reach and velocity, online interaction seems to respond – quite precisely so, regardless of its effectiveness - to current shortcomings of representative democracy⁴³. To that regard, Almeida (2017), recalls Bernard Manin’s concept of ‘democracy of the public’: “by this he meant a political system where parties are no longer the main source of information and no longer forge strong political identities; where political information is more easily available to citizens, increasing exposure of both the daily routines of governments and the internal rifts of political parties, as well as of the public and private life of politicians.

Due to these changes, electoral choices become more volatile and less determined by party identification”. This converses with Recuero’s conclusion about the relevance online interactions of protesters in worldwide manifestations, such as the Tahir Square Manifestations during the Arab Spring, Occupy movements in the United States and Europe, and Podemos movement in Spain:

⁴¹ “Anonymity online obliterates real-life identity boundaries and enhances free and open communication, thus promoting a more enlightened exchange of ideas. A growing body of literature attests to the potential that the Internet and its accompanying technologies have for reviving political discussion. Scholars have discussed several examples of online communities that engage in political discussion, the nature of which enhances democracy”, PAPACHARISSI, Zizi, *Democracy online: civility, politeness and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups*, New Media and Society, Sage, London: 2004. P. 267. See also GUESS et. Al., *Avoiding the Echo Chamber about Echo Chambers: Why selective exposure to like-minded political news is less prevalent than you think*, Knight Foundation, Miami: 2018.

⁴² “Although old types of organizations still stage protest events, mobilization processes are increasingly based on more informal coordination forms”. (Della Porta, 2015. P. 163) See also: Tarrow (2005), Albrow, Anheier, Glausius, Price & Kaldor (2008), Castells, Fernandez-Ardeval, Qiu & Say (2008).

⁴³ “Despite their attitudes and discourses, new social movements depend on other old societal institutions to effectively influence the political process. Their actions and demands must be echoed by public opinion makers and reach the media headlines, thus becoming featured public issues capable of impacting the citizen mood”, ALMEIDA, Maria Herminia Tavares, *From Authoritarianism to Democracy and After*, LASA FORUM, VOL XLVIII, Issue 2, Spring 2017.

“During these protests, social media and specially Twitter played a key role by allowing protesters to organize and spread their own narratives. Twitter also provided a platform to mobilize other users from different locations through hashtags, helping spread the word from the people on the streets to social media audiences, and often back again to the streets. (...)These phenomena is directly connected to the choice of communication strategies (such as Twitter) and the decentralized nature of contemporary protests (Castells, 2012), as well as the stronger role of personal networks in these events (Segeberg & Bennett, 2011). These characteristics are also related to the reduced presence and role of conventional political organizations (parties, unions, etc.) because digital communication platforms play this part (Segeberg & Bennett, 2012)”.

The statements suggest a multiplicity of relevant aspects of the social media-politics relationship. Much of those can be related to the consequences of the empowerment of the individual as a somewhat autonomous content producer and diffuser. The absence of mediation also characterizes a new type of direct (or seemingly direct) and apparently informal, quasi-unofficial interaction between political actors and the public. These manifestations may concern public opinion analysis, as they seem to be more appealing to the public and to generate more engagement than the official discourse. Not unusually, foreign policy authorities or entities manifest guidelines, announce decisions or communicate stances via social networks.

Reinforcing this trend, recent studies have produced extensive work regarding the participation of social media as an important element in public opinion formation and political mobilization in Brazil⁴⁴. Their particular features and unprecedented functioning of these social spaces - where

⁴⁴ See SPYER, Juliano, *Social Media in Emergent Brazil*. London, UCL Press, 2017; JUDENSNAIDER, Elena; LIMA, Luciana; ORTELLADO, Pablo. *Vinte centavos: a luta contra o aumento*. São Paulo: Veneta, 2013; ORTELLADO, Pablo; SOLANO, Esther. *Nova direita nas ruas?: uma análise do descompasso entre manifestantes e os convocantes dos protestos antigoverno de 2015*. *Perseu: História, Memória e Política*, São Paulo, n. 11, p. 169-180, 2016; GALLEGU, Esther Solano, ORTELLADO, Pablo, MORETTO, Márcio, “Guerras culturais” e “populismo anti-petista” nas ruas de 2017. See also: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/pablo-ortellado/2018/06/grupos-de-whatsapp-criados-na-paralisacao-podem-ser-usados-nas-eleicoes.shtml?loggedpaywall>

personalization of politics (Recuero, 2015) is made possible; interactions and exposure to political content are less determined by the user's will than by micro and macro data-fed algorithms; and the fact that they are gradually becoming a default source of the available political content that informs public opinion – justify the further consolidation of social media studies in the field of public opinion and foreign policy in Brazil. With that respect, a study currently undertaken by Torresan (2018) points out to the relevance of social networks in the field. Using Facebook analysis and cross-referencing of institutional pages and profile data, he argues that the digital network itself provides direct access to a broad and accurate opinion panorama, considering the informed public and the foreign policy community in Brazil: very likely, they are all present in the network and, to some degree, interact and express attitudes online. Although focusing on elites' opinion measurement and mapping – and not on formation – Torresan's work establishes a close relationship to this attempt of inserting the studies of social digital networks into the Brazilian research agenda for public opinion in International Relations.

Still, to understand whether social media interactions reflect and expose the attitudes of a broader, uninformed public, it is necessary to observe how Brazilian foreign policy debate occupies the vast interactions in social media. Departing from the question as to whether people express their foreign policy opinions on social media, like they do with other political issues, we can then evaluate how is this expression relevant to the public debate, and what are the most frequent foreign policy themes that mobilize online network interactions.

CHAPTER 2 - TWITTER DEBATES BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY

This research is based on the monitoring of tweets containing information or commentary about Brazilian foreign policy issues, through a theme-oriented analysis. To discover whether their presence in the social network is (a) frequent and (b) relevant to the public debate, data monitoring softwares **Netlytic** and **Trendsmap**⁴⁵ were run from April 1st to June 2nd, 2019 to retrieve tweets that contained words or combination of words pertinent to key subjects in Brazilian foreign policy. Tweets that eventually contained such key words or combinations but did not relate to foreign policy debate were later excluded. The resulting collections offered a large volume of data: **751,414** tweets which explicitly spoke about Brazilian foreign policy issues, and whose incidence can be multiplied, given numerous replies and indirect references, suggesting that Brazilian Twitter users are sensitive to their country's stances regarding global affairs, interested in its relationships with other nations and international institutions⁴⁶.

Following the retrieval, the most engagement-generating tweets under each theme underwent qualitative analysis. Not only did these tweets they share foreign policy-related news, but also express their attitudes on foreign policy's pressing issues, regardless of level of knowledge. The general volume of key-issue debates, listed below, and the relevance of single tweets were measured by counting original tweets and their engagement indicators. The debate volume increased as a mobilizing events such as a presidential trip to a foreign country occurred, or as online generated content such as a Foreign Minister's controversial tweet about bilateral relations sparked engagement. This intensity, however, did not necessarily correspond to analytical depth, as it would be expected in a platform that allows for 280-character interventions. Quite on the

⁴⁵ The combination of two proprietary software applications was necessary to overcome limitations posed by Twitter Advanced Search, which displays specific tweets from any given time since, but not numbers. Thus, the need for applications such as Netlytic and Trendsmap, which have been developed with Twitter's API and produce quantitative data. They are, in turn, limited as to time frame and scope. While Trendsmap allows for retroactive search - 2 weeks in the version acquired in this research -, Netlytic provides raw data in the form of csv files.

⁴⁶ The results obtained through this research, indicating that foreign policy has appeared as a relevant subject on Twitter debate in Brazil, resonates with research results by FGV-DAPP (<http://dapp.fgv.br/meio-ambiente-e-o-principal-tema-associado-ao-governo-apos-desastre-em-brumadinho/>, accessed on June 18, 2019)) and Nexo (<https://www.nexojornal.com.br/grafico/2019/04/13/Os-primeiros-meses-de-Bolsonaro-em-seus-tu%C3%ADtes>, accessed on June 27, 2019). Both surveys were based on Twitter monitoring and placed foreign policy among the most commented issues in early 2019.

contrary, simplification stood out, possibly as a result of the platform's design in combination with the country's current political polarization.

Why Twitter?

The choice for this particular platform is due to its specific affordances⁴⁷ - from technical aspects that differ from those in other social media, such as the kind of data made available for research, and a relatively easy access to the content shared by its users, also to behavioral and communicational aspects of user interaction, such as the platform's growing tendency to work as an immediate channel for public debate⁴⁸.

Twitter has been generally perceived as a digital platform with political relevance. Its impact over the political world has become the object of robust academic research⁴⁹, as well as of more informal analysis by commentators of both politics and social communications. In the United States, for instance, Government Officials's communications via Twitter have become so important as to be treated as historic archive, managed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).⁵⁰ Often do we see public officials being accused of using Twitter as a form of dodging the official channels for political negotiation, crating factoids, announcing administrative acts or even demoralizing opponents. Like other interactive digital platforms, Twitter is known to having altered political communication. Presidential elections in the U.S. and in Brazil, respectively in 2016 and 2018, are bookcase examples of how social networks undermined the importance of traditional media in moderating the dialogue between candidates and voters. In both cases, the press often acted as a loudspeaker for candidates' interventions on social media, enabling their use as powerful tools for candidates to set or shift the electoral

⁴⁷ lit: social media affordances Routledge handbook

⁴⁸ Each social network has its particular affordances, enabling different interaction dynamics and serving different purposes. Apart from Twitter, the most popular social networks in Brazil commonly used for news information and engagement in political debate are Facebook and WhatsApp (IBOPE, 2017; Reuters Digital News Report, 2019). Recent events involving **Facebook** data breaches have posed difficulties to detecting and counting posts.

WhatsApp, in turn, is the undeniably ubiquitous media and also the primary source of political information (Ortellado, 2018) among social networks in Brazil. But any quantitative recollection of its content is prevented by privacy settings, which have recently protected conversations with end-to-end cryptography.

⁴⁹ i.e.: Todd Graham , Marcel Broersma , Karin Hazelhoff & Guido van 't Haar (2013): BETWEEN BROADCASTING POLITICAL MESSAGES AND INTERACTING WITH VOTERS, Information, Communication & Society, DOI:10.1080/1369118X.2013.785581

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2013.785581?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/POTUS44>

debate's agenda. Still, at the same time that the network serves as a platform for unorthodox political behavior, it has been praised as a powerful tool that brings public officials and citizens closer. The use of social media for political purposes can therefore be understood as a two-sided phenomenon: while it has allegedly made political debate more accessible, facilitating the exercise of citizenship, it delivers superficial and fragmented content, leaving but little space for in-depth, moderate and temporizing considerations.



Source: <https://twitter.com/jnascim/status/1123352380882472960>

Although Twitter is not as popular as other platforms, it has been regarded as the most important source for political and judicial news.⁵¹ The political importance of this social network is not a novelty. Likewise, evaluating repercussion of remarkable tweets and the social network's impact on politics and policy making is not new to academic research. However, its strategic use by

⁵¹ A literature review of political campaigning on Twitter suggests that the platform is mostly used for posting information about campaign activities and links to campaign websites, with few messages targeted at engaging or interacting with the public (Jungheer, 2016). The scholarly emphasis on Twitter can be explained by the fact that the platform is perceived as public in a way that Facebook is not (Bruns & Highfield, 2013; Larsson & Moe, 2013; Small, 2011). In addition, Twitter provides easier ways to collect public messages through its application programming interface (API) on specific topics, such as those indexed via hashtags (e.g., Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). The few studies of politics on Facebook have focused more on how the platform may influence political participation—either through promoting “get out the vote” initiatives or through social capital (e.g., Bode, 2012; Settle et al., 2016; Vaccari & Nielsen, 2013; Vitak et al., 2011). Rossini, 2018.

politicians is a recent trend, and can be justified (Rossini, 2018) by the network's use as a means for agenda setting. Twitter has a relatively low penetration among internet-using populations (it has remained stagnant at a 20-23% of U.S. internet users).⁵² Rather than popularity, what makes Twitter politically strategic is the fact that its community is largely comprised of “news-makers”, from journalists⁵³ and academics to government authorities, and not only news consumers. Evidently aware of this network composition, able communicators such as Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro have taken advantage of this sound box dynamics to drive public debate and press coverage according to their own interests: “Much of the information generated by campaigns on Twitter makes its way to mainstream media channels, thus signaling its importance as a vehicle for strategic messaging in the hybrid media context” (Rossini, 2018).

While it can be argued that this role of mediation between political and communicational elites' opinion to the general public's knowledge is no different from that played by traditional media, the network's capacity to amplify content diffusion already gives signs of significant change in informational dynamics (eg: Prier, 2017). Both Trump and Bolsonaro declared in their inauguration speeches that social media have brought them closer to their electorates, and praised their governing styles for being immediate, allegedly providing constituents with direct channels of communication. Following his election, President Jair Bolsonaro said the contact between State and citizens no longer needs mediation, because “new technologies have allowed for a direct relationship between voters and their representatives”.⁵⁴ Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo also included a mention to this supposed direct contact in his inauguration speech:

“Falar com a sociedade não é simplesmente falar, é principalmente ouvir. Vou dar um exemplo do que temos para ouvir. É o comentário de uma pessoa que segue a minha conta do tweeter (sic.), que diz o seguinte... li isso ontem: “Antes eu não entendia o amor do povo da Inglaterra pela rainha. Agora entendo. Quando

⁵² Shearer, E., Gottfried, J. (2017, September 7). News use across social media platforms 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.journalism.org/2017/09/07/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2017/>

⁵³ <https://www.adweek.com/digital/report-journalists-make-up-a-quarter-of-all-verified-twitter-accounts/>

⁵⁴ Source: Justiça Eleitoral on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwxoARdeyro&t=27s>. See also: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/12/leia-o-discurso-feito-jair-bolsonaro-em-sua-diplomacao-como-presidente-da-republica.shtml>

*temos alguém que ama seu país e seu povo e os defende, ganha amor e respeito. Não conhecíamos isso antes de Bolsonaro.”*⁵⁵

Global reach

Twitter began operating in 2006, and quickly increased its number of monthly active users (MAU) until 2016, reaching 317,000. As a consequence of stricter privacy regulations launched in 2017, and the platform’s effort to outcast robots and fake profiles in the last couple of years, the number of MAU grew at a slower pace. As of the first quarter of 2019, the micro-blogging service averaged at 330,000 MAU. The amount of content produced, however, remained steady, in resonance with the perception of a faithful, captive audience: since 2014, the platform registers a consistent average of 500,000 tweets per day. It is worth pointing out that this content is not restricted to Twitter audience. The interdependent flow of communications between other social media and traditional news outlets suggests a wider spread of content among non-users. At the same time Twitter users share links to online news outlets and YouTube videos, tweets by public figures are often reported newspapers and television programs, commented on Facebook, shared via WhatsApp to a much larger public. In addition, Twitter content is accessible regardless of registry: any internet user can access the microblog in search for specific profiles. For example, by entering a query on any online search tool for Bolsonaro on Twitter, the official profile appears, with all its published content.

As it grew in numbers and revenue, establishing its particular traits as an online ‘public square’, Twitter has gained relevance in political discussions worldwide (Machado et. al., 2018) The platform is often used to share links to politics-related news issued on online media outlets; yet, users not only seek information, but also express their views and engage in user-to-user debate regarding multiple political issues, including foreign affairs. This behavior is induced, in part, by government officials’ and heads of State’ recent practice of using their Twitter profiles to announce foreign policy initiatives, comment on global affairs and communicate among peers -

⁵⁵<http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/discursos-artigos-e-entrevistas-categoria/ministro-das-relacoes-exteriores-discursos/19907-discurso-do-ministro-ernesto-araujo-durante-cerimonia-de-posse-no-ministerio-das-relacoes-exteriores-brasilia-2-de-janeiro-de-2019>

in what has been called *twiplomacy*⁵⁶, a parallel and reportedly ‘less diplomatic’ channel to intergovernmental official communications. The easy tool that enabled users from all parts of the world to swiftly express attitude became prone to the general trend of political polarization⁵⁷ - suggesting that, as any other political issue, foreign policy debates could be subject to polarization.

“At important moments of political and military crises, social media users not only share substantial amounts of professional news, but also share extremist, sensationalist, conspiratorial, masked commentary, fake news and other forms of junk news. [...] Consequently, social polarization is a driver—just as much as it may be a result—of polarized social media news consumption patterns.”⁵⁸

Twitter in Brazil

In Brazil, since 2014 at least, acting politicians have used the microblog to publicize their actions and views on a daily basis, and establish direct communication with constituents, often inviting audiences to live online conversations⁵⁹. As of May, 2019, former President Dilma Rousseff’s Twitter account was the leading political figure profile, with 6.1 million followers. Among all Brazilian accounts, hers was 41st in number of followers. Acting President Jair Bolsonaro came in second among most popular political figures, with 4.2 million followers. His official profile, however, was the fastest-growing in the political segment, with more than 230,000 new followers in April 2019 alone. More significant than the overall number of followers, this growing rate tends to grant *@jairbolsonaro* undisputed leadership in terms of influence capacity, to the point

⁵⁶ <https://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2018/> and <https://twiplomacy.com/info/south-america/brazil/>

⁵⁷ KELLY, John, FRANÇOIS, Camille, “This is what filter bubbles actually look like”, MIT Technology Review, Aug. 22, 2018. Available at: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/611807/this-is-what-filter-bubbles-actually-look-like/> and MARCHAL, Nahema, NEUDERT Lisa-Maria, KOLLANYI, Bence, HOWARD, Philip N., and KELLY, John. “Polarization, Partisanship and Junk News Consumption on Social Media During the 2018 US Midterm Elections.” Data Memo 2018.5. Oxford, UK: Project on Computational Propaganda.

⁵⁸ Vidya Narayanan, Vlad Barash, John Kelly, Bence Kollanyi, Lisa-Maria Neudert, and Philip N. Howard. “Polarization, Partisanship and Junk News Consumption over Social Media in the US.” Data Memo 2018.1. Oxford, UK: Project on Computational Propaganda. comprop.ox.ac.uk

⁵⁹ Source: Twitter https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/a/2014/in-brazil-twitter-also-a-platform-for-political-conversation.html

which presidential tweets are reported to affect intra-governmental relations with both allies and opposition, as well as the administration's agenda⁶⁰. The subsequent fastest growing political profiles remain far behind in the dispute for a larger audience: former President Lula comes in second, having attracted approximately 59,000 new followers in these same period.⁶¹

The political debate, however, is not restricted to the engagement with politicians: analysts, communicators, news outlets and the general public, all share political content and comment intensely on political matters (as shown by both the research project *Monitor do Debate Político Digital*⁶² and the *FGV DAPP Theme Monitor*⁶³ through surveys with consistent results in terms of popularity and distribution of political news over the past two years). According to the 2018 Reuters Institute Digital News Report in partnership with Oxford University, 66% of Brazilians use social media platforms as their main source of news, and 14% rely on Twitter for this type of content. In the eve of the 2018 elections, a Twitter Insight Survey⁶⁴ found that 70% of Brazilian users accessed the microblog in search of political information, and, more importantly, 60% claimed that the ideas sustained by presidential candidates in their official Twitter profiles contributed to their electoral choice. Among undecided voters, 78% said the candidates' official Twitter profiles could help them decide. This resonates with 2018 IBOPE survey results, according to which 56% of voters agree that social media has some influence over their electoral choice, ahead of traditional media, political parties and leaders in multiple segments of society⁶⁵. When it comes to forming opinions about candidates, the aggregate influence of social media interaction only loses to live, personal conversations with relatives and friends. When considering responses that attribute "a lot of influence" to information sources, social networks stand first (36%), followed by traditional media (35%).

⁶⁰ <https://www.ft.com/content/9f447d90-508c-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

⁶¹ Sources: Twitur <https://www.twitur.com/statistics/brazil/politics>; Socialbakers <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/brazil/society/politics/>. The number of followers cannot be considered the only relevant variable to define a profile as more or less influential.

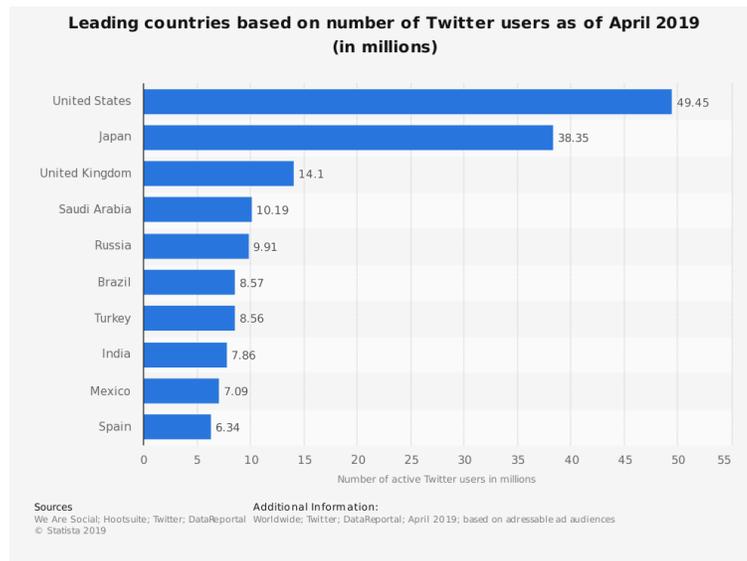
⁶² <http://www.monitordigital.org/>

⁶³ <http://dapp.fgv.br/politica-na-rede/pulso/>

⁶⁴ https://blog.twitter.com/pt_br/topics/company/2018/twitter-e-as-eleicoes-2018-no-brasil.html

⁶⁵ <http://www.ibopeinteligencia.com/noticias-e-pesquisas/redes-sociais-e-midias-tradicionais-sao-as-fontes-de-informacao-com-mais-influencia-na-escolha-do-presidente-em-2018/>

Out of 140 million active social media users (66% of the country’s population), 43% are estimated to use Twitter; and as of 2017, 28% had the app on their mobile phones (IBOPE, 2018). Research shows, however, that Brazilian profiles currently account for approximately 8.6 million monthly active users,⁶⁶ resulting in a large amount of less frequent access or non-subscription access. Still, Brazil was the fifth country in number of users as of 2019 first quarter,⁶⁷ out of a total 330 million⁶⁸ monthly active users; the country currently has 8.57 million MAU.



1 – Methodology

Interaction on Twitter is made up of different forms of participation. A user can initiate or contribute to a debate by posting an original tweet, retweeting another user’s tweet - simply reposting it without any comment - or quoting it with a comment. Twitter assembles both retweets and quotes of a tweet under a single figure. Users can also interact through “likes” - expressed through clicks on the heart-shaped button - and public replies.

⁶⁶ See: <https://www.statista.com/topics/737/twitter/>;

https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/02/07/twitter-reveals-its-daily-active-user-numbers-first-time/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.892adda49e01

⁶⁷ https://datareportal.com/?utm_source=Statista&utm_medium=Data_Citation_Hyperlink&utm_campaign=Data_Partners&utm_content=Statista_Data_Citation

⁶⁸ https://s22.q4cdn.com/826641620/files/doc_financials/2019/q1/Q1-2019-Selected-Company-Metrics-and-Financials.pdf

Original tweets correspond to spontaneous manifestations about a given issue. Retweets, quotes and replies are content-generating forms of engagement; whereas likes indicate *engagement* and *stance (attitude manifestation)*, as they most likely stand for endorsement, but do not generate content. Both forms of engagement increase a single tweets' exposure, but content-generating forms of engagement have the power to enhance the exposure of an entire topic; that is why content-generating engagement is a more relevant measurement for verifying the overall presence or pervasiveness of a given debate. Therefore, albeit all forms considered, the quantity of retweets and quotes, expressed in a single figure, along with replies, have precedence over likes when assessing engagement. Moreover, examining recurring words in tweets, herein presented in the form of word clouds, indicate the pertinence of a given term/word to a semantic universe. For illustrative purposes, we could imagine that out of 1000 tweets with the word "blue", 60% could contain the word *color*, 40% could contain the word *mood*. The recurring words, therefore, indicate the semantic groups to which the different acceptations of the word "blue" belong. Recurring words also allude to a topic of discussion.

In the analysis undertaken with the help of monitoring software **Netlytic**⁶⁹, several research refinements were attempted in order to narrow down the final sample to tweets pertinent to this research. This refinement endeavor became particularly necessary in cases which the terms used in the query would track down discussions alien to the foreign affairs universe. In order to ensure that only the debate about Brazilian Foreign Policy was considered, three restrictive criteria had to be employed. First, to cast out words that could refer to International Relations issues, geographic parameters were added to circumscribe the discussion to the Brazilian territory. Words such as "Venezuela", "Global Warming" or IMF, for instance, had to be restricted, as they could potentially refer to events and discussions with no connection to the Brazilian approach to such matters. Second, and for similar reasons, a language barrier was applied. This criterium has proven to be less efficient than the previous: although Twitter API filters language on the basis of the idiom in which the tweet is written, it is not unusual for Brazilian users to interact in foreign languages when responding to posts written in English or Spanish, or engaging with foreign profiles - thus, language filter potentially alienates relevant interaction from those users. Third, as

⁶⁹ https://netlytic.org/home/?page_id=10834

to discard ambiguity in words that populate more than one semantic universe, refinement tools allowed for the exclusion of tweets containing words that evidently pertain to a different, unrelated semantic universe. A simple query with “Mercosul”, for instance, granted a wider scope, but suffered with the interference of unrelated issues. The word was found in multiple comments about the participation of Brazilian football teams in a homonymous Latin American tournament.

Search parameters on Netlytic had to be manually set to enable geographically restricted collections, which here encompassed most of the national territory, and set São Paulo as a radial center (the city was found to be the main tweet-diffusion hub for the selected words, due to its large population and high degree of connectivity). In order to check the accuracy of the search parameters, in respect to their capacity to retrieve pertinent content, datasets were later compared with the results obtained from queries launched in the monitoring software **Trendsmap**⁷⁰. This tool enabled automatized geographic refinement, offered accurate language differentiation and automatically presented tweet counts, as well as its own assessment of most relevant tweets in a given discussion, while still allowing for manual word exclusion, in respect to the third criterium. Although obtaining these observable debate features were the main objective of manually set parameters for Netlytic queries, Trendsmap results could not be used as a primary source for research material, as the software version employed in this research did not provide raw, manageable and verifiable datasets. Trendsmap results were hence used for checking results and proving methodological accuracy.

1.1 - Parameters extracted from *Las Americas*:

The first set of queries in this research was formed by words introduced in the survey *Las Americas and The World, Brazil Report*. The survey explicitly asked about the respondents’ awareness and opinion regarding specific subjects concerning Brazilian foreign policy. This exercise enabled researchers to measure the respondents’ degree of knowledge about both foreign policy in general and a given foreign policy issue or institution. Here, those questions were condensed in key-words, which were then employed in the query parameters listed below. These key-words were then assembled in seven key foreign policy subjects: (1) Regional Integration;

⁷⁰ <https://www.trendsmap.com/>

(2) ‘MRE’ (Portuguese acronym for Foreign Relations Ministry); (3) ‘OEA’ (Portuguese acronym for the Organization of American States); (4) ‘ONU’ (Portuguese acronym for the United Nations); (5) ‘FMI’ (Portuguese acronym for the International Monetary Fund); (6) ‘aquecimento global’ (Portuguese for “global warming”), and (7) ‘China’. In some cases, however, coincidences were found between the words extracted from the Las Americas report and the foreign policy events that have had spontaneous salience in the period during which this research was conducted. Hence, other key issues that could have been added to this list, such as ‘Estados Unidos’ (United States), overlapped with the second criteria of parametrization, which corresponds to mediatic popularity of themes, to be developed further on. This choice for sets of words and themes bares consistency with previous research, and coincides with some of the main axes of Brazilian Foreign Policy nowadays. Although methodologically consistent, this first parametrization criterium deviated from one of Twitter’s crucial attributes: spontaneity of manifestations and interactions⁷¹. Because online debate is often event-driven, a second criterium was employed to curb this deviation and comprehend unbiased observations of spontaneous mobilization around events - from exogenous factors such as political facts and official declarations to endogenous ones, such as mobilizing or controversial tweets. This deviation had been considered before data collection and measurements; still, against expectations, figures extracted in the first set of queries appeared quantitatively relevant. In total, these queries produced **216,107** pertinent observations in a two-month period, regarding **seven** key issues extracted from the Las Americas survey.

1.2 - Parameters extracted from popular occurrences and Trending Topics

As an alternative, an inductive set of key issues was produced, in response to the most politically relevant and popularly commented foreign policy events within a certain time frame. While establishing political relevance and popularity entailed a certain degree of subjectivity, a guideline was established to escape mere impression and discretionary choice: the key issues that fit the second parameter had to be based on foreign policy news and content with repercussions in

⁷¹ While it is possible to drive and somewhat manipulate the popularity of a certain message, relevance and engagement are dependent on voluntary expression and the viral capacity of contents. See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-43218939> ; <https://rethinkmedia.org/blog/how-does-twitter-decide-what-trending> ; <https://socialpubli.com/blog/how-to-be-trending-topic-on-twitter/>

mass media outlets. This set of words reflects relevant facts in foreign policy, but also, relevant online discussions motivated by influential foreign policy authors, such as the President himself, government members, authorities, political leaders, analysts and commentators. Nevertheless, this approach may suggest a downcast of the independent character of social media as an element of public opinion formation, given that the aprioristic choice of words would be conditioned to mass media influence. Despite this contingency, data retrieval revealed that original tweets, which may not have been ballasted with actual policy facts, generated substantial degree of engagement. Some of them appeared on Twitter in the form of trending topics. Three key issues (not previously selected, but established as they emerged) were obtained under this popularity criterium: Brazil's bilateral relationship with the United States, the bilateral relationship with Israel, and the country's approach to the Venezuelan political crisis - altogether accounted for **576,745** pertinent observations.

What follows is a list of key-issue queries and their respective data collection from April to June, 2019. The tweets are written as published, preserving original orthography⁷². The data listed below show the number of single tweets containing the words set to retrieve each key issue. They include retweets, thus comprehending repetitive content, but do not consider replies or related tweets that may have partaken the given discussion but did not include those words. The number of tweets displayed, therefore, do not comprehend the entire debate dimension, assumed to be either equal, in case there were no related tweets without keyword mentions, or larger, in case there were. It is worth mentioning that by random observation, numerous responses expressed attitudes through emoji and expressions of encouragement or criticism. The monitoring also collected the number of unique users: different individual profiles that participated in the discussion at least once, revealing the size of the engaged community for each matter. General assessments are followed by tables including the most engaging tweets. For each search under a single parameter, the data collection software Netlytic generated separate sets once the collection reached 100,000 occurrences. Each of these data sets formed word clouds, in which most employed terms were listed in different sizes, according to their frequency. Articles and prepositions were manually excluded, revealing semantically relevant words.

⁷² Twitter communications in Portuguese sometimes prescind grammatical propriety. In many cases, instances that could be considered grammar mistakes are so written to intentionally subvert norms in favor of the platform's own linguistic standard.

A) Tweets from spontaneous/mediatic topics

A.1) United States

Brazil's relationship with the United States of America became a particularly evident subject in local media in the 2018 electoral period, and so remained during the first months of the presidential term. This bilateral partnership had been historically politicized in the national debate. Tracing back to Brazil's pursuit of autonomy in the international arena, it had been often associated with general perceptions of concepts such as independent national development, imperialism and, more recently, regional/hemispherical leadership. Ideological takes on political affinity with the U.S. eventually associated the defense of Brazil's autonomous insertion in the international system and its active investment in Latin American South-South cooperation with the political left, regardless of concrete foreign policy initiatives of political and economic cooperation that coexisted. The electoral debate rekindled this ideological association in respect to mass public attitudes, as the candidate and later president Jair Bolsonaro displayed explicit fondness towards the North American country. His manifestations of admiration were a hot topic in the media: under his administration, Brazilian foreign policy was expected (at least by some of his supporters) to turn away from multilateral institutions, Latin American and South-South cooperation, and focus on a closer partnership with Donald Trump's U.S.. Therefore, as 2019 began, not only the president's declarations, but the bilateral relationship itself was under the spotlight.

Throughout the first semester of 2019, traditional media extensively reported and commented - not without controversy - on events such as Bolsonaro's official visit to the U.S. from March 17 to 19, the subsequent bilateral agreements - especially the American support for Brazil's plight to integrate the OECD, and the technological safeguards deal that allowed for the commercial use of the Alcantara rocket launch base by American companies, signed on March 18 -, as well as Bolsonaro's second trip to the country due to an event in his honor, from May 15 to 16.

As the five major national newspapers highlighted the bilateral partnership, materialized either by facts and events or official declarations, the foreign policy issue became eligible for social media

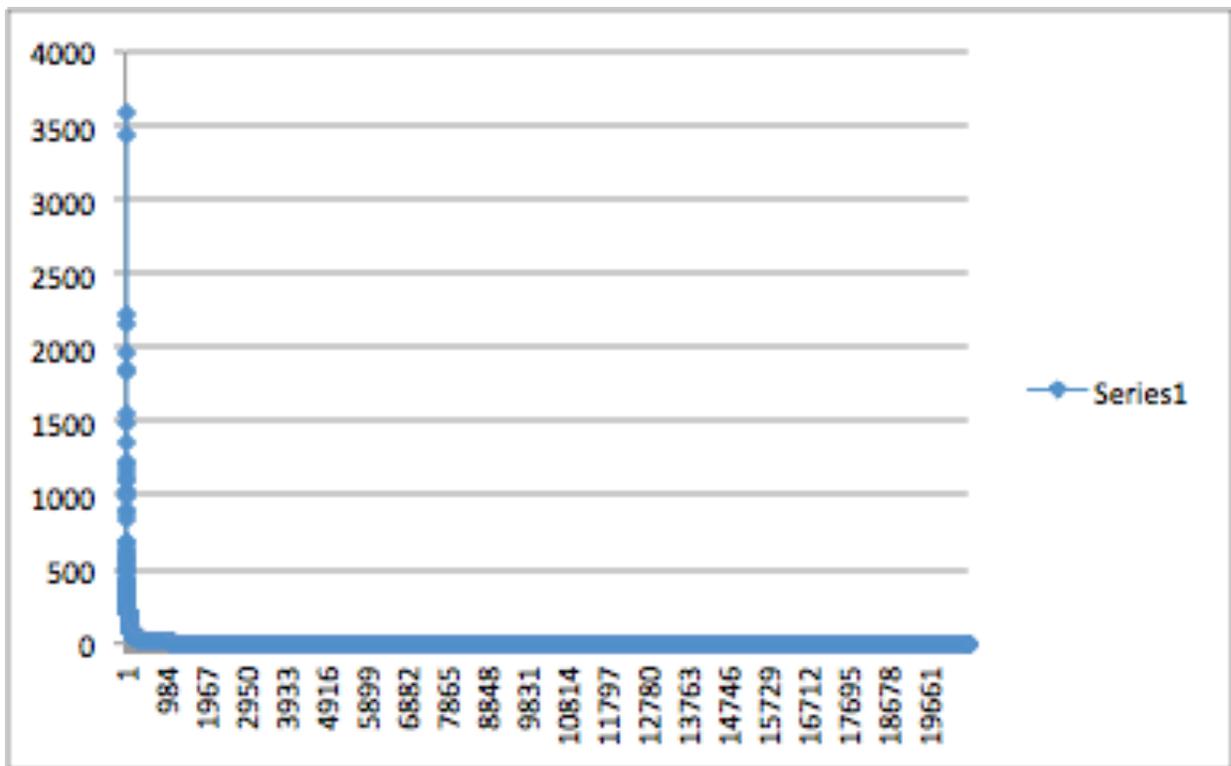
analysis, according to the aforementioned methodological criteria. Twitter engagement - original *tweets*, replies, comments and likes - was found to be significant and expressive of attitudes regarding Brazil-U.S. bilateral relations. In resonance with the subject's historical tendency to become prone to partisanship, Twitter interactions were not only frequent, but virtually entirely subject to domestic polarization. Tweets revealed either strong criticism or support regarding the presidency in general.

Debate in numbers

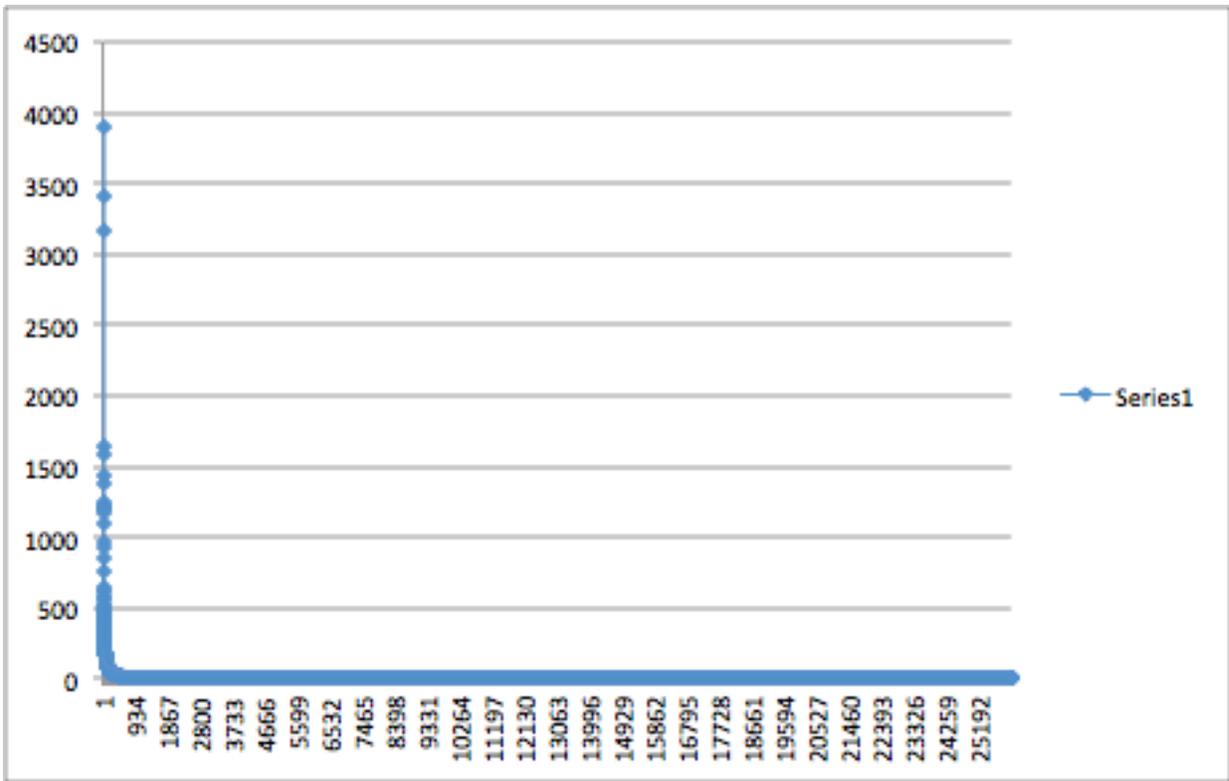
In order to retrieve tweets that referred to the Brazil-U.S. bilateral relationship, search parameters were established to reflect the presence of a combination of pertinent terms in one single tweet: the retrieval was programmed to find posts which included the words “Brasil” or “Bolsonaro” combined with “EUA” or “Estados Unidos” (the Portuguese acronym of “USA” and the Portuguese name for “United States”, respectively). From April 1st to June 2, 2019, this search retrieved **205,072** tweets. Additionally, a second dataset was built with tweets that combined “Bolsonaro” and “Trump”. In the same period, it collected **118,972** tweets. The dimension and significance of this debate are amplified when engagement indicators, such as *likes* and replies to pertinent tweets that did not contain the search parameters (and were therefore left out of the collection), are taken into consideration.

Some of the 2019 events that drove media attention to the bilateral relationship (rendering it eligible for social media analysis) were highlighted by the press happened outside the retrieval period (April 1st to June 2, 2019), such as the president's first trip to the U.S.. Still, the distribution of tweets posted during the given interval suggested that, in that sample, interactions - and hence the expression of attitudes regarding the bilateral relationship - were more intense when coinciding with events or official declarations. Out of 205,072 tweets in two months, the peak of posting activity was registered on May 15, with 22,261 occurrences. However, a different, more even distribution pattern was observed when the sample followed the “Bolsonaro AND Trump” search parameter: out of 118,972 tweets, posting activity peaks were shorter, and occurred in multiple occasions: on April 10, with 5179 tweets; May 3, with 4,329; May 5, with 4,303, and May 27, with 4,459. This revealed a less time-concentrated pattern for those discussions, which were centered in political figures rather than in political events.

Tweet engagement and content diversity, however, followed similar distribution patterns in both samples: few tweets corresponded to most of the debate. Under the first parameter, a mere 15 tweets held a 50% share of the overall debate, creating a significant concentration for similar content by replication. Under the second parameter, 15 tweets corresponded to 25% of the overall debate. Yet, in both samples, unique posts are not irrelevant, since large shares of the debate consisted of single, not retweeted messages - a long tail-shaped array of individual, original comments.



First out of three “Bolsonaro” or “Brasil” AND “EUA” or “Estados Unidos”.



First out of two collected sets of tweets under the parameter “Bolsonaro” AND “Trump”⁷³

Data collection also allowed for the identification of a limited but large community of users interested in the U.S.-Brazil bilateral relationship. In the first sample, 132,154 unique posters were identified as authors of 205,072 messages; in the second, 92,953 unique authors posted 118,972 messages. The difference between the number of tweets retrieved and the number of unique users suggested that some Twitter profiles have posted pertinent content repeatedly. (i.e.: throughout this two-month period, @GuilhermeBoulos and @gugachacra posted several different tweets containing the words “EUA”, “Bolsonaro” and “Trump”). Those frequent users may be considered “influencers” to a certain debate or field of activity, and are responsible for most of the debate concentration, as they are largely seen, commented on and retweeted. Still, similarly to content distribution in single tweets, unique users are too numerous to be considered part of a

⁷³ Charts 1 and 2 display the number of retweets a single, original tweet has had (vertical axis), and the number of tweets which have been retweeted. We can see that few tweets (quantities close to one tweet, and necessarily smaller than 984 in chart 1, and 934 in chart 2) are tweeted up to 4000 times. In turn, a large amount of tweets (up to 19661 in chart 1 and 25192 in chart 2) have been retweeted only one time, or no time at all, persisting only the original post. The conclusion drawn from these charts point to the fact that the debate, while plural, concentrates largely on specific messages, which are repeatedly replicated.

restricted group, and suggest that attitudes about U.S.-Brazil bilateral relations were widely expressed in the period.

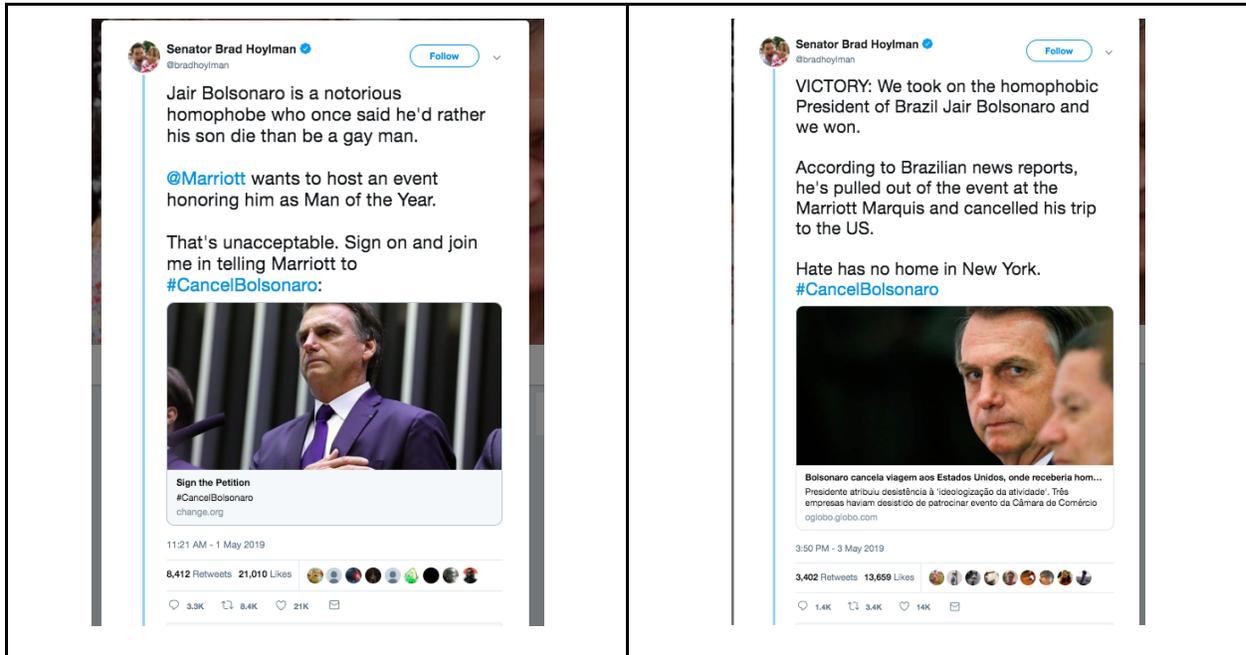
#CancelBolsonaro

The significant presence of at least one of these events on Twitter discussions was also attested by the platform itself, as a hashtag referring to Bolsonaro's second trip to the United States reached the platform's Trending Topics. The visit had been motivated by an award granted to him by the Brazilian-American Chamber of Commerce, but the original venue, the alternative venues, event sponsors, and even the city selected for the solemnity refused to host homage to the Brazilian president. The Twitter profiles of the American Museum of Natural History, the restaurant Cipriani and the New York Mayor Bill de Blasio all posted official refusals. New York State Senator Brad Holyman joined the controversy, pressuring Marriott Hotel - which had initially accepted to host the event - to cancel the visit. Holyman discharged a series of tweets and initiated the hashtag #CancelBolsonaro, reaching Brazil Trending Topics on May 2nd⁷⁴. The controversy that followed, culminating with the choice of Dallas as host city and an impromptu visit to former U.S. President George W. Bush generated a heated debate online⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ <https://revistaforum.com.br/senador-dos-eua-prega-boicote-a-bolsonaro-com-cancelbolsonaro-que-chega-aos-trending-topics-brasil/>

⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/bradhoylman/status/1123653561668255746> (left)

<https://twitter.com/bradhoylman/status/1124446073483931649?lang=en> (right)



Some of the terms revealed the intense repercussions of events such as New York Mayor's public detraction of Jair Bolsonaro, perceived by words such as "prefeito", "blasio", "contra", "comércio", and even the presence of qualitative assessments of those events and political figures involved - such as "homofóbico", "vergonha", "incrível", "emocionado" and "servidão".

The word clouds formed from the second search parameter ("Bolsonaro" and "Trump") revealed that the presidents' names were included in debates carried out in foreign languages, and inserted in discussions about international political leaders. The tweets in languages other than Portuguese ("derecha", "losing", "winning") were later excluded from the qualitative analysis, but they might have been interacted with by Brazilian users in their discussions about foreign policy and international relations in general.

amazônia banco bill blasio **bolsonaro** brasil brasileiro chama comércio
 contra câmara **eua** evento história hoje homenagem homofóbico humano israel jair jantar
 museu natural nova partido perigoso prefeito presidente quer york

agenda bem-vindo **bolsonaro** bolsonaro brasil bush convidou dallas dia
 dinheiro dólar educação essa **eua** flávio incrível inútil jair laços paga presidente
 reais receber sendo temos totalmente vez viagem visita "brasileiros"

acima asqueroso **bolsonaro** bordão brasil brasil-estados chefe comércio
 câmara dallas deus dia emocionado envergonha esqueceu **estados** ficou homenageado
 jair nojento pela presidente quer servidão terra trump tudo **unidos** voluntária york

bolsonaro brasil contra crees derecha donald duque eleição erraram eua
 jair losing media mundo nada nadie netanyahu nova nunca pensávamos presidente
trump venezuela winning  bolsonaro  macron  may  netanyahu  salvini  trump

#ep2019 #euelections2019 andrzej australia **bolsonaro** brazil donald duda farage
 france hungary india italy jair marine matteo modi morrison narendra nigel orban pen poland
 salvini scott **trump** uk viktor winning world

In order to discover the content of such a bulky debate - attesting its connection with the subject, as well as finding whether the messages were informative, analytical, etc. -, a selection of most engaging tweets was carried out by selecting the most retweeted, responded and liked posts. A combination of these factors originated a list of 20 tweets, 9 of which present top 10 highest value in ranks according to all three variables (retweet, like, reply), while 11 presented distinctive values for one or two of the variables - and were hence eligible for qualitative analysis, given their engagement potential. All among the most engaging tweets either made reference to the Brazil-U.S. bilateral relationship or to Brazilian foreign policy in general. Some, particularly in the second data set, were written in foreign languages, and therefore excluded from qualitative

analysis. Still, the largest bulk of data was recognized as Portuguese. Most engaging tweets showed attitude expression.

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/luizgui Prado/status/129075568761331713?lang=en	Bush: “Não confirmei a visita. Ele mesmo se convidou” NY: “Bolsonaro não é bem-vindo aqui” Dallas: “Não estamos confortáveis em receber alguém como Bolsonaro” Jair: “Brasileiros, temos uma agenda incrível de compromissos nos EUA para estreitar laços econômicos” Dólar: R\$4,02	34712	96406	285
https://twitter.com/FernandoHortaOf/status/1129908608593006594	Amigo Bolsonarista, dia 26 você vai para rua em apoio a quê? ao dólar a 4,10? à gasolina de 5 reais? ao direito de receber o salário dos funcionários, como faz flávio bolsonaro? pedindo mais cortes "padrão fifa" na educação? ou para adotar a bandeira dos EUA de vez?	18289	50693	883
https://twitter.com/felipeneto/status/1129026344212467712?lang=en	Queremos resposta do Bolsonaro sobre o q ele foi fazer nos EUA com dinheiro público! Não houve prêmio algum. Não foi convidado pelo Bush. Visitou museu e bar. Ele está fazendo turismo com amigos, usando o nosso dinheiro, enquanto o Brasil explode.	14515	55879	1400
https://twitter.com/guilhermeboulos/status/1129118017873489922?lang=en	Bolsonaro em Dallas: "Brasil e Estados Unidos acima de tudo". É nojento, asqueroso. É servidão voluntária. Ficou tão emocionado de estar na terra do chefe que até esqueceu de Deus no bordão. Bolsonaro envergonha o Brasil.	6207	32538	1400
https://twitter.com/severiano_andre/status/1124738910888833026	Vcs repararam que Trump não moveu sequer 1 pentelho da orelha em prol do Bozo em NY? E eu nem digo politicamente, mas pessoalmente mesmo. Nem 1 tuitzinho, bicho. O mundo é o playground e Bolsonaro é a criança com piolho.	5957	23311	206
https://twitter.com/Estadao/status/1117015823879507968	>@EstadaoInter Prefeito de Nova York chama Bolsonaro de perigoso, racista e homofóbico	5321	25159	2900
https://twitter.com/gugachacra/status/116884665389002752	Prefeito de NY, Bill de Blasio, chama Bolsonaro de ser humano perigoso e pede ao Museu de História Natural que cancele evento da Câmara do Comércio BRASIL- EUA que homenageará o presidente do Brasil. No @nypost	4409	21851	1900
https://twitter.com/BolsonaroSP/status/1129382622298333184	@BolsonaroSP: Tem imagens que você só vai ver na internet - e outras só na TV aberta. Receptividade de Jair Bolsonaro em Dallas, EUA 🇺🇸🇧🇷	4394	20736	1500

https://twitter.com/manueladavila/status/1127939375730438144	Bolsonaro vai aos EUA pela segunda vez, sem nunca ter pisado o Nordeste brasileiro como presidente da República, lembrou bem o professor Guilherme Casarões (FGV).	4011	26335	2700
https://twitter.com/haddad_fernando/status/1123560001711280129	Vexame sem fim: A companhia aérea Delta Airlines e a consultoria Bain & Company desistiram de apoiar a premiação de “Pessoa do Ano”, promovida pela Câmara de Comércio Brasil-Estados Unidos. Motivo: o homenageado.	3554	18420	1900
https://twitter.com/jovensreacinhas/status/1117963581457354752	Bolsonaro Incêndio no Museu Nacional "foda-se" Incêndio na França "Nossas orações para o povo francês" Trabalhador assassinado pelo exército no RJ "foda-se" Tiroteio nos EUA "Nossas orações para os americanos" Brasil acima de nada, qualquer estrangeiro acima dos brasileiros	3188	10149	27
https://twitter.com/GuilhermeBoulos/status/1115669528501981184	"Quero explorar a região amazônica em parceria com os EUA", disse hoje Bolsonaro na Jovem Pan. Ou seja, quer entregar a Amazônia, como entregou a base de Alcântara. É um escândalo! Bolsonaro tem que ser indiciado por crime de lesa-pátria.	2813	13362	962
https://twitter.com/jornalismowando/status/1124285520291467265	Quer dizer que Bolsonaro colocou uma estatal para bancar uma festa em sua homenagem? Seria isso crime de responsabilidade?	2553	8663	288
https://twitter.com/embaixadaeua/status/1131526230073851909	Os Estados Unidos mantêm seu apoio ao #Brasil para início do processo de adesão à #OECD (OCDE), como anunciado em 19 de março, na declaração do @POTUS, de @JairBolsonaro e pela @WHAAsstSecty	2509	13767	287
https://twitter.com/acaucb/status/1125537822688067584	Bolsonaro vai pro Texas receber uma homenagem, mas no Nordeste n pisou desde que assumiu a presidência da república. Em pouco mais de quatro meses de governo, serão 2 viagens aos EUA, e nenhuma visita a região mais pobre do seu país.	2210	13272	230
https://twitter.com/mariosabinof/status/1124148101395156997	Jair Bolsonaro deveria receber a homenagem de Pessoa do Ano na Trump Tower. É o único lugar de Nova York totalmente imune à demagogia do Partido Democrata.	2146	16083	306
https://twitter.com/erdwenzel/status/115423618618613761	Deutsche Welle já repercute entrevista de Bolsonaro à emissora de rádio de SP. Deixa ver se eu entendi: Bolsonaro quer parceria com EUA para explorar a Amazônia? Jornalista alemão acaba de me perguntar: Brasileiro não tem amor à sua terra não, vai entregar para os gringos?	2133	5923	215

https://twitter.com/IvanValente/status/1124270069155024896	O mesmo Banco do Brasil que teve sua propaganda comercial vetada por destacar a diversidade da juventude brasileira vai patrocinar o jantar em homenagem a Bolsonaro nos EUA. Diversidade não pode. Bancar regalos com dinheiro público, pode.	1962	7569	202
https://twitter.com/delucca/status/1124447034285723648	No mesmo dia, Bolsonaro cancela a viagem que faria aos Estados Unidos porque NENHUM local quer abrigar a homenagem que ele receberia, e ainda levou na cara que o Brasil não é elegível para integrar a OTAN, contrariando a promessa de Trump. Grande dia!	1922	9202	111
https://twitter.com/carlosbolsonaro/status/1124476516547661824	Um desperdício de energia disputar com um possível candidato a presidência dos EUA que trata assim países com relações diplomáticas e comerciais. A democracia e o mundo que preza pela liberdade perdem. As facetas sendo deflagradas. Acerta o Presidente Bolsonaro. Isso é esquerda!	1885	11362	2000
https://twitter.com/MarceloFreixo/status/1126100678286376960	O presidente @jairbolsonaro tietou, lambeu as botas, rifou os benefícios comerciais brasileiros na OMC para agradar Trump e acabou levando bola nas costas. Os EUA não estão nem aí se o Brasil entra ou não na OCDE. Bolsonaro é só uma marionete. #TexasCancelBolsonaro	1675	9575	421
https://twitter.com/MouraoGal/status/1113054291776978946	O presidente foi a Israel e ganhamos inimigos árabes. Foi aos EUA e ganhamos inimigos mexicanos e chineses. Só olhou para a Venezuela e ganhamos inimigos russos. E ainda nos acusam de ser contra a globalização. Vamos unir o mundo contra o Brasil	1390	6598	67

In common, those tweets inserted Brazil-U.S. bilateral relationship in discussions about domestic politics. Users publicly identified with the political left issued majority of those engaging tweets. Some criticized Bolsonaro's alleged subservience to the U.S., others questioned the impact of the president's visit to the country on the public budget.

A2) Israel

On March 31, 2019, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro landed on Israel for a three-day official visit. The trip itself was controversial - it was among the first presidential travels of his term, following a trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, in January that year, and official visits to the United States of America, on March 17, and Chile on March 21. The order of a president's visit to a foreign country is a customary indication of a state's priorities in terms of bilateral

partnerships; and Bolsonaro began by subverting the traditional order of Brazil's long-cherished bonds. Even more controversial were the events and declarations before and during the visit. They were then understood as signs of actual rupture with some cornerstones of Brazilian Foreign Policy - such as Brazil's long held stance as an advocate for the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, Bolsonaro had pledged to change the Brazilian embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem, in apparent disregard for any foreseeable consequences, and intended as gift to the evangelical caucus, one of the political groups forming his Congressional support base. During the trip, however, he recoiled, announcing instead the installation of a trade office in the sacred city. This rollback was like remedy to a *reckless* promise, but failed to please evangelicals, irritated Arabs and raised concern among foreign policy officials and analysts. Moreover, the perspective of jeopardizing the positive \$ 3.9 billion trade balance with Arab League countries (FP DATA), leading buyers of Brazilian halal meat, irritated agricultural producers - one of the president's most powerful constituent groups.

On Twitter, the debate was already engaging experts and inciting less analytical, but inflamed, manifestations from both the president's supporters and detractors. Even among those non-experts, clear stances regarding Brazil's policy towards Israel, Palestine and the Middle East in general could be perceived. At some point, however, a surprisingly complex hashtag - #HamavoteiNoHaddad - in reference to the presidential visit to Israel, created by the president's opponents, hit the platform's Trending Topics - spurring an ever more complex debate in social media. On April 1, political group Hamas issued a public statement condemning the Brazilian President's trip to Israel, particularly Bolsonaro's and Benjamin Netanyahu's joint visit to Jerusalem's Western Wall. In response, one of the president's sons and Rio de Janeiro Senator Flávio Bolsonaro tweeted: "I want you to EXPLODE!!!!", linking to a news piece on the Hamas' declaration. In no time, the Senator erased the tweet, without any explanation. Still, the moments during which the tweet remained online were enough to generate a mediatic crisis: the content was seen by thousands of Twitter users, and the traditional mass media reported the gaffe. Subsequently, railers of Flávio's tweet began employing the hashtag #HamavoteiNoHaddad (or some of its variations, such as #hamaseuvoteinohaddad and other non-significant alterations) in their tweets, along with critical commentary, as further demonstrated.

Meant to be understood as a joke, the hashtag implied a “plea for mercy”, as if asking Hamas, a key actor in the conflict, not to retaliate, because the engaged users had voted for Fernando Haddad, Jair Bolsonaro’s opponent in the 2018 presidential election. The hashtag was shared as a humorous take on the knowingly unrealistic possibility of retaliation, but denounced the administration’s partisanship in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An interpretation of the hashtag’s content reveals an intricate connection between the public’s understanding of both a foreign policy issue and a domestic matter. It presumes some degree of knowledge about the fact that Hamas is a relevant actor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that it is considered a terrorist group by the United States. The label also indicates some knowledge of Brazilian Foreign Policy, as it refers to a concern Brazil could potentially join the list of countries targeted as enemies by extremist groups, becoming a victim of violent attacks - something the country has historically managed to keep at bay.

Despite being an extreme simplification of these highly complex issues, the hashtag manages to condense elements of information and opinion, on the one hand, and to address the polarized domestic political environment, suggesting that Haddad - the opponent - would follow a different foreign policy guideline had he won. Provocation, therefore, did not restrict itself to the foreign policy debate, nor to the political polarization in course; rather, it mixed the two dimensions together. The reaction displayed by Bolsonaro’s supporters corroborated this interpretation. Multiple posts stated that “the left” or “leftists” were vile to the point of “supporting terrorists”. Observing the tweets, one could find that this reactive trend had examples of true misunderstanding of the original hashtag, but was mainly a strategy to vilify the ones on the other side of the political spectrum. A complex matter such as Middle Eastern Politics was then reduced to a social media battle within the Brazilian ideological divide; it became an instrument for a narrative dispute between the left and the right.

The digital mobilization that followed Bolsonaro’s visit to Israel, as well as the hashtag that emerged from the debate, is one among many examples of Twitter users’ engagement and will to express attitudes regarding Foreign Policy issues. The queries and results described in the following pages not only show that the subject is present in the social media environment in the form of a prolific debate, through evident opinion manifestations, but also suggest an important

conclusion as to *how* the digital debate occurs and presents itself. The following data support the idea of an appropriation of foreign policy issues by the current political polarization.



During the two-month monitoring period, a total of 140.393 tweets were retrieved containing the words “Bolsonaro” or “Brazil” in combination with “Israel” or “Jerusalem”. Another 9685 included the hashtag #HamasVoteiNoHaddad. At least 98.364 unique users participated in the debate. Similarly to the results presented in the Brazil-U.S. query, the chronological distribution of tweets presented a pattern of higher concentration on the days when foreign policy events or actors’ statements were reported. Tweets peaked on April 2nd, with 77,480 messages. The word clouds generated for every set revealed dominance of terms related to the presidential visit, alluding to Bolsonaro’s controversial affirmations regarding the Holocaust and to celebrities involved in the promotion and celebration of the Brazilian-Israeli relationship. Among the most engaging tweets, aside from those issued by the president himself, criticism prevailed, either in the form of explicit disapproval and contradiction of the President’s remarks in that context, or by the sharing of critical news pieces.

amei **bolsonaro** brasil esquerda frente governo greenpeace grupo hamas
 história holocausto hospedado hotel **israel** jair judeus medina museu nada nazis
 nazismo netanyahu neymar paz presidente recepção sucesso terrorista visita visitado

@astro_pontes @mctic andamento **bolsonaro** brasil country crimes
 days dessalinização destroy eduardo embaixador forgiven governo hamas holocaust
 holocausto iniciativa início **israel** jair museu nordeste palestino president
 presidente programa reputation reunião água

acadêmicos alvo aráujo **bolsonaro** brasil chacota chanceler criticado diplomáticos
 embaixada ernesto escritório hamas holocausto internacionais israel jair
jerusalém memorial/museu museu nazismo políticos presidente segundo sido vashem
 visita visitado yad árabes

bolsonaro brasil brasileiro desastre diplomático embaixador falou holocausto
 https://t.co/ixoyspzeyi imagem **israel** isso medina mundo museu netanyahu neymar nossa
 notícia ofendeu paz país perdoado presidente presidência religiões sucesso temos vergonha visita

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/felipeneto/status/1117215668414439424	Em resumo, o nosso Presidente que tem a capacidade mental de uma azeitona, disse publicamente em evento no RJ que O HOLOCAUSTO PODE SER PERDOADO. O Presidente de Israel se pronunciou, falando: "nós nunca perdoaremos e nunca esqueceremos". A notícia tá viralizando em Israel.	19,500	80049	1500
https://twitter.com/jessicambrosio/status/1112769000986107909	amei a recepção que o greenpeace fez ao bolsonaro em frente o hotel que ele ta hospedado em israel	13778	44025	118
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1113158371761422337	- Netanyahu, Bolsonaro, Neymar e Medina pelo Sucesso de Brasil e Israel.	9602	57094	2900

https://twitter.com/felipeneto/status/1117216237908635653	Aliás, não é só em Israel. A notícia de que o Presidente do Brasil falou que o Holocausto pode ser perdoado está viralizando no mundo inteiro. É uma VERGONHA para a nossa imagem, um DESASTRE diplomático. É isso que dá eleger uma capivara pra Presidência de um país.	9590	50389	1300
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1115185430901788672	O alinhamento do Governo Bolsonaro com Israel teve algum impacto sobre as exportações com os árabes? o faturamento dos exportadores para o período foi o maior da história: R\$ 2,3bilhões.	7327	46811	1700
https://twitter.com/ronilso_pacheco/status/1113104190103056387	Bolsonaro no Brasil sobre a escravidão: “Dívida? Que dívida? Eu não escravizei ninguém”. Bolsonaro em Israel sobre o Holocausto: “Quem esquece o passado está condenado a não ter futuro”. A gente chama de desonestidade, burrice ou racismo?	5817	15922	237
https://twitter.com/OliverStuenkel/status/1117212233761730560	How to destroy a country's reputation in 100 days	5760	15777	291
https://twitter.com/Haddad_Fernando/status/1113032780978454528	No Brasil, cristãos, muçulmanos e judeus não só vivem em paz, como casam entre si. Em visita a Israel, Bolsonaro ignorou os primeiros, ofendeu os segundos e frustrou os últimos, além de importar um conflito inexistente entre nós. Nenhum ganho. Pena.	5378	34075	2400
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1149280327665422337	- Na ONU o Governo Jair Bolsonaro apresentará suas prioridades no documento de candidatura à reeleição no Conselho de Direitos Humanos da ONU. As principais pautas estão ligadas ao fortalecimento das estruturas familiares e a exclusão das menções de gênero.	4588	31789	2700
https://twitter.com/folha/status/1113077131054067713	Nazismo é de direita, define Museu do Holocausto visitado por Bolsonaro em Israel	4331	21231	1300
https://twitter.com/lulaoficial/status/1113432097459449857	Lula foi o 1º presidente brasileiro a visitar Israel. Mas também visitou a Palestina, não ofendeu povos e religiões, defendeu a paz e a solução pacífica de dois estados, respeitando a tradição diplomática brasileira. E o Brasil ganhou com mais respeito e comércio #timeLula	4,174	22880	1900
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1131367333442797568	Estive há pouco na cerimônia do 71º aniversário do Estado de Israel. Nunca nossos laços de amizade e cooperação estiveram tão fortes. Shalom. - com Embaixador de Israel no Brasil, Yossi Shelley.	3,723	32537	1,700
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/	Nosso dia hoje em Israel: temos a certeza que estamos mudando a imagem de desconfiança do	3,716	24575	1200

1113245106101018626	Brasil para os investidores e cidadãos estrangeiros! Podemos e vamos fazer muito mais!			
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1113050653507629057	Na Terra Santa (Israel) padre da Paraíba abençoa o Governo Jair Bolsonaro.	3694	23889	1200
https://twitter.com/MarceloCRedeTV/status/1113378190955823104	Assistam o vídeo: A visita foi um sucesso e como a Globo não conseguiu arranjar nada para culpar o presidente Bolsonaro, metem o pau no premiê de Israel. Podem aguardar: no desespero em breve o Jornal Nacional vai revelar que quem matou Odete Roitman realmente foi Bolsonaro.	2841	17031	786
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1117217371599646720	Andamento do início do Programa de Dessalinização da água no Nordeste com o Governo Bolsonaro. Trabalho oriundo de Israel com a iniciativa do @mctic via @Astro_Pontes .	5343	32332	1800
https://twitter.com/carlosbolsonaro/status/1117443918176620545	O que foi escrito pelo Presidente Jair Bolsonaro durante sua visita ao Museu do Holocausto em Israel. Foto tirada pelo embaixador de Israel no Brasil, Yossi Shelley. Essa verdade você não verá na imprensa desinformadora.	3460	16758	1200
https://twitter.com/gugachacra/status/1125427558944784392	Eduardo Bolsonaro cancelou reunião com Embaixador palestino por causa dos ataques do Hamas a Israel. Não entendi. Embaixador palestino é do Fatah, adversário do Hamas. Seria como cancelar reunião com Eduardo Bolsonaro por culpa-lo por uma ação do PT. Não tem lógica	2177	19668	1900

A3) Venezuela

For the largest part of the 2018 presidential campaign, the political and economic crisis in Venezuela was employed by anti-left discourse as a dooming narrative about Brazil's future, in case it were to elect a leftist candidate. The fear that "Brazil would become Venezuela", and the speech advocating for a anti-Workers Party vote "so that Brazil doesn't become Venezuela" became mottos of the right-wing speech. Much of this narrative found support in an often exaggerated version of Brazil's policy of approach, support and open negotiation towards the Venezuelan government during Lula's and Dilma Rousseff's terms. Following Bolsonaro's victory, the newly seated government vindicated a policy shift towards the neighboring country, in an affirmation of intolerance to what it understood as a leftist dictatorship. Bolsonaro

bandwagoned Donald Trump’s aggressive-like policy and made himself ready for assistance in an eventual military intervention. Some of the most engaging tweets under the Venezuelan issue referred to that speech, sometimes ironizing it, sometimes endorsing it. Not always allusive to Brazil’s external policy, some tweets merely used the right-wing rhetoric of the Venezuelan case (which in itself carries foreign policy elements and attitudes) as an argument in a domestic politics discussion. Many occurrences, however, did make direct reference and expressed attitudes on how should Brazil behave in the face of Nicolás Maduro’s regime.

Search parameters were set to geography and language restricted, to cast out tweets by foreign, particularly Venezuelan, users, at the cost of excluding multiple Brazilian users’ interactions with Spanish-written tweets. Pertinent tweets amounted to 112,308 messages, and 51,702 unique posters engaged in the debate. Word clouds showed that many Brazilian users engaged on cross-border and cross-language debate, but the most engaging tweets in the restricted sample were posted in Portuguese and by Brazilian profiles. As expected, the distribution of tweets explicitly related to Brazillian policy towards Venezuela peaked on April 30, when a political event called the public’s attention. Then, an opposition insurgency lead by Juan Guadó attempted to overthrow Nicolás Maduro. This peak, however, was less pronounced, with 9809 single messages. This is likely due to the pervasiveness of the narrative about the Venezuelan case in the domestic debate.



URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/felipeneto/status/1134246873198419969	<p>23:59 - "VOTEM NO BOLSONARO PRA ISSO NÃO VIRAR A VENEZUELA" 00:00 -</p> <p>GOVERNO BOLSONARO</p> <p>MEC diz que professores, alunos e pais não podem divulgar protestos</p> <p>Pasta orienta que população denuncie quem estimular manifestações em horário escolar</p> 	10,657	43722	656
https://twitter.com/carlosbolsonaro/status/1132984350553849857	O recado dado pela população nas ruas de domingo foi claro e qualquer um conclui que a maioria quer fazer o Brasil avançar e minoria insiste em fazê-lo parar. Parece que querem que nos tornemos uma Venezuela, e o pior, estão rindo da sua cara. Aonde querem chegar?	4535	31246	3100
https://twitter.com/lucciano_hang/status/1138254498567249920	Pobre Brasil, quase 30 milhões da população está desocupada, o país parado e a esquerda continua querendo tocar fogo no circo. Motivo, soltar o ladrão que esta preso em Curitiba e fazer do Brasil uma Venezuela. Vamos deixar isso acontecer? #SomosTodosMoro	3,733	17086	1200
https://twitter.com/xicograziano/status/1123233409327824896	Derrubar Maduro na Venezuela significa derrotar pela segunda vez a quadrilha vermelha no Brasil. Basta ver a esquerda corrupta daqui se manifestando contra o “golpe”. Avante democracia!	2983	14952	212
https://twitter.com/lucciano_hang/status/1123264254260465665	Militares que apoiam o ditador Maduro passando por cima dos manifestantes na Venezuela. Esta é a “democracia” que a esquerda prega. Chega desse regime cruel, apoiado pela esquerda do Brasil. Força aos venezuelanos que estão lutando contra uma ditadura comunista. #VenezuelaLibre	1853	7040	247
https://twitter.com/lucciano_hang/status/1121430128784027648	Ótima fala do deputado federal Marco Bertaiolli. O PT emprestou dinheiro a Venezuela para construção do metrô de Caracas a uma taxa de juros de 4.5%. Já para o estado de SP os juros foram de 8.6%. PT financiou ditaduras comunistas, enquanto negligenciou os problemas do Brasil.	1652	5179	101
https://twitter.com/mjcosta_/status/1136742871044886528	O número de estatais em nosso país é um absurdo, para não dizer criminoso: Venezuela: 576 Brasil: 418 Suíça: 4 Austrália e Japão: 8 Áustria: 10 Bélgica: 12 EUA: 16 Reino Unido: 16 Dinamarca: 21 Chile: 25	1043	3141	85

	#STFBrasilQuerPrivatizar			
https://twitter.com/CarlaZambelli17/status/1125422849924182017	Se não temos hoje uma situação como a da Venezuela aqui no Brasil, é graças a este honroso homem, @Gen_VillasBoas - que aguentou até o último momento, mesmo com ELA, para entregar seu cargo depois que o @jairbolsonaro colocou a faixa presidencial. O Brasil não aguenta mais isso.	1036	7293	1400
https://twitter.com/dw_brasil/status/1118808352732209153	Brasil cai em ranking e fica mais próximo da zona vermelha, na qual se encontram Venezuela e países onde situação é difícil para jornalistas. Desde a campanha eleitoral, imprensa se tornou alvo para apoiadores de Bolsonaro, diz Repórteres Sem Fronteiras.	960	2121	960
https://twitter.com/gleisi/status/1124313016563007490	O país tá derretendo. A indústria tem um dos maiores recuos. A construção civil está na lona. O desemprego grande, renda caindo. Mas os bancos com altos lucros e Bolsonaro querendo guerra com a Venezuela. E era o PT o problema do país! O q os golpistas e a direita tem a dizer?!	904	3366	1,900
https://twitter.com/IvanValente/status/112326312660258821	Bolsonaro defensor da ditadura militar e do crime de tortura, pede democracia na Venezuela. Enquanto isto, aqui estimula o genocídio de pobres na cidade e no campo e/ou licença para matar dados a policiais e ruralistas. Ataca o conhecimento e censura e destrói Universidade. Hipócrita e cínico	784	2685	110
https://twitter.com/Iuciano_hang/status/1121355758803783680	Contra fatos não existe argumentos que se sustente. Pode confiar a esquerda somente quer tumultuar e destruir o Brasil para tentar voltar ao poder e fazer do país uma grande Venezuela. É a nova previdência ou quebrar o nosso país para pagar altas aposentadorias para privilegiados	778	3875	75
https://twitter.com/HaddadDebochado/status/1138185233021526017	Os bolsominions votaram no Jair Bolsonaro para o Brasil “não virar uma Venezuela”, e agora estão querendo expulsar do país um jornalista que fez uma matéria que eles não gostaram. Eu conto ou vocês contam?	638	3670	37

These three issues – United States, Israel and Venezuela, have dominated the spontaneous debate, being introduced by foreign policy events and official public statements by foreign policy actors – sometimes on Twitter itself . They alone were responsible for the largest part of all Twitter conversations regarding Brazilian foreign affairs during the retrieval period.

B) Parameters extracted from key issues suggested in the Las Americas survey

B1) Global Warming

The issue, mentioned among the questions used in the Las Americas survey to measure the public's awareness and consistency of opinion, gained mediatic relevance in 2019⁷⁶, as newly appointed Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo became known as a detractor of the so-called “climatism” [climatismo in Pt.]. According to the minister, human-caused climate change is nothing but “dogma”, and its supporting narrative is a “plot devised by cultural Marxists to stifle economic growth in capitalist democracies and favor China”⁷⁷. Monitoring showed that Brazilian Twitter users reacted to the minister's stance and engaged in online debate about the country's environmental policy, with frequent reference to the country's adherence to international agreements.

The online debate regarding Global Warming as a key issue was addressed by geo-referenced searches with the words “aquecimento global” alone, or in combination with the word “Brasil”. As expected, language filtering did not change results when applied as a second layer of search refinement, given that the search terms were written in Portuguese: “aquecimento global”, provided an automatic language restriction and, most likely, tweets in Portuguese were retrieved regardless of their origin. In an attempt to exclude non-relevant tweets, such as those that might originate from Portuguese speaking countries other than Brazil, a radial location filter has been applied.

A total of 45,684 tweets were recorded during the retrieval period, with at least 38,402 unique posters. Tweets peaked on June 1st, when 7,622 tweets coincided with the end of the Semana Nacional do Meio Ambiente (National Environment Week in Brazil), and one day after the World Environment Week, celebrated by the United Nations and other international organisms on June 5. This peak, however, was relatively low and revealed an even distribution of tweets

⁷⁶i.e.: <https://www.valor.com.br/politica/5985233/novo-chanceler-diz-que-esquerda-criou-%3Fideologia-da-mudanca-climatica> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/15/brazil-foreign-minister-ernesto-araujo-climate-change-marxist-plot>

⁷⁷ <https://www.metapoliticabrasil.com/blog/sequestrar-e-perverter>

throughout the period. The large number of retweets of few highly engaging messages (see table below), in turn, revealed a high concentration of the debate in terms of content.

Without any restrictions that could have narrowed the search to the object of interest, Twitter users largely commented on global warming with allusion to Brazilian climate and environmental policy. Frequent word analysis revealed that, even among non-restricted occurrences, at least 1393 messages referred to the “denial of global warming” as one of the “lies” told by the current administration. Most of them indicated the meaning by the use of the hashtag #BolsonaroDay on April Fools’ Day, which reached Trending Topics on April 1st. An analysis of the most engaging tweets shows an association of the Global Warming subject with domestic policy and other issues of public concern in Brazil, as can be seen on the majority of relevant tweets. The issue’s connection to the overall conversation about Brazilian foreign policy lies in the recurring mentions to the national Foreign Ministry’s disruptive and controversial stance against the climate change discourse, as Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo sustains it is an ideologically biased, “climatist” rhetoric. According to some of the tweets retrieved, a part of the Twitter community seems to believe that this conservative stance regarding the global environmental agenda is endorsed by supporters of the Bolsonaro administration.

Furthermore, an observation of the word cloud generated from all occurrences reveals a combination of terms pertaining both to the national environmental policy (“brasileiros”, “agrotóxicos”, “poluentes”, “demarcação”, “terras”, “animais”) and the country’s participation in the global climate change regime (“aquecimento”, “global”, “brasileiros”, “poluentes”, “milhões”, “vida”, “terra”).



URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/felipenet/status/1134915848798461953	Meu sonho é que os brasileiros passem a se interessar tanto por assuntos como "agrotóxicos", "aquecimento global", "poluentes" e "demarcação de terras" quanto se interessa pela vida sexual da Anitta.	23699	108771	2000
https://twitter.com/luizguiprado/status/1125586683842519041	“O jovem fala q tá triste só pra chamar atenção” - 13 milhões de desempregados - padrões estéticos e financeiros surreais - tudo caro pra cassete - violência em todo lugar - animais sendo extintos numa velocidade bizarra - aquecimento global - pessoas egoístas e preconceituosas	6418	18051	54
https://twitter.com/andrefran/status/1122603102639677440	A aluna do PSL filmou a professora pq ela: Afirmou que a terra é plana? Disse que aquecimento global não existe? Defendeu que nazismo é de esquerda? Nada disso. Foi pq ela criticou Olavo de Carvalho, o astrólogo charlatão mentor do bolsonarismo. É que só pode ideologia burra.	2070	12149	158
https://twitter.com/haddadfernando/status/1134063482217947138	Ciência desmascarada- nosso bozochanceler descobriu a razão do aumento da temperatura da Terra: os termômetros. Antes instalados no meio do mato, estão hoje à beira de estacionamentos, em razão da urbanização. O aquecimento é local e não global. E ninguém percebeu...	1797	9694	1300
https://twitter.com/taliripetroni/status/1125767905260527616	O ministro do Meio Ambiente bloqueou 95% da verba para o clima. Noventa e cinco por cento! Com essa medida, o investimento em políticas sobre mudanças climáticas no Brasil vai ser praticamente ZERADO. Reflexo de um governo inconsequente que “não acredita” em aquecimento global.	1459	4772	71
https://twitter.com/HaddadDebochado/status/1112657372495912960	Bom dia para a mamadeira de piroca, kit gay, terra plana, ideologia de gênero, aquecimento global, doutrinação marxista, nazismo de esquerda, comunismo no Brasil e 64 não foi golpe #BolsonaroDay	4366	13696	168
https://twitter.com/tdbem/status/1122129277258993665	a única minoria que os bolsonaros aceitam é a de pesquisadores que negam o aquecimento global	912	4293	13
https://twitter.com/andretrig/status/1131624781005168641	Amanhã ela voltará a protestar em frente ao parlamento da Suécia por mais ações contra o aquecimento global. Toda 6ª feira milhares de estudantes fazem o mesmo em seus países. @GretaThunberg é exemplo de ativismo em favor da vida. Veja porque muitos políticos não gostam dela	621	2363	47

https://twitter.com/jandira_feghali/status/1134114037250318336	Ministro da Educação que dança em vídeo institucional com um guarda-chuva e diz "HAVIAM emendas", ministro das Relações Exteriores que diz que a culpa do aquecimento global é por causa dos termômetros... Parece que o Brasil foi tragado para uma realidade paralela bizarra.	623	2613	145
https://twitter.com/gwenyspider/status/1119228958074187776/photo/1	Leonardo DiCaprio vem a muito tempo falando sobre aquecimento global, poluição, desmatamento, cita o Brasil diversas vezes, na Netflix há documentários onde ele foi produtor executivo e entrevistador, assistam, conheçam os projetos e apoiem ♡ #WeLoveTheEarth	758	1579	7
https://twitter.com/brumelia_nebrum/status/1130415869539098624	Hello Brasil! O sistema de proteção do meio ambiente está sendo destruído pelo governo Bolsonaro e a Amazônia está sendo atacada por todos os lados. Sem floresta não há como conter o aquecimento global.	236	986	7

B2) China

A non-georeferenced, non-filtered search found 40,828 tweets with the terms “China” and “Brasil” combined. The Portuguese spelling of the word “Brasil” restricted tweets by language, but non-Portuguese occurrences emerged in significant quantities. Over 70% of messages – 29,744 - were written in Portuguese; 96% of all debate corresponded to tweets in Portuguese and Spanish, but promoted interaction with speakers from both languages. Considering the most retweeted content in the dataset, a large bulk of messages originated from Brazil and other Latin American countries, particularly Venezuela, Mexico and Argentina (Image 1). A closer observation of interactions over the most relevant content in Spanish (highlighted in the table below), through replies, retweets and likes, showed that discussions about Brazilian relations with China or Chinese presence in Latin America happened regardless of linguistic and national boundaries. To apply additional language and geographic filters would therefore implicate in the loss (desconsideração) of significant results.

The commercial and financial aspects of the bilateral relationship are explicit in the most engaging tweets, as well as in the collection of most frequent words. An ideological take on the discussion could also be perceived. Some of the relevant tweets, as shown below, placed China along the axis of countries governed under left-wing administrations - one that should be either praised or estranged in favor of alliances with right-wing governments, according to the user’s

affiliation in the domestic political spectrum. Despite the pertinence of overall results, one tweet in particular provoked significant alterations to the word cloud: the message with the highest amount of retweets did not refer to foreign affairs, but to Brazilian Education Minister Abraham Weintraub's educational background, revealing the precedence of a single communicational event over the regular, more evenly distributed conversation. Still, the following engaging tweets indicate that this was an outstanding exception. The second most engaging tweet, for instance, refers to how Brazil's political approximation to countries such as China and Venezuela projects domestic political polarization to the global context. Also, informational tweets about foreign relations initiatives, such as Vice President Hamilton Mourão's visit to China, were also largely shared. Despite the initial neutrality of the original message, replies often expressed foreign policy attitudes explicitly, for example:

Replying to @GeneralMourao @FlavioXSid and @TVBrasil
“À China é Comunista! Só lembrando!” - (@PaniSant, May 15, 2019)⁷⁸

Replying to @GeneralMourao and @TVBrasil
“A China já era, ou se ajoelham perante os EUA nessa guerra ou todo embuste chinês vai cair por terra. Fica a dica para futuras negociações.” -- (@Luxcious3, May 15, 2019)⁷⁹

Replying to @GeneralMourao and @TVBrasil
“Corretíssimo Sr Vice Presidente, precisamos tentar manter relações políticas e econômicas com todos para o bem deste nosso lindo país.” -- (@lmhorta, May 15, 2019)⁸⁰

Replying to @GeneralMourao and @jairbolsonaro
“Selva! Vamos fazer parcerias com mundo todo sem viés ideológico.”
-- (@engfabiananunes, May 24, 2019)⁸¹

Replying to @engfabiananunes @GeneralMourao and @jairbolsonaro

⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/PaniSant/status/1128733905933279232>

⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/Luxcious3/status/1128625200575258630>

⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/lmhorta/status/1128622812497838080>

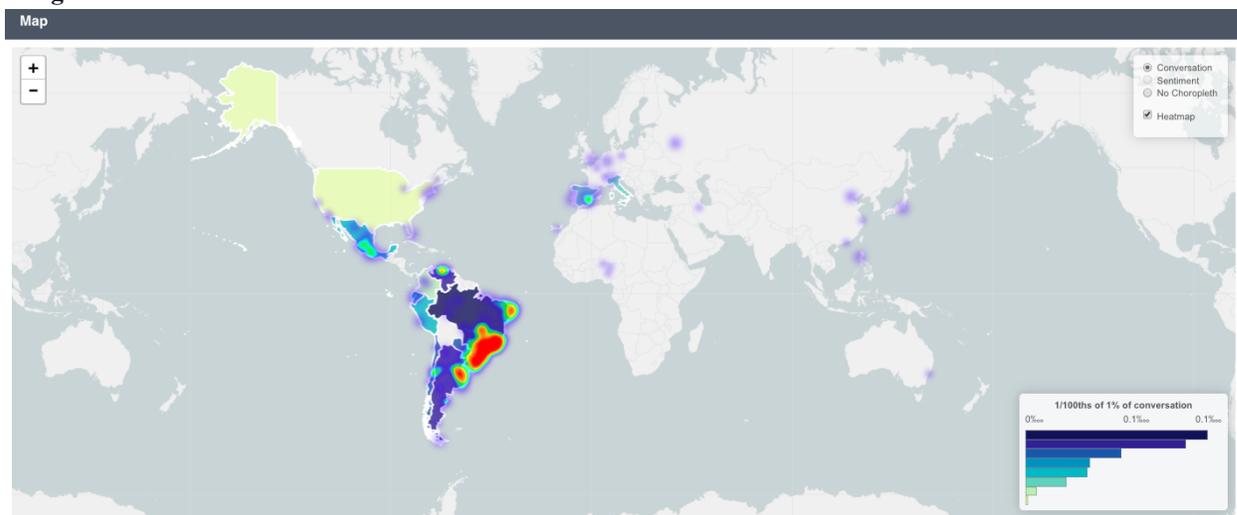
⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/engfabiananunes/status/1132104517577859074>

“Não existe nada s3m vies ideológico, ow genio”

-- (@bot_alvinegro, May 25, 2019)⁸²



Image 1



URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1115282445019095040	Corrigindo: Abraham possui mestrado em Administração na área de Finanças pela FGV e MBA Executivo Internacional pelo OneMBA, com título reconhecido pelas escolas: FGV/Brasil, RSM/Holanda, UNC/Estados Unidos, CUHK/China e EGADE-ITESM/México.	3631	38167	2600
https://twitter.com/douglasantos/status/1114165158245433344	Tentativa de transmissão do filme "1964: Brasil entre Armas e Livros", e adivinhem? A esquerda democrática não deixa que o filme seja exibido. Demonizam 1964 e	2365	7541	499

⁸² https://twitter.com/bot_alvinegro/status/1132120882376269824

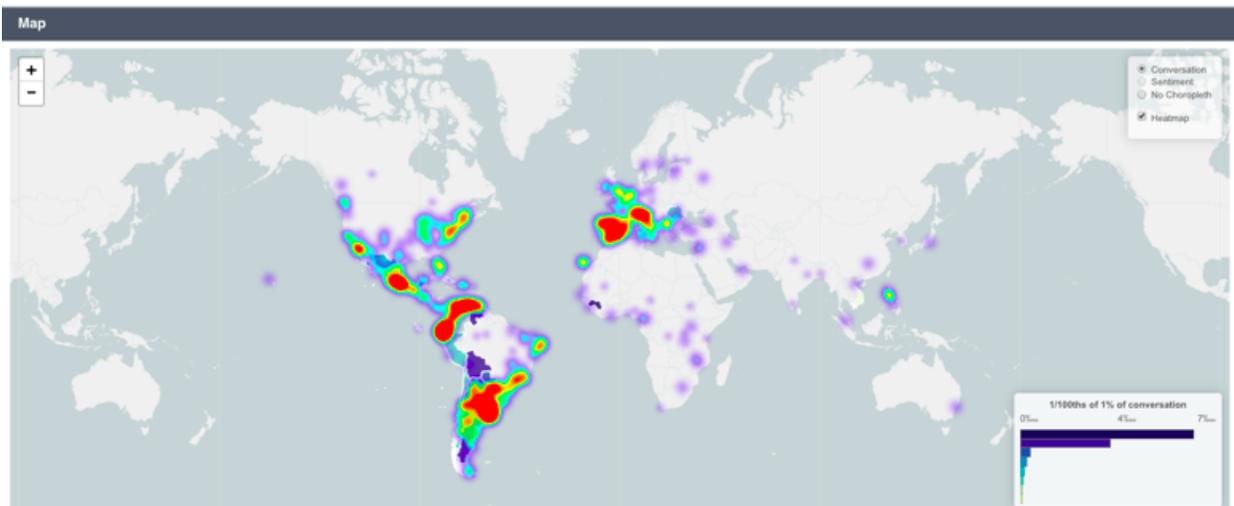
	idolatram a Venezuela, Cuba, URSS, China e Coréia do Norte.			
https://twitter.com/anterogreco/status/1112479186546028546	Há quem pergunte como seria o Brasil, não fosse o GOLPE contra a Democracia em 64: provavelmente competiria com EUA, Japão, China, Alemanha como grande economia mundial. Seria mais justo, mais rico, mais educado. E não seria COMUNISTA, o papo furado da época para enganar trouxas	1034	5952	268
https://twitter.com/opropriolavo/status/1135987750782590977	Contrato de reconhecimento facial com a Huawei É submeter o Brasil aos serviços de inteligência da China.	623	3800	95
https://twitter.com/zehdeabreu/status/117119792824115209	De Tel-Aviv a Nova York, protestos contra o Capitão. Rússia e China ameaçando retaliação comercial. Árabes querendo pular fora. Se a ideia é destruir o Brasil, ele está conseguindo.	563	2436	74
https://twitter.com/generalmourao/status/1128620246120767488	Na entrevista que foi ao ar ontem pela @TVBrasil falei sobre a importância e os objetivos da viagem oficial que farei nos próximos dias à China, principal parceiro comercial do Brasil desde 2009. Deixo o link da entrevista completa:	362	3881	534
https://twitter.com/PTnoSenado/status/1129844858540236802	Enquanto China, Alemanha, Estados Unidos, Canadá, para citar alguns exemplos, criam embargos para proteger suas empresas, o Brasil vende o que tem e caminha a passos largos para a desindustrialização. Tem como isso dar certo?	361	662	44
https://twitter.com/gleisi/status/1137034877092712449	Estamos assistindo à chegada da China ao topo, a maior economia. O 5G é a ponta de lança, principal símbolo. Atrás vem a consolidação do colossal mercado chinês-asiático. Agora c/ aliança China-Rússia a	349	1300	898

	correlação de forças na geopolítica muda de patamar. E o Brasil atrás dos EUA			
https://twitter.com/PatoCorporation/status/1125097473868029956	A China está construindo a maior rede de transporte marítimo, rodoviário, ferroviário e de sistemas avançados de comunicação por todo o planeta, projeto apelidado de "nova rota da seda". O Brasil está fora por ódio ideológico, mas comemora venda d 3 caminhão d abacate. Nova era	309	1003	25
https://twitter.com/Globo_Rural/status/1126870874794135552	Só eu estou sentindo o cheiro de laranja de novo no ar?	263	1225	82
https://twitter.com/inst_lula/status/1122144100000706565	#LulaFalou #LulaInspira @LulaOficial : Eu sonhava em criar um bloco na América do Sul pra gente ter força nas negociações com a União Européia, com os EUA, com a China. O Brasil foi muito importante no G20... tudo isso desmanchou. A que ponto chegamos? Que avacalhão!	233	647	21
https://twitter.com/JorgeEickhoff/status/1133167568225804289	Con la jugada de Oslo la tiranía logró: 1. separar a Guaidó de sus principales aliados (Estados Unidos, Colombia, Brasil) 2. posicionar favorablemente a sus aliados (Cuba, Rusia, China) 3. neutralizar y poner en "hold" factores contradictorios (Grupo de Lima, Unión Europea).	1467	1163	148
https://twitter.com/fmartinmoreno/status/1128438545276784640	¿AMLO no va al la cumbre del G-20 compuesto por la Unión Europea, Argentina, Australia, Brasil, Canadá, China, Francia, Alemania, India, Indonesia, Italia, Japón, México, Rusia, Arabia Saudita, Sudáfrica , Corea del Sur, Turquía, el Reino Unido y Estados Unidos? ¿Le entiendes?	1418	3445	937

https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1131644853782274055	Después de 11 años volvimos a EXPORTAR GAS A CHILE Y BRASIL, CEREZAS A CHINA, COSECHA RÉCORD, CORRUPITOS PRESOS, EMPRESARIOS PRESOS, TARIFAS REALES, ETC. Y solo en 3 años y medio, sabes lo que se va a hacer en los prox. 4 años con una ARGENTINA EN MARCHA? NVM, MM 2019 mira DALE RT	930	1237	68
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B3) International Monetary Fund

A non-georeferenced query set to search for incidences with the term FMI, Portuguese acronym for International Monetary Fund, found 382,898 tweets. However, as “FMI” also correspond to the Spanish acronym, the expressive majority of messages retrieved had been written in Spanish. Those came mostly from Venezuela, Argentina and Spain, indicating a heated debate about economic policy and these countries’ relations with the IMF.



Results in portuguese were not statistically relevant, reaching a mere 2.4% of tweets, at a total of 9275 occurrences. Among these tweets, more than half referred to the global importance of the IMF, and only 4202 mentioned the word “Brasil”. Nevertheless, the word cloud that resulted

from the restricted database combining those two terms - “FMI” and “Brasil” - revealed semantic pertinence with Brazilian foreign policy. The presence of words such as “Bolsonaro”, “PT” and “Esquerda” suggested a strong connection to partisanship in domestic politics, which was later corroborated by single tweet analysis. The most engaging tweets in the sample revealed an instrumentalization of the debate regarding Brazil and the IMF by local political polarization: as seen in the table below, all but three tweets embedded attitudes towards country’s alignment or detachment to the Fund’s economic recommendations in comments that revealed support or criticism of the current administration. The last tweet in the list, despite being essentially informative, was frequently shared by attitude-expressing quotes and/or enticed attitude-expressing replies. In either case, these interactions, however few, inserted the discussion about the country’s relation with IMF in politically broader, partisan comments, using the country’s relation with IMF as arguments to support the sender’s attitudes in a politically broader debate. The following tweets are examples of replies to the three informative tweets in the list.

Replying to @Estadao

“A esquerdopatia nesse aí é avançada... Terminal...” (@CeceloAmorim
-- June 6, 2019)⁸³

Replying to @BlogdoNoblat

“Puxa, o PRESIDENTE BOLSONARO, deve ter culpa nisso... 3 meses e meio de governo e não resolveu 16 anos de malandragem???” (@rhgcavalcanti
-- April 19, 2019)⁸⁴

Replying to @valoreconomico

“Economia voltará a dinamizar, o desemprego cair, os serviços públicos melhorarem, essencial o controle dos gastos públicos, reforma profunda da previdência, um estado patrocinador do livre mercado, do investimento e competitividade, segurança jurídica. Estado mínimo e eficiente!” --
(@07band, May 25, 2019)⁸⁵

Replying to @valoreconomico

Esse pibinho é perola da grande mídia, de empresários sonegadores de impostos e dos patinhos amarelos da Fiesp! --(@Nianpe, May 24, 2019)⁸⁶

⁸³ <https://twitter.com/CeceloAmorim/status/1136492509415317504>

⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/rhgcavalcanti/status/1119181746883506177>

⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/07band/status/1132186034169630720>

⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/Nianpe/status/1132096695821586432>

acabado x acadêmicos x adélio x argentina x bolsonaro x **brasil** x chauí x cultura x dizendo x dívida x
 entregaria x esquerda x exatamente x **fmi** x homicida x inflação x justificou x lula x maluco x marilena x medalhões x
 outros x país x política x produto x pt x recorrer x riquezas x vivem x ódio x

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/flavioogordon/status/1134470280338911232	Adélio justificou seu ódio homicida por Bolsonaro dizendo que ele entregaria as riquezas do Brasil para o FMI. Ora, mas isso é exatamente o que vivem dizendo Marilena Chauí e outros medalhões acadêmicos. Maluco ou não, Adélio é o produto acabado da cultura política de esquerda.	899	4700	52
https://twitter.com/glesi/status/1131265278363537408	Armínio Fraga ã tem moral p/ falar do PT dos governos Lula e Dilma. É ex-banqueiro, beneficiário de informações públicas por cargo q exerceu. Foi do J.P.Morgan e agente de Wall Street. Foi ele quem ajudou a quebrar o Brasil 2 vezes e recorrer ao FMI durante a era Tucana	460	1500	269
https://twitter.com/MiriamLeitaoCom/status/1137377182089715712	A chance de uma união monetária neste momento é nenhuma. Bolsonaro falou de algo que o BC nao está estudando, nem poderia. Brasil tem 380 bi de reservas e inflação caindo pra 4%, Argentina pede dolares ao FMI e tem 55% de inflação.	439	2600	492
https://twitter.com/claro	FMI apoia Previdência de Guedes	234	996	22

udioedantas/status/1132059349956927493				
https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1120977403721871360	-Valeu a pena trocar a dívida externa em dólar com o FMI pela dívida Interna? - Sim valeu! O Brasil só não está como a Argentina, com inflação galopante, pelo fato de nossa dívida não estar mais em dólar. Obrigado Lula!	207	974	11
https://twitter.com/bollemdb/status/1118624783627894784	4. O Brasil está na corda bamba. 5. O Peru tem uma crise política deflagrada pela Odebrecht. 6. O Equador teve de recorrer ao FMI. 7. A reforma da Previdência que o Chile fez há anos está sendo duramente questionada. 8. A Bolívia continua com Morales. 9. O México tem o risco AMLO part 1: Tenho dito que a América Latina atravessa o pior momento desde os anos 80 embora o contexto seja diferente. 1. A Argentina acaba de anunciar congelamento de preços. 2. A Venezuela vai quebrar a qualquer momento. 3. A Colômbia não está aguentando a crise vizinha. Cont	139	1200	122
https://twitter.com/ToimeiAbuso/status/1134211505447165953	Em avaliação psiquiátrica, Adélio Bispo afirmou que no governo Bolsonaro seriam mortos "os pobres, pretos, índios, quilombolas, homossexuais, só ficando	99	245	27

	os ricos maçons dominando as riquezas do Brasil" - (link: https://uol.page.link/DJybt) uol.page.link/DJybt será que é doido mesmo? link para matéria do FMI			
https://twitter.com/Estadao/status/1136339403968827398	Evo Morales diz que FMI e EUA estão por trás de privatizações no Brasil	77	388	281
https://twitter.com/BlogdoNoblat/status/1119160510501412864	Participação do Brasil na economia global cai ao menor nível em 38 anos Fatia do país na produção de bens e serviços no mundo foi de 2,5% no ano passado, segundo o FMI	48	111	38
https://twitter.com/valoreconomico/status/1132075180136849408	FMI corta projeção para crescimento do Brasil em 2019	43	150	14

B4) Regional Integration

The online debate about regional integration as one of Brazilian foreign policy's key issues has been addressed by multiple sets of search terms that bare significance in the context of the country's policy for bilateral relationships with neighboring countries, South and Latin-American institutions, the idea of regional leadership, and international mechanisms for cooperation and integration. Some of the search parameters, such as "integração regional" (Portuguese for regional integration, in a total of a total of 898 tweets), or a combination of terms "Brasil" and "América Latina" failed to retrieve quantitatively relevant results⁸⁷. Others, such as "Mersosul"

⁸⁷ The query made with a combination of the terms "Brasil" and "América Latina" failed to produce relevant results. Most occurrences retrieved sentences that contained these words, but not necessarily corresponded to the Brazilian policy for Latin-American regional integration. Most occurrences referred to a cultural event - a Korean Pop band concert - understood by Twitter users as rare and exceptional. Fans of Kpop band Bangtan flooded the network with massive tweeting, with over 40000 occurrences. Statements such as "Brazil is the only country in Latin America to host the Bangtan band tour" have produced an irredeemably deviated data set.

(11,022 tweets⁸⁸) and “Prosul” (8,370) were found in more numerous occurrences. A general assessment indicates that Twitter users discussed the issue between April and June, and showed concern, support or disapproval of the current administration’s policy shift for regional institutions. Even if through a rather uninformed debate, often lacking depth and propriety. Since the post-electoral period, the government’s communications regarding the issue had conveyed, through social media and traditional press channels, the message that Mercosul and Regional Affairs were no longer a priority in the country’s external affairs, claiming that their prior degree of importance had been given due to an ideologically biased foreign policy.⁸⁹ As a result of this intentionally divisive rhetoric, regional integration became yet another weapon in the narrative dispute, on Twitter, between governments’ supporters and opponents, during the administration's early days.

An observation of the distribution of tweets including the term “Prosul” throughout the period revealed that users reacted to quasi-official messages emitted by the government. On April 16, President Bolsonaro tweeted about Brazil’s formal detachment from Unasul, replacing it with a new Latin-American instrument for political dialogue and cooperation, the “Fórum para o Progresso da América do Sul” (Prosul). This single tweet had 5200 retweets, 39300 likes and 1400 replies.⁹⁰

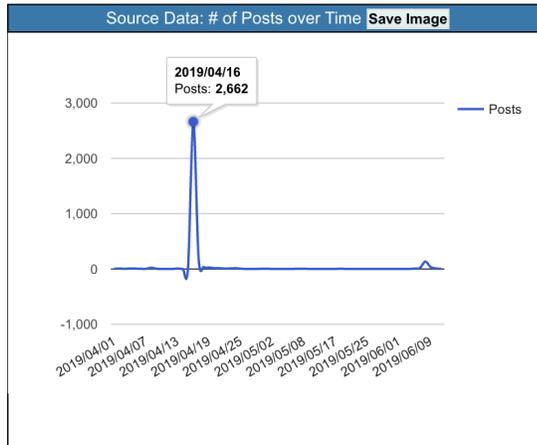


As a result, original tweets mentioning the initiative peaked instantly, reaching the country’s trending topics and revealing the president’s capacity to dictate the online debate’s agenda:

⁸⁸ The original georeferenced query with the term “Mercosul” retrieved 15990 tweets. No language refinements were applied, but as the Portuguese acronym differs from the international denomination MERCOSUR, in Spanish, results were roughly narrowed to tweets written in Portuguese. Still, the dataset was spurred with numerous references to a regional football tournament called ‘Copa Mercosul’. Further refinement was then manually employed to exclude all tweets carrying the words “copa” and “taça” (both referring to ‘cup’ in the sports-related acceptance), as well as “fluminense” “flamengo”, “vasco” and “campeonato”. (see: <https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1118113468308180994>). The resulting dataset turned out largely pertinent to foreign policy context.

⁸⁹ <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/paulo-guedes-diz-que-mercosul-nao-sera-prioridade-em-governo-bolsonaro-23194734>

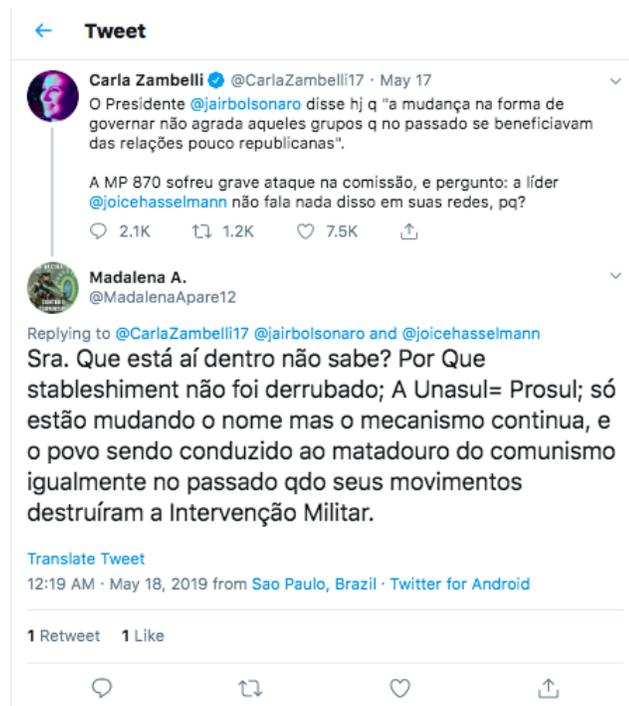
⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1118101835057963008>



As expected, the debate that followed the president’s tweet incited attitude expression, with quotes and replies that frequently threw the subject into a left-right narrative dispute:



Source: <https://twitter.com/danibacedo/status/1118096864786751493>



Source: <https://twitter.com/MadalenaApare12/status/1129587372184805376>

The most relevant dataset in the Regional Integration debate resulted from the query considering the word “Mercosul”. The most engaging posts either referred to foreign policy and expressed attitudes to that respect, but were not explicitly connected to the domestic political debate; or referred to foreign policy, expressed attitudes to that respect and made a clear use of the given foreign policy issue (Brazil’s stance regarding Mercosul) as arguments to defend or attack an ideological position in domestic political debate. The following tweet emerged from the as the most engaging and significant in this particular dataset:

‘RESGATE DA IDENTIDADE: o SÍMBOLO NACIONAL VOLTOU! A primeira remessa dos novos passaportes com o BRASÃO DA REPÚBLICA já está pronta! A emissão começará em breve. Adeus inscrição MERCOSUL.’ -- (@joicehasselmann, April 7, 2019)⁹¹

The person behind the profile @joicehasselmann is Congresswoman Joice Hasselman, PSL party leader. Her influential position in real life public debate, in addition to her numerous followers

⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/joicehasselmann/status/1114743644702093312>

(319,000 as of April 10, 2019), incites user's inclination to react as it raises *impression* rates⁹² - in other words, it enhances her tweets' visibility. This tweet has 1.4 thousand *retweets* and 11.1 thousand *likes*. Although *retweets* are not necessarily endorsements to a tweet's content, they are an indication of engagement and debate incitation. More importantly even, the tweet generated elaborated answers by influential and non-influential users alike. Amidst the 840 direct answers to the tweet (as of April 10, 2019), which mostly praised the patriotic symbolism of removing the Mercosur inscription from Brazilian passports' covers, somewhat in-depth considerations about the significance of the gesture in respect to foreign policy were posted:

‘Adeus país soberano e líder da América Latina. Vamos nos isolar e desfazer laços que nos fortaleçam para que os países ricos nos explorem e nos comprem a preço de banana! Parabéns aos envolvidos!’ -- (@Isentona1, April 7, 2019)⁹³

‘Mais uma pra se lamentar. O que há de mais simbólico que aliar-se a um continente inteiro, fortalecendo pessoas e culturas e afins. #resistiremos’ -- (@ZeVenicio, April 7, 2019)⁹⁴

‘UK sairá da UE para negociar livremente com a China. O Brasil sai do Mercosul, Brics, G20 para servir mais facilmente aos EUA’ -- (@MarcosS43786992, April 2019)⁹⁵.

‘Será que hoje o mártir Bolsonaro [sic.], defenderia o auto fuzilamento por ferir a soberania nacional com a entrega da base de Alcântara para os Americanos?’ -- (@rogelio57438739, April 7, 2019)⁹⁶.

“Queria poder dar 1.000.000.000.000 de likes!!! Mais oito anos com um passaporte renovado e com aquele lixo vergonhoso de símbolo Mercosul, na capa dele”. -- (@domotor_r, May 13, 2019)⁹⁷

⁹² Twitter impressions are the number of times a tweet appears in a user's timeline:

<https://business.twitter.com/pt/analytics/tweet-activity-dashboard.html>

⁹³ <https://twitter.com/Isentona1/status/1114832595517353987>

⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ZeVenicio/status/1115064341072625667>

⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/MarcosS43786992/status/1115006755967242241>

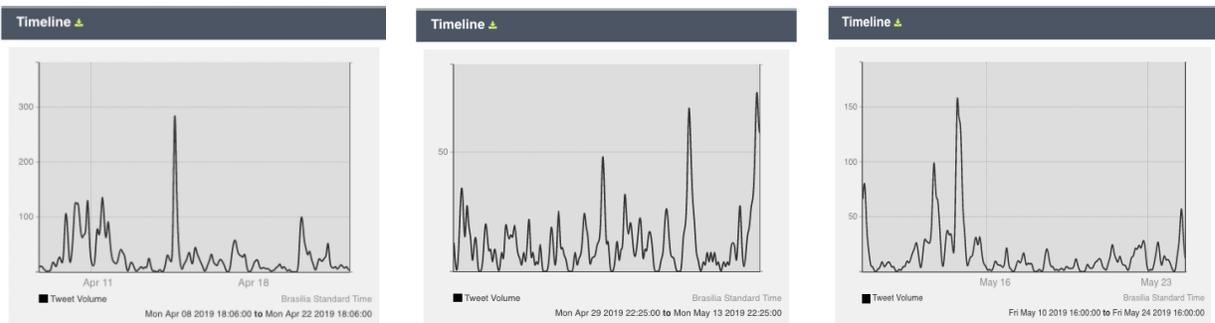
⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/rogelio57438739/status/1114856368513650688>

⁹⁷ https://twitter.com/domotor_r/status/1128029479878778880

“Muito bom. Fora Mercosul.” -- (@FranciscoJDD, May 13, 2019)⁹⁸

“Tão bonito! Aonde petista coloca a mão, faz 🤪” --(@RosaHelena_CA, May 13, 2019)⁹⁹

The monitoring software Trendsmap allowed for a detailed visualization of the tweet distribution for the specific Mercosul dataset. It suggested a similar pattern seen on the “Prosul” dataset, for debate enhancement following a public official’s tweet - shortly followed by gradual disengagement as other issues dominate the political agenda. Retrospective retrievals showed a decrease in original tweets and engagement around the topic.



In two occasions (second and third retrospective retrievals in the graphics above), the following tweet by @AiltonBenedito, which also appeared in the manual analysis with Netlytic, was highlighted as the most relevant and most replied tweet. It also referred to the exclusion of the Mercosul symbol from passports’ covers by posting a link to a news article.

“Justiça determina volta do brasão da República aos passaportes. Em 2015, governo da ex-presidente Dilma Rousseff retirou o brasão e colocou o símbolo do Mercosul”. --
(@AiltonBenedito, May 13, 2019)¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/FranciscoJDD/status/1129158099498078208>

⁹⁹ https://twitter.com/RosaHelena_CA/status/1128061733485019136

¹⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/AiltonBenedito/status/1128027079537250307>

The tweet generated responses that expressed an explicit attitude towards the measure, either approving or disapproving, but consistently connecting it to policy guidelines in Bolsonaro’s administration, for instance:

“Falta as placas dos carros vamo acabar com esse negócio de globalismo forçado” --
 (@TavaresEla, May 13, 2019)¹⁰¹

“Não posso acreditar que Dilma tinha feito isso sendo 🇧🇷 tão nacionalista, nossa!” --
 (@laobviarealidad, May 13, 2019)¹⁰²

Such polarized response to official declarations could also be observed in quotes and replies to tweets that appeared to be merely informative, such as Human Rights Minister Damares Alves’ and Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo’s posts reporting their activities in Mercosul fora, as listed in the table below:

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1118101835057963008	O Ministro das Relações Exteriores, @ernestofaraujo, formalizou saída da União das Nações Sul-Americanas (Unasul) e constituir o Fórum para o Progresso da América do Sul (Prosul). Fazendo parte do novo bloco Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colômbia, Equador, Guiana, Paraguai e Peru.	5200	39300	1400
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1118101987944534016	Os únicos membros que seguem ativos na Unasul são Uruguai, Guiana, Bolívia, Suriname e Venezuela. A Unasul nasceu em 2008 como um projeto do então presidente da Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, sendo apoiado por Lula.	2600	24000	733
https://twitter.com/joicehasselmann/status/1114743644702093312	☐☐ RESGATE DA IDENTIDADE: o SÍMBOLO NACIONAL VOLTOU! A primeira remessa dos novos passaportes com o BRASÃO DA REPÚBLICA já está	1400	11000	818

¹⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/TavaresEla/status/1128041567992844289>

¹⁰² <https://twitter.com/laobviarealidad/status/1128048474317103106>

	pronta! A emissão começará em breve. Adeus inscrição MERCOSUL.			
https://twitter.com/damaresalves/status/1134459637137367042	Discurso há pouco na Reunião de Altas Autoridades em Direitos Humanos do Mercosul. E reafirmei o compromisso deste governo em combater todo o tipo de discriminação. Ninguém fica para trás. #VoteinoBolsonaropraIsso	664	4300	116
https://twitter.com/ernestofaraujo/status/1119615866658856961	Assim como na Independência, nas guerras do Prata, na fixação das fronteiras, ao aderir aos Aliados na II Guerra, ao negociar Itaipu e criar o Mercosul, nós diplomatas temos hoje a oportunidade de contribuir para a grandeza da nação. Feliz Dia do Diplomata para todos os colegas!	549	6000	305
https://twitter.com/KendraChihaya/status/1115779945169604609	△□ FIM da placa do Mercosul!!! ✂Bolsonaro, cobra do Ministro da Infraestrutura Tarcísio Freitas uma solução, visto que isso foi uma das promessas de campanha. E você é a favor ou contra essa medida!?! #EuAprovoBolsonaro	451	1600	387
https://twitter.com/damaresalves/status/1134243034533695489	Amanhã estarei na Reunião de Altas Autoridades em Direitos Humanos do Mercosul defendendo as posições do governo @jairbolsonaro e em busca de parcerias em temas comuns na região, como a busca por desaparecidos e o combate à violência.	395	4300	81
https://twitter.com/DamaresAlves/status/1134435727817748480	Bom dia, gente. Daqui a pouquinho farei meu discurso na Reunião de Altas Autoridades em Direitos Humanos do Mercosul, aqui em Buenos Aires, Argentina. Farei a defesa da vida e irei propor um pacto contra a corrupção, que é uma das principais violações de direitos humanos.	374	3000	133
https://twitter.com/jojobancada/status/1115914004965265410	Foi nesse discurso em favor dos países do Mercosul e pela integração da América do Sul, na presença de George Bush, que os EUA perceberam o "perigo" que Lula representava ao seu imperialismo e decidiu fazer o golpe no Brasil e a prisão de Lula.	305	911	31

https://twitter.com/MagarinosC/status/1116278684955099143	<p>Agradeço a @BolsonaroSP sua liderança e compromisso. Os presidentes @mauriciomacri y @jairbolsonaro compartilham a visão de modernizar o MERCOSUL. O acordo com a União Européia criará empregos e melhorará a vida das pessoas. Aguardamos a rodada de maio con expectativa de progreso</p>	269	2500	27
https://twitter.com/bolsonarosp/status/1121383097918996480	<p>☐☐ Gracias, Embaixador Carlos Magariños (ARG). O acordo do Mercosul com a União Européia e outros blocos/países e a recuperação econômica do Brasil e Argentina são pautas que interessam a ambos. Acordos que recuperem as economias são prioridade na CREDN.</p>	248	2200	38
https://twitter.com/ernestofaraujo/status/1116140641661140992	<p>Em Buenos Aires, hoje, tive reuniões com o Chanceler Jorge Faurie e com o Ministro da Produção Dante Sica para tratar da dinamização do Mercosul e das muitas áreas de uma renovada parceria Brasil-Argentina (tecnologia, energia, segurança, etc.)</p>	241	2000	45

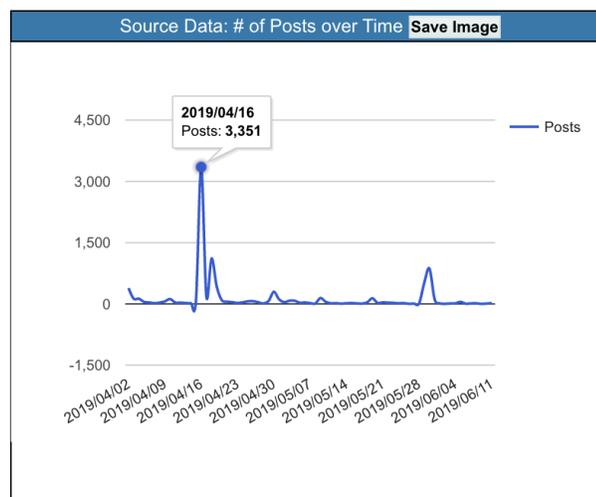
B5) Brazilian Foreign Ministry

The online conversations that mentioned the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, captured by queries with a combination of the terms “Brasil” and “MRE” or “Relações Exteriores” in a non-georeferenced and unfiltered search, found 22759 occurrences. While the word cloud indicates the debate to be pertinent with the foreign policy context, containing words such as “nações”, “sul-americanas”, “prosul” and “comissões”, some of the most engaging tweets added negative attitudes towards the Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo to more encompassing sets of critical comments regarding the administration in general. Moreover, the relevant tweets listed below often overlap with results from queries under the “Regional Integration” parameters. Again, essentially informative tweets were ostensibly shared with attitude-expressing quotes and provoked attitude expressing replies. Some tweets and replies made reference to the President’s and Foreign Minister’s explicit

“fondness” of the United States¹⁰³, either justifying¹⁰⁴ it or criticizing their “lack of patriotism”¹⁰⁵ (as seen in table below).



The peak of messaging coincides with the announcement by President Bolsonaro of Brazil’s withdrawal from Unasur and its commitment to the Prosul endeavor, suggesting the same reaction dynamics: following a public officials’ mention of the foreign policy-related subject, the issue gained relevance in the online debate, and was perceived as important by the uninformed and uninterested public.



¹⁰³ <https://twitter.com/felipeneto/status/1129153799283777536>

¹⁰⁴ https://twitter.com/karulina_barros/status/1129375258694344704

¹⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/batixtamelissa/status/1129158872990650368>

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/samiabomfim/status/1111065468570353665	Questionei hoje o ministro das relações exteriores Ernesto Araújo sobre o descumprimento por parte do Brasil de uma orientação da ONU sobre saúde da mulher. O ministro se enrolou completamente e não soube me responder. Vergonhoso o despreparo dele para lidar com esse assunto.	10400	37100	28000
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1118101835057963008	O Ministro das Relações Exteriores, @ernestofaraujo, formalizou saída da União das Nações Sul-Americanas (Unasul) e constituir o Fórum para o Progresso da América do Sul (Prosul). Fazendo parte do novo bloco Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colômbia, Equador, Guiana, Paraguai e Peru.	5200	39300	1400
https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1118973285897768963	Agradeço @bolsonarosp, que sempre ajudou a resgatar a confiança no Brasil mundo afora. O Presidente da Comissão de Relações Exteriores, foi recebido hj pelo premiê húngaro Viktor Orban, que colocou-se à disposição e dividiu experiências positivas de abertura econômica na Hungria	2800	21900	887
https://twitter.com/deputadofederal/status/113386162390574912	A minha equipe me avisou e eu não acreditei. Mas é verdade. O ministro de Relações Exteriores de @jairbolsonaro refutou as mudanças climáticas citando termostatos que antes ficavam no mato e agora estão no asfalto... 👎👎👎👎👎👎👎 O que o Brasil fez pra merecer isso?!	1300	4500	685
https://twitter.com/jandira_feghali/status/1134114037250318336	Ministro da Educação que dança em vídeo institucional com um guarda-chuva e diz "HAVIAM emendas", ministro das Relações Exteriores que diz que a culpa do aquecimento global é por causa dos termômetros... Parece que o Brasil foi tragado para uma realidade paralela bizarra.	619	1600	145

https://twitter.com/bbcbrasil/status/1113086053492162561	Análise histórica no site do Museu do Holocausto, visitado por Bolsonaro e sua comitiva em Jerusalém, contraria opinião expressa semana passada pelo ministro das Relações Exteriores, Ernesto Araújo, para quem o nazismo foi um movimento de esquerda (link: https://bbc.in/2K0wE51)	363	1000	104
https://twitter.com/Glauber_Braga/status/1126483851566571521	Apresentei o projeto 466/17. Ele proíbe, na prática, instalação de bases militares de outros países no Brasil. Para fazê-lo o governo teria que realizar um plebiscito. A matéria está na Comissão de Relações Exteriores. E quem pegou a relatoria e sentou em cima? Eduardo Bolsonaro.	184	847	34
https://twitter.com/TelmarioMotaRR/status/1117880860080951296	Estive nesta segunda-feira, 15, na Casa Amarela, com autoridades venezuelanas, entre eles o Ministro do poder popular para as relações exteriores, Jorge Arreaza, a fim de restabelecer o diálogo entre Brasil e Venezuela. Confira: (link: https://bit.ly/2Inhk0C)	170	119	40
https://twitter.com/USAemPortugues/status/1122910859876024321	Hoje, o @SecPompeo recebeu o ministro das Relações Exteriores do #Brasil @ernestofaraujo no Departamento de Estado @StateDept @ItamaratyGovBr @itamaraty_en @EmbaixadaEUA @BrazilinUSA	147	512	26
https://twitter.com/luisnassif/status/1130173327228702722	Bolsonaro faz Brasil perder influência mundial, diz agência internacional (link: https://jornalggn.com.br/relacoes-exteriores/bolsonaro-faz-brasil-perder-influencia-mundial-diz-agencia-internacional/)	99	205	8

B6) Organization of American States

The queries set to measure the debate about the Brazilian presence in the Organization of American States did not find relevant results. The searches ran under parameters including the word “Brasil” and “OEA” or “Organização dos Estados Americanos” retrieved results largely

pertinent to Venezuelan politics, revealing an intense online debate in that country, as the acronym works in Spanish as well as in Portuguese. The extended organization name in Portuguese has enabled significant filtering, although it failed to be as a comprehensive parameter as the acronym. Out of 384013 occurrences, a mere 1.1% (4,307 tweets) were detected to be written in Portuguese, making it impossible to either detect their pertinence to Brazilian Foreign Policy or select a sample of most engaging pertinent tweets.

B7) United Nations

A georeferenced and language filtered search with the terms “Brasil” and “ONU” or “Nações Unidas” retrieved 72,963 pertinent tweets. Among them, 7121 included the term “Bolsonaro”. Although some of the tweets listed as highly engaging - two¹⁰⁶ among the top ten, with very high engagement rates - mentioned the United Nations but did not refer specifically to Brazil’s presence in the Organization, an analysis of the word cloud revealed that the bulk of the debate was centered around Brazil’s participation in UN mechanisms and operations. Original tweets, quotes and replies, all contained examples of an association between the country’s active participation in the UN and the government’s ideological stance. A symbol of multilateral order and cooperation, the UN became the epitome of the so-called “globalism”, and became associated with a “leftist” agenda for foreign policy.



¹⁰⁶ **Unrelated tweets mentioning UN**

“Cadê a indignação da resistência democrática, da ONU, do FHC, da MPB, da OAB & ETC contra a FAKE NEWS da menina que repudiou o presidente? Vocês fingem combater bolsonarismos e trumpismos mas qualquer criança de escola vê que a sua maquiagem de herói democrata está toda borrada”

https://twitter.com/GFiuza_Oficial/status/1120013816228667393

And “Juliana Paes apoia a Reforma da Previdência, que vai precarizar a vida de milhares de mulheres tornando elas mais vulneráveis. A mesma Juliana é uma das representantes das mulheres brasileiras na ONU Mulheres Brasil.”

<https://twitter.com/RibSte/status/1153150593579585536>

These were excluded from the most engaging tweets table, and from the total sum of occurrences.

URL	Tweet	RT	<3	Replies
https://twitter.com/bolsonarosp/status/1127272711942807552	A audiência de custódia que solta presos em flagrante em até 24h foi uma recomendação da ONU executada pelo CNJ. Pergunto: você já votou em alguém da ONU ou fo CNJ? Qual a legitimidade que estas pessoas acham que tem para fazer esse tipo de coisa? Isso o Congresso não derruba!	5700	26700	2100
https://twitter.com/AnaPaulaVolei/status/1133514785268461568	A Venezuela HAHAHHA do ditador Nicolás Maduro HAHAHA assumiu hoje HAHAHHA a presidência do órgão de desarmamento HAHAHHAHA da ONU HAHAHHAHAHAHAHAHAHA	4900	23500	2200
https://twitter.com/taliriapetrone/status/1129814935972798464	Embarcando agora para Paris, e depois irei a Genebra. Vamos trocar experiências sobre direitos humanos e denunciar o governador Wilson Witzel na ONU. A luta é internacional.	2100	21600	4000
https://twitter.com/gugachacra/status/1124783660987822080	Olavo de Carvalho, condecorado por Bolsonaro, xinga o General Santos Cruz, que foi force commander das forças de paz da ONU no Haiti (MINUSTAH) e no Congo (MONUSCO), sendo um militar respeitado internacionalmente. Além disso, é ministro- chefe da secretaria de governo do Brasil	1700	11200	1300
https://twitter.com/joomikhail/status/1124778625415491585	#BoicoteBurgerKing Lista de COMUNISTAS atualizada The NY Times The Economist João Amoêdo Facebook Papa Geraldo Alckmin ONU Sheherazade Folha de São Paulo Le Pen Reinaldo Azevedo Harvard PSDB Mourão Estadão Gilmar Mendes CNN Chile Fox News IBGE Prefeito de Nova York Burger King	1300	4100	189

https://twitter.com/AlvarengaRibe/status/1124329103958650880	NO BRASIL DE BOLSONARO Professor não presta. Jornalista não presta. ONU não presta. Meio-ambiente não presta. Índio não presta. Gay não presta. Universidade não presta. O que presta é só pastor, militar e torturador	1100	3800	65
https://twitter.com/andretrig/status/1128312121853399041	Quando o analfabetismo ambiental se supera, s/qualquer argumento embasado cientificamente, relegando um país que já foi protagonista na busca por soluções, à condição de nação entorpecida pela mediocridade e pelo obscurantismo rasteiros #SemClima	1100	4000	107
https://twitter.com/lpbraganca/status/1121897250094030849	Provavelmente os EUA nunca irá ratificar o tratado de armas da ONU pois sabe que o tratado prejudica sua indústria bélica e o exercício de sua soberania. Isso não pareceu ser razão suficiente para os “guerreiros do povo brasileiro” que aprovaram tal tratado em 2015 passivamente	926	6200	51
https://twitter.com/RenovaMidia/status/1113886481720934400 on April 4 https://twitter.com/RenovaMidia/status/1114660313297760256 on April 6	Em um documento enviado à ONU, o governo do presidente Jair Bolsonaro afirma que "não houve golpe em 1964" e que os "militares agiram para conter a ameaça comunista".	842	3700	136
https://twitter.com/andrefran/status/1116509654891290624	O caminho é sem volta. Quem conhece um pouquinho de história, já viu esse enredo se desenrolar em outros países. O final não é nada legal. E pra reverter demora... (link to "Bolsonaro passou a votar na ONU seguindo a Bíblia", by O Globo https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/bolsonaro-diz-que-brasil-passou-votar-na-onu-seguindo-biblia-23591655?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=O%20Globo)	524	2700	131
https://twitter.com/abdalafarah/status/1123325920943771648	Eduardo Bolsonaro foi para a fronteira do Brasil com a Venezuela. Em que função? a) Ministro das Relações Exteriores b) Filho do Presidente c) Chefe das Forças Armadas d) Representante do Conselho de Segurança da ONU e) Líder da Turma 501 (Esperando Frota e os amiguinhos)	346	1500	154
https://twitter.com/JornalOGlobo/status/1116420625466318851	Bolsonaro diz que Brasil passou a votar na ONU seguindo a Bíblia.	221	1200	734
https://twitter.com/randolfeap/status/1128063841764507648	Bolsonaro segue envergonhando o Brasil, dessa vez cancelando evento da ONU sobre o clima que seria realizado em Salvador/BA. Reflexo da política de inimigos imaginários tocada pelo governo que culpa o	217	835	185

	"marxismo cultural" pelo aquecimento global!			
https://twitter.com/rafaelmartins/status/1128269370579390467	Bom Dia Brasil acaba de informar que o governo Bolsonaro cancelou um evento ambiental mundial marcado para Salvador ainda em 2019. A prefeitura soube pela ONU, segundo a Globo. A justificativa é que o ministro do Meio Ambiente não se sentia "confortável" a respeito (segue)	196	657	22
https://twitter.com/thaisheredia/status/1116444252110716928	acabou o estado laico?! (link to "Bolsonaro passou a votar na ONU seguindo a Bíblia", by O Globo https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/bolsonaro-diz-que-brasil-passou-votar-na-onu-seguindo-biblia-23591655?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=O%20Globo)	196	1100	218
https://twitter.com/erikakokay/status/1113891284836671488	Mais uma vergonha internacional: Brasil diz à ONU que não houve golpe em 1964. A tentativa do governo Bolsonaro de mudar os fatos históricos do Brasil merece todo o nosso repúdio.	185	704	37

The findings presented in this chapter acknowledge the presence of a bulky debate about Brazilian foreign policy on Twitter.

During the early months of Jair Bolsonaro's administration, Brazil's foreign affairs engaged a large community of the platform's users, mostly driven to the debate by foreign policy events or tweets posted by public figures, notably members of the government and the president himself. Real-time monitoring of Twitter content related to the 10 selected themes, as listed above, was able to retrieve 751,414 original tweets, retweets and quotes, shared by at least 500,634 unique users from April 1st to June 2nd.

The outreach of his foreign policy-related content reached an even larger number of users, as they engaged with these tweets through likes and replies: overall, the debate encompassed 1,815,041 likes and 115,068 direct responses. The latter did not include the specific terms associated with the 10 issues in question, but came as straightforward commentary in reaction to those original posts. The 751,414 tweet sample was unevenly distributed, both regarding the themes to which they related and the internal content of each message. The three issues that related to foreign

policy events (section A in this chapter), were able to condense 576,745 observations, while the additional tweets referred to key issues extracted from the Las Americas survey.

Following the assessment of the debate's presence and bulk, its main characteristics and particular traits could be perceived through the analysis of the most engaging tweets under each theme. Although there were few merely informative posts – mainly issued by the official profiles of news outlets –, messages were largely attitude-expressive: the language gave clear signs of the user's take on foreign policy events and guidelines, as well as their approval of foreign policy actors. The issues were usually debated in connection with domestic policy stances. The attitudes expressed in tweets often made reference to the user's stance regarding the administration.

Notably, the uneven distribution of single contents revealed a diffusion dynamics that relates to the aforementioned mechanism of attitude transference from elites to the general public. Results from the analysis of 126 most engaging tweets (displayed in the tables above) indicated that Twitter users not only relied on the platform to access news and information, but also relied on the elaborations of few active users to form their opinions – and later shared or engaged with these messages to express their own views, often by replicating content. This analysis indicates that this work's main hypothesis – that of social media as heuristic shortcuts in opinion formation, can be corroborated.

CHAPTER 3 - ORDINARY PEOPLE TWEET ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This research was initially motivated by an inductive perception of the growing relevance of social media to public opinion. Not long ago, Brazilian society began to pay attention to the reflexes of online interaction on mass attitudes as new means of both influence and opinion expression, and the possible effects of this phenomenon on the country's political life. The public's takes on political issues and public policy were being the object of online discussions, often in the form of long, heated arguments, engaging not only social media users, but society as a whole, to the point where they affected political outcomes. Since the most varied subjects concerning the political sphere/world were pervasive in the digital interactions, even inciting academic research here and abroad, it was not farfetched to presume that foreign policy would too be among those debates. Considering the literature that places Brazilian foreign policy within the political issues that have a considerable share of the public's interest, and about which people are able to express coherent attitudes, the hypothesis that connectivity might play a part had to be raised.

This entailed undertaking a research endeavor on a relatively unexplored field. As mentioned in Chapter 1, recent research has observed the digital networks of foreign policy actors and concerning elites, which provided a valuable contribution as to these groups' online connectivity. This, however, did not account for mass attitudes and the penetration of foreign policy issues in the broader spectrum of social media users. The first step in order to grasp the general public's participation on the foreign policy debate was, therefore, to verify its existence and the extent of its pervasiveness amidst the whole of social media interactions. The present study, therefore, proposed the theme-oriented frame of reference: searching for foreign policy issues as search queries over an unrestricted population of users, during a limited period, as an additional contribution to observing the actors' and elites' flows of interaction.

As explained in chapter 2, Twitter offered an accessible and relevant database for departure, whose outcome was a descriptive and non-inferential depiction of the foreign policy debate on the social platform from April to June, 2019. The overall results revealed that the debate was existent, bulky and pervasive: it not only reached the general public but also fomented/instigated

engagement from a non-specialized public. Aside from the 751,414 original tweets, retweets and quotes, which alone mobilized at least 500,634 Brazilian users¹⁰⁷, the detectable overall debate encompassed 1,815,041 likes and 115,068 direct responses. Additionally, on several occasions, foreign policy-related tweets and hashtags reached the trending topics, enhancing exposition, and often generated transmedia repercussions, reaching traditional news broadcasters.

An additional descriptive layer was added by observing the content of the most engaging tweets. This assessment revealed that individual foreign policy attitudes could be detected in original written messages, responses and other less-costly reactions. These attitudes were often an expression of instrumentalization: foreign policy attitudes were employed as tools to argue and take stances on a polarized discussion about domestic politics. As this chapter will explore in the following pages, *attitudes expressed on Twitter are not as pragmatic as the ones appreciated in recent surveys (2010 and 2015). The majority of attitude manifestations obtained online during this period tended to serve a polarized debate and reflected domestic politics attitudes. If survey results indicated a sensible degree of pragmatism, this study suggests that opinions expressed may also vary according to where the individual lies in the political spectrum: left or right.* But because this study was only descriptive and non-inferential, it did not propose to infer a comprehensive panorama of public opinion trends. Nevertheless, the fact that individual attitudes could be perceived in this limited sample approximates social media analysis to the purpose of opinion polls and surveys, provided the employment of adequate methods. Currently employed in scholarly and market-oriented research, **content analysis** and **sentiment analysis** (both methods capable of scanning through a large quantity of imagetic and textual data) are methodological tools that offer ability to grasp mass attitudes and opinion trends with the required rigour and precision, and they could serve in the assessment of Brazilian foreign policy attitudes in a complementary manner. Unlike public opinion surveys, social media analyses deal with spontaneous and voluntary manifestations, whose expression may be provoked by influencers, news or events, but are not induced. With the comparative disadvantage of being less predictable, and depending on the emergence of communicational waves (such as trending topics, for instance), these studies may limit the periodic reassessment of issues (as users may simply stop

¹⁰⁷ Some datasets did not allow for an adequate triage between Brazilian and non-Brazilian users, and so their account of unique posters was not considered in the present figure.

interacting on a given subject, depending on events), and usually require *a posteriori* systematization of data (as spontaneous attitude manifestations can be conveyed in multiple forms).

Given the purposes of this research, and despite its evident limitations, the results here obtained enable a potentially constructive dialogue with the literature analysed in Chapter 1:

A) Ordinary people talk about foreign affairs on Twitter

Foreign policy issues mobilized twitter users far beyond the foreign policy community. These “outsiders” engaged on debates by writing original tweets, writing responses, sharing and giving “likes” to content. Still, the main debate initiators are members of the country’s political elite. Results were consistent with the standing literature on public opinion and foreign policy, as explored in chapter 2: attitudes expressed by the non-specialized and non-interested online community could be perceived as reflexes of the statements and perceptions that originated within the elites. On Twitter, these attitudes were expressed on messages that seemed to have the ability to condensate and formulate thought, later appropriated by the general community of users. The present study retrieved 126 tweets, classified as “most engaging” under each foreign policy key issue; out of which, 51 were issued by acting politicians (including state ministers and party leaders). Another 25 were posted by either journalists in their personal pages or news outlets’ official profiles. Those groups are directly interested, and are in informational advantage with respect to the overall population. Here, they have shown to produce a relatable and easily replicable sample of foreign policy attitude expressions. Curiously, the analysis revealed the existence of a particular group of influence: Twitter’s own elite. This group, who was responsible for 13 of the most engaging tweets, is made up of Internet users who became known for their production of online content - often generalistic, not necessarily specialised in foreign policy or any other specific field. They outreach a broad public, across age and income ranges, and do so too when commenting on foreign policy. Not necessarily first-hand informed, they seemed to provide accessible and brief analyses and elaborate relatable sentiments of outrage and indignation, in most cases, and enthusiasm and support, in fewer, with respect to foreign policy events or official statements. Notwithstanding, the so-called “outsiders” - people who did not associate public activities with their personal Twitter profiles, did not explicitly provide

information about their relationship with the foreign policy field and were not recognized as public figures - were responsible for 15 engaging tweets. Also, considering the top 10 among the 126 most engaging posts, 3 were issued by them, while only 10 were posted by politicians. The other five were from Internet influencers.

Source	N. of Tweets
Politicians	51
Journalists	17
"Outsiders"	15
Internet influencers	13
News outlets	8
Public figures*	6
Businesspeople	5
Scholars	5
Political group**	3
Embassies	2
Ambassadors	1
TOTAL	126

*outside the foreign policy community

**Political parties, movements or institutions

Although this research focuses mainly on identifying and describing the foreign policy debate on Twitter, and finding attitude expressions - thus treating social media monitoring as a means to obtain a time-framed portrait of mass attitudes, as public opinion surveys do - its results revealed a particular dynamic of influence that provokes reflection regarding the role of social media on public opinion formation. Given our close dialogue with the research agenda that investigates mass attitudes' formation, pervasiveness and effects of on foreign policy, this work could not exclude considering social media as an additional element among the informational sources of its users. The pertinent literature often treats attitude formation and expression through social as intricate phenomena, stating that the public uses social media to obtain information, rely on their trusted network to form an opinion, express their attitudes online and, as a result, is able to

collectively affect both policy and politics - the aforementioned scholarly articles about presidential elections in Brazil and abroad, influenced by online interaction and by viral, taylor-made content, offer plenty of examples. Furthermore, recent studies have rekindled the 1948 “two-step flow” theory on public opinion to identify influence dynamics that are particular to online interactions. Then, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet attested that word-of-mouth transmission from few informed readers and media consumers to a larger uninformed group in their respective spheres of interpersonal contact - friends, relatives and co-workers - played a fundamental role in the communication process. Nowadays, with discredited media outlets¹⁰⁸, contemporary authors (Choi, 2015; Hutchins, 2014)¹⁰⁹ investigate the role of online interactions and a trusted network influencers as elements as powerful as interpersonal relations were in the 1940’s.

The results presented in this research suggest that the traditional elites, as well as new players in Twitter’s influence dynamics, have used the platform to broadcast their attitudes in an explicit and immediate manner. Much like spheres of interpersonal contact, online interaction between the elites and the general public seemed to affect mass attitudes. These notable users, either trusted by their Twitter followers to be informed and reliable, or recognized as relevant actors in the public sphere, had the ability to drive the debate and, through their posts, influence attitudes. Their messages were not only retweeted and liked, but also concentrated the largest bulk of the debate, thus indicating that the content which they propagated was appropriated by the general Twitter community. This finding corroborates the hypothesis that, during this research’s time frame, Twitter communications served as a means of attitude transference from informed elites to a general, uninformed public, playing a part traditionally performed by traditional media.

¹⁰⁸ “Across all countries, the average level of trust in the news in general is down 2 percentage points to 42% and less than half (49%) agree that they trust the news media they themselves use. Trust levels in France have fallen to just 24% (-11) in the last year as the media have come under attack over their coverage of the Yellow Vests movement. Trust in the news found via search (33%) and social media remains stable but extremely low (23%)” Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 2019. See also: 2019 EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER BRASIL, available at <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>; Gallup 2019: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/195542/americantrust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx>; Pew Research Center, 2019: https://www.people-press.org/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/?fbclid=IwAR2tC_ehX7RKhhI22llsLL0-1QiCCwOIBt1glzPAhNQDRGhuGoAhkx945Dk

¹⁰⁹ i.e.: CHOI, Sujin. “The Two-Step Flow of Communication in Twitter-Based Public Forums.” *Social Science Computer Review*, vol. 33, no. 6, Dec. 2015, pp. 696–711; and HUTCHINS, Amber. “Social Media Opinion Leaders: Two-Step Flow in the Social Media Sphere” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 96th Annual Convention, Hilton San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, 2014.



Source: <https://twitter.com/DelfimBisnetto/status/1145019991772794881>

B) Political partisanship: attitudes online appear less pragmatic and more partisan than survey results

The discoveries revealed in the Las Americas reports (2010 - 2015) were the main empirical drivers of the questions this work seeks to address. The survey was able to verify significant degree of coherence and stability in foreign policy attitudes of leaders, informed public and uninformed audience. Brazilians were then enthusiasts of globalization and believed their country should perform a leading role in international matters. They manifested their attitudes in resonance with the idea that Brazil was a welcoming country, with no rivals or enemies. An interpretation of the results, particularly with respect to globalization, revealed pragmatism: despite showing the effect of ideational variables in their attitudes, respondents favored multilateral cooperation and cosmopolitanism when they saw positive effects “on the labor market, companies and the economy in general,” but were not so favorable when confronted with the possibility of price inflation.¹¹⁰ *This pragmatism, which derived from economic variables, was virtually absent in the content of the most engaging tweets here retrieved. The foreign policy attitudes expressed on Twitter during this period came across as conditioned to political ideology and domestic stances online, in a seemingly heuristic shortcut: foreign policy stances propagated by leaders on each side of the political spectrum appeared to be appropriated by their respective*

¹¹⁰ Video interview: https://cebrap.org.br/cebrap-pesquisa-07-brasil-americas-e-o-mundo/?fbclid=IwAR3-PKG-5ukvbFDOBjqBksTQcHYVHnkS3S8Tu9gObYJ6n_f07be1swLCI-M

supporters. Our study, however, did not dispose of tools to address the possible effects of political polarization over mass attitudes as an additional variable in opinion formation. However, in that regard, a different survey by the GPOPAI-USP suggests an interference of politically radicalized speech of the networks on voter's attitudes. A study revealed that attitudes from Jair Bolsonaro's supporters, gathered and informed by an electoral campaign "almost exclusively made over digital grounds", pointed to an increase of nationalism and xenophobia.¹¹¹

Furthermore, the *Las Americas* surveys depart from the premise that the public's degree of exposure and contact with international realities may affect their attitudes regarding foreign policy actors and issues. They assume that "those who possess a vast network of frequent connections" with realities from abroad become more "interested, open and participative" to foreign affairs.¹¹² Considering this assumption, as well as findings in the present study - in line with the other sources herein mentioned, namely FGV-DAPP and Nexo - which indicated the popularity of the foreign policy debate online, we find suggestion that such a bulky debate may have amplified the exposure of foreign issues in the domestic arena. But whether this temporarily enhanced exposition of Brazil's foreign affairs has had the power to raise levels of information (accurate or not) and public awareness to the point of increasing the subject's salience has yet to be answered with further investigation. One aspect that puts this possible effect into question is the ephemeral character of content concentration. Foreign policy issues were not permanently popular throughout the two-month retrieval period, as demonstrated before. Talks were unevenly distributed in time, and tended to be responsive, gaining relevance as to foreign policy events happened. For example, while during this period there were 72963 tweets about the UN; on September 17 alone, days ahead of the United Nations General Assembly 2019 session, 13000 people were tweeting about the Brazilian participation.¹¹³

Second, this *buzz* may have been but a novelty, restricted to the peculiar use of social media by the current administration as a platform to incite discussions and advertise its foreign policy stances. Jair Bolsonaro's administration reportedly picked foreign policy as one of the axes of

¹¹¹ Available at: <http://www.monitordigital.org/pesquisa/pesquisa-com-eleitores-de-bolsonaro-marcoabril-de-2019/>

¹¹² Op. Cit. Relatório México, las Américas y el Mundo 2004-2014: Diez años de opinión pública y política exterior.

¹¹³ Twitter mobile data, September 17, 2019, 11:35 am, metrics under "política".

rhetorical radicalization, and Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo is a particularly prolific Twitter user when publicizing his views on global affairs. Nonetheless, the period in question has witnessed popular acknowledgment, if not engagement, with foreign policy issues through Twitter, and its reverberations in other means of communication, including traditional media. Whenever the president, his entourage or a member of the political world tweeted about foreign policy, a vast audience of followers - including opinion influencers - received the message. Whether this amplified exposure has had long term effects on the way Brazilians perceive foreign policy, or has had the ability to form and alter their attitudes, is still to be seen.

Regardless of the possible effects of an amplified speech, the audience's interest on the subject preceded the online interaction. The considerably high levels of interest in international matters, as shown in the Las Americas survey, are likely to be essential drivers of online engagement. Due to the costs of online interaction, in order to engage on a given content, users have to be interested in some aspect of it - be it the sender or the content. Interest drives engagement, which in turn amplifies the content's exposure.

In 2014, respondents sought news and information mainly through television. Only to the informed and interested public was the Internet a relevant source. The survey made reference to the Internet in general, with no particular mention to social media. However, politics and communications phenomena in the four years between the survey and the 2018 elections, as seen in Chapter 1 (particularly the literature concerning the influence of social networks over Brazilians' political behavior) give us reasons to believe this scenario different today. It should be noted that while the Internet is a multi-content universe, which allows for news to be displayed in multiple platforms, from traditional media outlets' online editions to private chat messaging apps, going through video streaming channels and official institutional websites, social media have particular interaction characteristics. Their affordances, as previously mentioned, are believed to enhance radical speech and debate polarization, thus rendering attitudes more partisan and less pragmatic.

C) Social media under scrutiny

As pointed out by Lewandowsky (2012), “The Internet has revolutionized the availability of information; however, it has also facilitated the spread of misinformation because it obviates the use of conventional “gate-keeping” mechanisms, such as professional editors. This is particularly the case with the development of Web 2.0, whereby Internet users have moved from being passive consumers of information to actively creating content on Web sites such as Twitter and YouTube or blogs”. Misinformation and manipulation have become real problems as opinions formed online have been thought to decide political futures.

In spite of exceeding the present work’s scope, it is worth mentioning that social media monitoring and content analysis social does not escape addressing the so-called “informational warfare”: the use of “bots”, fake news and unlawful user data appropriation to intentionally alter politics and policy through content manipulation. Although these mischievous tools are “able to falsify a panorama of support or criticism to a given issue or person,”¹¹⁴ they are designed - and paid for - to insert and enlarge a Twitter debate about a given issue. In the present case, despite biased narratives and instrumental use of foreign policy issues, no signs of dissimulated or automated content were grasped among the most engaging tweets. It was not possible to measure whether the influence of “bots” (automated accounts impersonating humans) have boosted the number of interactions in the overall foreign policy debate here described. It would be safe to assume that, nowadays, no more than 9-15% of all Twitter accounts are fake¹¹⁵ - and if projected entirely over our unique poster results, this proportion of “bots” would impact the size of the engaged community of real users. Still, given that these tools are particularly concerned with online exposure, their presence would not diminish the relevance of online foreign policy discussions.

On account of these potential downsides, social media’s influence on opinion and policy has been put under the scrutiny of scholars, politicians and journalists. Not rarely, reasonable statements

¹¹⁴ Robôs, Redes Sociais e Política no Brasil, FGV-DAPP

¹¹⁵ Varol et al., in Proceedings of the 11th AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, Montreal, 2017), pp. 280–289.

Fonte da Ref: Science of Fake News(Page 2). After this study, Twitter announced measures to eliminate bots. (NEW DATA?)

are made advocating that “Twitter does not - or should not - make politics”¹¹⁶, and that the “abusive” use of social media by the Bolsonaro family is “detrimental to democracy”. This perception finds scientific corroboration (i.e.: Samuel, 2018), but only reinforces the need for deepening our knowledge about the subject.

¹¹⁶ i. e: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/clovisrossi/2019/03/twitter-nao-e-diario-oficial.shtml?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newscolumnista; <https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,assistimos-ao-renascimento-da-familia-imperial-critica-fhc,70002758352>

CONCLUSIONS

Monitoring social media and analysing its interaction with the political world has numerous dimensions. A long list of implications, which begins at their impact on public opinion, passes through the political power of content manipulation, fake news, automatization, privacy and surveillance, fragmented information, and tailor-made political messages based on irregular use of big data, and seems to never end. The academic research agenda that investigates the vast field of the relationship between social media, public opinion and politics has been established globally as a relevant front in behavioral, social and political sciences. In International Relations, the theme began to be addressed in recent years, as on the one hand, foreign policy actors make intensive use of digital platforms to broadcast their views and announce their actions, and on the other, citizens engage with foreign policy content online, appropriating information to make decisions that affect the global scenario. Making use of often experimental and transdisciplinary methods, scholars worldwide are seeking to better explain this phenomenon. In Brazil, foreign policy analysts concerned with public opinion, its formation and impacts on foreign policy decision making, are now consolidating studies that address the impact of digital technologies and social media in the field. The present work intends to integrate this front, proposing a theme-oriented frame of reference to identify and describe *if* and *how* Brazilians discuss foreign policy on Twitter, regardless of their level of information on the subject.

In close dialogue with the literature that shows Brazilian foreign policy attitudes to be existent, coherent and even pervasive amidst the uninformed public (Almeida et. al, 2019; Guimaraes et. al., 2018; Onuki et. al. 2016), this study indicated that online communications – particularly Twitter interactions – were an additional means of attitude expression with respect to foreign policy. From April to June, 2019, foreign policy debate was exposed beyond the foreign policy community, reaching the uninformed and uninterested public. Results also revealed that the general public was not a mere spectator: it engaged with foreign policy issues by expressing their attitudes in more or less costly ways. As results were merely descriptive and non-inferential, it is pertinent to ask if that expression of attitudes could be used as a complementary tool to measure public opinion. Also, on the other side of the coin, questions emerge as to whether this content exposure has increased the public's level of information and contact with foreign policy,

affecting beliefs, attitudes, and ultimately, foreign policy making. Also, as a growing literature suggests that the Brazilian institutions responsible for decision making and implementation of foreign policy have become more plural and less prone to bureaucratic isolation (Fraria, 2008; Lima 2003; Milani, 2011; Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Oliveira, 2013; Pomeroy and Waisbich, 2017), the presence of foreign policy debate on twitter relates do the expression of societal demands through a reportedly immediate communication channel between citizens and decision makers.

Particularly in Brazil, the Las Americas surveys (2010; 2015) verified that, through information provided by the media, the public debate about foreign policy issues transcended the elites and generated coherent foreign policy attitudes within the general public. The surveys attribute to traditional media outlets - mainly Television – the main sources of information, but acknowledge the importance of Internet as one the elite's main sources. Results here suggest that the outward movement of attitudes, from elites to the general public, may count with the help of social media interactions. We found that Twitter served not only not only as a platform for attitude expression, but also as an important component of public opinion formation. The systematization of the existing literature on mass attitude formation, provided by Baum and Potter (2008), allows us to understand a general and broad force field made up by the components of public opinion formation, but did not include social media.

The outward diffusion of elites' perceptions is mediated by the complex relationship between the components of public opinion formation: the multiple elements through which how people acquire information and form their foreign policy preferences (Baum and Potter, 2008). Due to their particular influencer-follower dynamics, social media have become a powerful vessel of attitude transference from cultural and political elites to the uninformed public. Often performing a parallel and complementary role to traditional mass media, social networks are likely to play a part in public opinion formation and framing, when addressing Brazilian foreign policy issues. The concentration of the debate around the notable influencers, as seen in our selected engaging tweets (as disposed in Chapter 2), as well as their ability to mobilize attitude expression by a large community of users indicated that Twitter was used as an instrument for attitude transference,

corroborating our hypothesis. This occurred as the large community of potentially uninformed users replicated the messages, appropriating their content. In face of informational disadvantage, those users relied on Twitter elites – made up of either traditional foreign policy actors or Twitter’s own influencers, who were not recognized as members of the foreign policy community – to form their own attitudes. The particular traits of digital interaction seemed to be critical for this sort of appropriation, given social media’s unique ability to engage and empower users, and quickly spread information. Twitter’s 280-character format especially encourages the quick appraisal of contents and expression of attitudes, having become prone to what field researchers call displays of sentiment, in other words, the presence of positive or negative elements associated to a piece of information within a tweet, retweet or like, that can range from tribute and support to disapproval, and indignation.

The informational architecture of the platform also contributes to assertive, and sometimes aggressive, communication patterns – which in turn, favor polarization. Although the foreign policy debate here detected was often partisan, and exposed in connection with domestic politics issues, often with polarized political stances (as explored in Chapter 2) - this research was not able to address the hypothesis of foreign policy attitude instrumentalization by political polarization. These preliminary insights, however, suggest a path for future research.

Instrumentalization: remarkable trait of a polarized debate

Scholarly acknowledgement of an ever-growing interference of societal demands on decision making processes from the 1990’s forward show that the influence of the public on foreign policy, now allegedly facilitated by social media, is not a radical novelty, as praised by Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo on his tweet (see introduction), as the slow but progressive effect of institutional changes allowed the “State to be more responsive to society’s demands and interests, also in the field of foreign policy” (Faria 2008 p.80). Still, the systematic use of Twitter to diffuse the government’s foreign policy actions may be indeed disruptive. As some of the traditional cornerstones of Brazilian foreign have reportedly been defied and

transformed,¹¹⁷ Twitter became, at least from April to June, 2019, a stage for advertising a new set of beliefs regarding Brazil's role and objectives in the international arena.

Results retrieved during this study, namely the analysis of the most influent profiles and their messages, largely displayed the expression of foreign policy attitudes instruments for domestic politics, amidst a polarized public debate. It appears as this instrumental use is not exclusive to the government: with little in-depth information available, the same foreign policy subjects served as arguments for mobilizing the public pro or against, left or right. The content extracted from the most engaging messages indicated that the debate: (1) was mostly stimulated by 'facts on the ground', or foreign policy events, addressed in tweets by either field actors, influential and/or politically relevant users, or traditional media profiles in the platform; (2) was generally inserted in a more comprehensive narrative dispute between the opposing poles in domestic politics; (3) mobilized supporters of either side, who manifested via original tweets, retweets, responses and likes, regardless of their level of information, technical or historical knowledge, but in resonance with the expected foreign policy attitude for each given side. Even more global, less partisanship-prone issues, which could therefore be discussed in a more endogenous, technical basis such as global warming, were frequently appropriated.

Ramos et. al. (2015) suggest that social media has a significant impact on the polarization of public opinion regarding the most diverse issues, from book and film reviews to politics. Their study's main achievement was to find a reliable mathematical predictor for detecting the trend to polarization in societies. The authors found that social media interactions between individuals are one among the multiple factors that contribute to the emergence and spread of extreme positions, as "moderate opinions dwindle". Consisting of a relatively new, potentially disruptive form of social interaction, social media increases connectivity and thus rises the "average degree through which opinion spreads". Consequently, content acceleration and amplification by means of social

¹¹⁷ See: <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/governo-bolsonaro-inclui-familia-elimina-mencoes-genero-pobreza-tortura-em-candidatura-na-onu-23798604>; <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/2019/07/11/2273-brasil-acompanha-paises-islamicos-em-votacoes-sobre-direitos-das-mulheres-sexuais-na-onu>; <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/brasil-vota-favor-de-protecao-identidade-de-genero-na-onu-mas-ressalva-que-genero-sinonimo-de-sexo-biologico-23804802>, and <https://jamilchade.blogosfera.uol.com.br/2019/06/27/a-diplomacia-teologica-brasileira-um-relato-de-um-dia-na-onu/>

media interactions facilitate the shift from a mostly moderate society to a predominantly extremist one. In such a polarized environment, each side reinforces their own views and narratives about facts with pungent and potentially viral messages. Another study by the Laboratório de Estudos e Imagem de Cibercultura (Labic) at Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (Ufes) examined Twitter activity among President Bolsonaro's supporters and revealed that the current administration counts with the support of a small but active virtual "army" of Twitter users, who "act deliberately, trying to impose a certain narrative with respect to facts."¹¹⁸

The possibly transformative effects of social media on foreign policy attitudes call attention to the influence of a transformed - likely intrumentalized and polarized - public opinion on actual policy making. An assessment of government actions through social media monitoring has shown specific influence of social media assessment on a foreign policy decision during, by coincidence, our study's analytical time frame¹¹⁹. Private consultant and data analysis company Arquimedes has shown that the decision to maintain the Brazilian embassy in Tel-Aviv coincided with low mediatic support for the measure - as did other measures undertaken by the current administration. Through the use of a proprietary technology, the company developed an index for social media user sentiment: based on retweets and shares of the governments tweets and Facebook posts, the tool measured users' mood, on a range from zero to 100; zero being totally negative and 100, totally positive. Whenever a controversial measure - such as the transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem - received a grade lower than 30 on the index - indicating an approval rate of less than 30% among social media users who engaged with the matter - there was probability the government could recoil. The index's record history for the embassy transfer started at 42 and plunged to 7, following news on import restrictions by Saudi Arabia in reaction to the renewed Brazilian-Israeli rapport.

¹¹⁸ <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/pequeno-grupo-impulsiona-artilharia-bolsonarista-no-twitter-23562974>

¹¹⁹ Two other administration "recoils" were detected; they also coincided with low approval among social media users. First, in February, 2019, the Minister of Education took back his request for public schools' headmasters/principals to read the administration's slogan out to students before singing the national anthem. Second, shortly after, the president ordered the Justice Minister Sergio Moro withdrew his appointment of political scientist Ilona Szabó for first alternate in the National Council for Criminal and Penitentiary Policy [Conselho Nacional de Política Criminal e Penitenciária]. In the eyes of the president's online supporters, Szabó, who was at the time Director of Instituto Igarapé, an NGO dedicated to public/urban security studies, was no more than an enemy to arms liberation advocates. Both announcements had had negative repercussions online. Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/governo-bolsonaro-recuos-coincidem-com-rejeicao-temas-nas-redes-sociais-1-23495533>

Arquimedes founder Pedro Bruzzi declared: “There is a certain standard. We verified that, whenever the index for a given controversy is below 30, the government might review its stance. Above 30, nothing changes”. In interviews concerning this finding, scholars Pablo Ortellado and Fabio Malini corroborated the digital networks’ influence over government’s actions. If this correlation between online sentiment and foreign policy decisions were ever verified in other issues, Brazilian foreign policy would be facing an unprecedented channel of societal influence: democratic, on the one hand, but dangerously susceptible to politicization, misinformation and opinion manipulation on the other.

Further research

We have verified and assessed the online presence of foreign affairs discussions in one of the most politically influential platforms. By doing so, we have only begun to set ground for answering the inevitable questions that emerged. During the period of analysis, we saw that whenever the selected key foreign policy issues had not been brought about by events, statements or news, public engagement was not as high. But when provoked by outside reality, Brazilian Twitter users expressed their views on their country’s expected identity and performance. These views, nonetheless, often served as instruments in a polarized debate that opposed left and right in domestic politics. This “partisan” variable for attitude expression, although possibly restricted to the period in question, may add up to the pragmatism and the non-partisan set of beliefs that oriented Brazilian’s opinions on foreign policy.

New research pathways may arise from the development of these findings, outside this dissertation’s scope. The data retrieved can still be examined for further qualitative analyses of mentions, not only onto the most engaging, but also to the larger, complete array of collected messages. More importantly, future research with less limited collection capabilities that ours could go beyond and expand the time frame of consistent and thorough monitoring. Ostensibly tracking both fixed and eventual issues could enable the exam of mass attitudes, address the question of increased salience and likely provide answers as to the influence of mass attitudes

over policy making. A multiplicity of non-traditional and non-state actors is now known to influence foreign policy decision making. Although further examination of these actors' online networks is required to ensure and precise their engagement on foreign policy debate, the results obtained from this research suggest that these groups are now likely to use social media as visible platform for voicing out their foreign policy attitudes, interests and agendas. This calls for further investigation about the effects of this amplified attitude diffusion on public opinion in general. Like a circular movement, while these actors populate social media, they are not only expressing their views, but also being exposed to content. Therefore, yet another line of inquiry emerges - one that examines whether the public debate on social media has the ability to influence these groups' foreign policy attitudes. And because they are influential actors, this would ultimately have an effect on foreign policy making.

There seems to be room for further studies about this influence regarding foreign policy. This work addresses this underexplored field, proposing that the debate about Brazilian foreign policy occupies Twitter and reaches beyond the foreign policy community. Our study seeks to call attention to the importance of including the social media dimension in academic investigations about the public opinion-foreign policy relationship.

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