

**WestminsterResearch**

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/westminsterresearch>

**Contrasting Federal and State Government Communication on  
Facebook in Brazil: Contradictory Messages and Realities**

**Medrado, A. and Cabral, A.**

This is an author's accepted manuscript of a chapter published in: Maarek, P. (ed.)  
Manufacturing Government Communication on Covid-19: A Comparative Perspective  
Cham, Switzerland Springer. pp. 175-211.

The final authenticated publication is available at Springer via:

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09230-5>

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

## **Contrasting Federal and State Government Communication on Facebook in Brazil: Contradictory Messages and Realities.**

Dr Andrea Medrado

Dr Adilson Cabral

### **Brazil's political context and government communication.**

In early 2020, when the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 to be pandemic, Jair Bolsonaro had completed his first year of office. His election, in October 2018, epitomised the country's political shift to the right after 14 years of Government by the Workers' Party (PT). The PT had been in power since 2003 with Lula da Silva, for two terms; and Dilma Rousseff, elected in 2010, and reelected in 2014. In 2016, the Brazilian Senate impeached Rousseff for moving funds between government budgets. Rousseff denied being involved in corruption scandals or having done anything illegal, arguing that maneuvering funds was a common practice among her predecessors (BBC News Latin America, 2016)<sup>i</sup>.

Known for his far-right politics, for lashing out at women, ethnic minorities, and indigenous groups, Bolsonaro presented himself as an anti-PT candidate and an advocate of Christian values. Although he had worked as a federal legislator since 1991, he also managed to convey an anti-establishment image during his election campaign. Gaining strength due to the impeachment turmoil, the former paratrooper and army captain gathered support from a range of political actors, such as the military, the Evangelical churches, and politicians aligned with a neoliberal agenda. He beat the PT candidate Fernando Haddad in the second round of the 2018 elections with 55.1% of the valid votes. The PT's original plan was to name Lula as a presidential candidate. However, at the time, he was being held in prison for corruption charges and deemed unfit to run in the elections under the Clean Slate Law. Ironically, three days after winning the election, Bolsonaro appointed the judge who helped arrest Lula, Sergio Moro, to his Justice Ministry.

The Brazilian scholar Muniz Sodré (2021) argues that the Bolsonaro Government helps define an age of "uncivil society" in Brazil. Drawing from Hegel's, Lenin's, and Gramsci's notions of "civil society", Sodré notes that two important dimensions are linked to the "uncivil society". The first one is characterised by forms of public sociability that are

founded on idiocy, hatred, and exasperation. Long before he became president, Bolsonaro became well-known for incendiary remarks reported by various media outlets such as telling a congresswoman that “he would not rape her because she did not deserve it”, saying that he would prefer his son “to die in an accident than to show up with some bloke in a moustache” (Meredith, 2018), and honouring a famous torturer during Rousseff’s impeachment session.

The uncivil society’s second dimension is linked to a marriage between the neoliberal minimum state with necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003). In the Brazilian context, neoliberal reforms have intensified since the 1990s, alongside the country’s process of re-democratisation. With the free market as its guiding principle, they have provided the foundations for legitimising market-oriented social policies. After Rousseff’s impeachment, under Michel Temer’s presidency, the Senate passed a labour reform to include a cap on government spending on education and health, an overhaul of the pension system and an easing of worker protections (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

At the same time, these neoliberal reforms accelerated processes of pauperisation and precarisation, indirectly and directly exposing masses of individuals to death. As Sodré (2021) suggests, this demonstrates the ways in which neoliberal policies are intertwined with the rise of necropolitics. The latter creates forms of social existence characterised by small doses of death that come from social, economic, and symbolic violence. These daily doses of humiliation are perpetrated on marginalised populations by neglecting their basic social goods, such as access to health, sanitation, and housing, leading to a living-dead existence. Facilitated by capitalist neoliberal circumstances, necropolitics entrap “human beings in the struggle or and the work through which he or she confronts death. It is through this confrontation with death that he or she is cast into the incessant movement of history” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 14).

Another characteristic of the uncivil society relates to the styles of leadership and communication employed by the Bolsonaro Government, employing tactics of confrontation, conflict, and disinformation. Having conducted a content analysis on the Facebook page of Brazil’s Federal Government, Joathan, Medrado and Medeiros demonstrated that Bolsonaro frequently used social media to engage in public rows with the Supreme Court, state governors, city mayors, and journalists (2021, p. 227). This, in turn, pointed to a high level of internal disagreements and disjointed coordination efforts by the various State Governors,

Ministers and the President himself (Ibid). As an example, since Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, Bolsonaro has appointed four different health Ministers: Luiz Henrique Mandetta, with whom he had several public disagreements in relation to social distancing measures and the efficacy of Covid-19 treatment medications; Nelson Teich, who served as Minister for less than a month; Eduardo Pazuello, an Army officer with no medical training, and Marcelo Queiroga, who is occupying the role as of the time of writing.

In addition to the ministerial instability, both Bolsonaro's election campaign, in 2018, and his mandate as president since 2019 have been characterised by the frequent use of various forms of disinformation and misinformation. Investigations published by the national broadsheet *Folha de São Paulo* revealed that private companies financed mass messaging services on WhatsApp during the presidential race (Mello, 2018). The reports also denounced how databases were acquired for the targeted distribution of messages to micro-segments of the voters, something that can be linked to strategies employed by Steve Bannon who was involved in Bolsonaro's campaign (Da Silveira, 2018).

After the elections, and in the context of the pandemic, observers have also witnessed a disinformation crisis in the Brazilian media sphere. This was fed by unofficial changes in terms of the Federal Government's communication structures. Firstly, the Government increased the budget for the Secretariat of Communications – SECOM. At the same time, SECOM informally embraced the unofficial "Office of Hatred", led by Bolsonaro's son, Carlos Bolsonaro, who even set up an office at the Presidential Palace in Brasília even though he has been officially elected as a City Councillor for a different city, Rio de Janeiro. This structure made it possible to continue spreading hate speech against Bolsonaro's opponents (predominantly via WhatsApp and on social media) as well as denialist discourses that trivialise the pandemic (via WhatsApp, social media, but also on mainstream broadcast media). One emblematic moment occurred when Bolsonaro referred to Covid-19 as "just a little flu" in a televised presidential speech on 24 March 2020 (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021, p. 223).

As the pandemic became a major health crisis in Brazil, a Parliamentary Commission was set up to investigate the spread of misinformation and disinformation by the Bolsonaro government. This Commission has identified a surge of misinformation around three major themes. The first theme consists of pseudo-scientific information about symptoms, risks, and

cures. This includes the promotion of unproven drugs against Covid-19, such as hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin, and nitazoxanide, and the sabotage of established interventions, such as social distancing, mask-wearing, and vaccination (Furlan and Caramelli, 2021, p. 1). The second theme revolves around control measures adopted by other countries and recommended by international organisations, and their supposed ‘catastrophic’ collateral effects. The third theme focuses on attacking decision-makers or public figures to delegitimise those supporting social isolation measures, including state governors that have implemented quarantine, media outlets, and health specialists, and on praising those who publicly support a “return to normality” (certain government officials and businessmen). In sum, as suggested by Ricard and Medeiros, the Federal Government messages tend to: 1) minimise the severity of the disease; 2) discredit the social isolation measures as well as vaccination programmes to reduce the disease's spread and 3) to increase the distrust of public and scientific data (2020, p. 1-2).

In this complex scenario, the pandemic has produced a devastating effect. Brazil is the third country in terms of number of confirmed Covid-19 cases – over 27.5 million (behind India and the USA) – and the second country in terms of number of deaths – almost 640 thousand (behind the USA) – as of the time of writing (Worldometer, 2021). This has led to serious concerns that the Federal Government is not taking the pandemic threat seriously enough. State Governors, and particularly João Dória, the Governor of São Paulo (Brazil’s wealthiest state) have become vocal critics of the President, his anti-pandemic measures, and his conflict-oriented communication tactics. In an interview for Time, the centre-right Governor, who used to be an ally of Bolsonaro during the election campaign, stated that: “the president despises us and attacks us. He has put us in an impossible position by creating a narrative that impedes the protection of people and life,” (Time, 2020).

Additionally, in contrast to Bolsonaro’s anti-vaccination stance, Brazil’s Butantan Biomedical Institute has started to locally manufacture a vaccine developed by China’s Sinovac. The shot, CoronaVac, is being manufactured in the São Paulo State, using inputs from China. In this way, CoronaVac became the first vaccine available in Brazil in January 2021, when the Sao Paulo State Government offered to supply the vaccines to the Federal administration. Bolsonaro, however, has expressed scepticism at what he calls the “Chinese vaccine”, engaging in frequent public provocations with the São Paulo Governor João Dória, reinforcing their political rivalry (Simões, 2021). Reflecting about/ this conflicted scenario,

the aim of this chapter is to compare the different framings employed the Federal and the São Paulo State Government communication on Facebook. Employing a content analysis (Bardin, 1977), we investigate the types of theme categories that prevail in each of the two Governments' official Facebook pages - @palacioplanalto and @governosp. By doing this, we delve into issues of communication strategies and leadership in a context of crisis (Lilleker et. al., 2021). We also ask: in what ways are salient economic, such as providing financial support to vulnerable families, and public health issues, such as covid-19 vaccines, being addressed? To what extent can we find instances of misinformation and disinformation in these official pages? In what follows, we start by sharing perspectives that address issues of government communication, including the relationship between the various government levels and actors, and discussing research on leadership in times of crisis.

### **Government Communication: From leadership models to misinformation and disinformation on social media.**

Analysing political communication in a context of crisis, Coman et. al. emphasise the importance of three dimensions of leadership: performance, media management, and control of the narrative (2021, p. 3). Drawing from Kahn's (2020) research on leadership during public health crises, Coman et.al. identify two models of leadership: a) The Politician Prominence Model – which manifests when the politician accepts advice from experts but keeps the primary decision-making and public communication role; and b) The Expert Appointee Prominence Model – when the politician delegates decision-making and public communication roles to experts, while providing public support for their decisions (2021, p. 3). The first model has two implications for government communication: it leads to a personalisation and centralisation of leadership, and it requires that the public place full trust in the leader's ability to unite a nation with integrity and a competent performance (Coman et. al., 2021, p. 3-4).

In this chapter, considering Kahn's (2020) two models of leadership, we analyse how the Bolsonaro Government has tried to assign a "Prominent" role to the President as opposed to the São Paulo Government's adoption of an "Expert Appointee" model by emphasising the scientific achievements of the Butantan Institute. In addition to leadership roles, it is also important to consider the role played by mass media, acting as a bridge between governmental actors, their publics (Seeger et.al., 1998, p. 138; Coman et. al., 2021, p. 4) and

civil society, including citizens' solidarity movements (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021). Such bridging roles are varied and can range from providing information; promoting or contesting government narratives; being a source of guidance and consolation; or framing the coverage based on political, moral, or religious tenets (Coman et.al., p. 4). The role of media in framing messages matters because it provides a schema of interpretation for audiences and citizens to respond to real-world events. According to Entman (1993), frames represent organising principles that are shared persistently over time to the extent that they become easily recognisable and symbolically meaningful to audiences. Importantly, framing also consists of selecting one aspect of a complex event - which can be easily communicated - and presenting it to an audience. Thus, by framing an event and providing a reference point for audiences, media outlets help construct reality (Carter, 2013, p. 1).

In Brazil, one important media frame in terms of Government communication has been the frame of *conflict* between different spheres of power, such as the Federal Government, the States and Municipalities and the Supreme Court (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021, p. 227). The authors note that the prominence of this category is associated with a serious lack of leadership in the country. The presence of conflicting attitudes and contradictory messages "created a sense of confusion and abandonment, worsened by the Government's low emphasis on communicating solidarity with the millions of Brazilians who are falling ill and the thousands who have lost their lives" (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021, p. 229). The authors also suggest that a focus on solidarity was replaced by messaging which revolved around "permanent campaigning" (Ibid), an element that will be further investigated in this chapter.

The concept of permanent campaign was developed in the United States, and it refers to how there is no clear-cut distinction between the time politicians spend in governing and the time that they spend in campaigning (Blumenthal, 1980). The theory of permanent campaign is also attributed to Patrick Caddell, a political strategist who wrote a memo for Jimmy Carter after his Presidential election. The memo famously said that "governing with public approval requires a continuing political campaign" (Bowman, 2000, p. 63; Joathan, 2020, p.19). Thus, Caddell named a phenomenon – the permanent campaign – that refers to a process of constant image management, ensuring electoral success rather than government mandates that cater to citizens' needs. Such phenomenon includes various strategies, ranging from

increasing the number of trips to locations that can yield electoral dividends to the search for donations to parties for future campaigns (Joathan, *Ibid*).

The permanent campaign literature emerged at a time when authors and experts were concerned with the implications of TV for the communication dynamics between politicians and their publics (Joathan, 2020). In this chapter, we situate the debates around permanent campaigning in a context of social media use in government communication. This is relevant because social media has created new possibilities for permanent campaigning with (somewhat) horizontal communication flows between communication teams and citizens/voters/social media users. In this way, heads of governments have used social media to capture attention from and communicate with (potential) voters through impactful images, videos, and messages on an almost daily basis (Lalancette and Raynauld, 2019, p. 888). Thus, we compare how permanent campaigning strategies are adopted on social media by the Federal Government in contrast to a State Government (São Paulo).

“Misinformation” and “disinformation” also deserve special attention here. We draw from Wardle and Derakhshan’s (2017) distinction between the two concepts. According to the authors, misinformation is the type of information that is false, but not made with the intention to harm. Disinformation, on the other hand, is the type of false information that is intentionally crafted and shared to harm people, social groups, countries, or organisations. However, a few authors have problematised this distinction. For Jack (2017), for instance, identifying the original intent entailed in a media piece might not as straight forward as the literature suggests. To cite her:

The intentions behind any given piece of media content are rarely clear. Further, whether a given story or piece of content is labelled as misinformation or disinformation can depend as much on an actor’s intent as on the professional standards of the person evaluating it. (2017, p. 4).

Therefore, one might question whether the distinctions between misinformation and disinformation might be as clear-cut as they appear at first sight. Other authors such as Fallis prefer to focus on the concept of “function”, or a quality that a thing acquires. To cite his definition: “disinformation is misleading information that has the *function* of misleading someone” (2015, p. 413).



In this chapter, we will refer to both concepts – misinformation and disinformation – because our analysis includes both information that has the function of misleading citizens and information that generates engagement with users on social media (such as shares, comments, and likes) even if these users are unaware of messages’ misleading function. Moreover, in the context of the pandemic, authors have turned their attention to misinformation and disinformation that revolve around vaccination on different forms of media. Bradshaw et. al. (2020), for instance, analysed the documentary series “Vaccines Revealed”, advertised as truth within anti-vaccination Facebook groups. Recommended specifically to parents who are on the fence about whether to vaccinate their children, the documentary aims to expose the main players of what they call “the vaccine industry”. For these players, who include the Murdoch Media Monopoly, governmental agencies and doctors, the main concern is financial gain. Thus, in the series, Big Pharma and governmental agencies were portrayed as fully corrupt and knowledgeable about the fraud and deceit they actively engaged in for illicit gain (Bradshaw et.al. 2020, p. 2061).

Other authors turn their attention to the espousing misinformation and disinformation about Covid-19 vaccines by public figures. Glasper highlights the role of social media in strengthening the anti-vaccination movement, considering it a serious concern for public health. To cite the author: “social media–fuelled misinformation by anti-vaxxers include claims that the vaccines are used to implant microchips into recipients or cause sterilisation. The World Health Organization is concerned that the consequences of unchecked anti-vaxxer reports will claim lives, especially those of children” (2021, p. 82).

Although these are relevant perspectives, they refer to contexts in the Global North, such as the USA and the UK. Oliveira’s study is helpful here because she situates the phenomenon of misinformation and disinformation in a context of challenges to scientific communication, drawing from empirical research conducted in Brazil and on messaging platforms such as WhatsApp groups. She notes that “scientific narratives are disputed in both traditional media and on social media platforms” as “new actors keep appearing in digital spaces, and the algorithms continue to function” (2022, p. 18). Oliveira also reveals the dynamics in which different voices compete for public visibility in the media and on social media platforms:

The conspiracy theorists create and prosper in their bubbles. In these digital spaces, phenomena that intertwine politics, science, and religion – such as flat earth-ism,

creationism, and other themes – flourish, along with other movements that attack the legitimacy of scientific work, forcing us to rethink modern scientific authority (Ibid).

Drawing from these observations about which actors are given authority to speak on social media, we analysed the content of the two previously mentioned Facebook pages. Here, we turn to an explanation of our methodological approaches, choices, and data collection procedures, before presenting our research findings.

### **Methodological Approach.**

This chapter draws from quantitative and qualitative content analyses (Bardin, 1977) of posts published on the Facebook pages of Brazil’s Federal Government - @palacioplanalto (<https://www.facebook.com/palacioplanoalto>) and the State Government of São Paulo - @governosp (<https://www.facebook.com/governosp>). The first page has over 911k likes and one million followers whilst the second page has almost 900k likes and 1.2 million followers as of the time of writing<sup>ii</sup>. The pages respectively represent the Federal and the State of São Paulo’s Governments’ official voices, allowing citizens to follow government-led initiatives, projects, and the president’s and governor’s everyday lives. Our methodological approach draws from but expands upon and updates an approach utilised in a study in which the first author was involved during the early stages of the pandemic (Joathan, Medrado and Cabral, 2021). For this chapter, we have added an analysis of posts about vaccination, which were not discussed in the previous study because Covid-19 vaccines had not been developed yet. We also focus here on issues of permanent campaigning, which we had identified as an area for further investigation.

For both pages we collected posts published for one month - between 05 January and 05 February 2022. We selected this period for two main reasons. First, in January, Omicron, the highly contagious variant of Covid-19, caused a sharp spike in cases in Brazil after the Christmas and New Year’s Eve holidays. The country recorded the highest number of daily infections since July 2021 (Boadle, 2022). Second, 05 January was the date when the São Paulo State Government started to publicly announce that it would start vaccinating children between the ages of 5 and 11. The actual vaccination (with the Pfizer vaccine) started on 14 January 2022. The first child to receive the shot was 8-year-old Davi Seremramiwe Xavante, a member of the indigenous Xavante population. The vaccination with the “Butantan

vaccine” started on 21 January. In contrast to this pro-vaccination stance, and after failing to sabotage the vaccination campaigns for adults, Bolsonaro directed his efforts on undermining vaccination for children. The President suggested that the vaccine’s collateral effects were unknown and advised parents “not to be fooled by the propaganda” around children’s vaccination (Barbara, 2022).

We only collected posts which consisted of images and text, but not video content - ( $n_1 = 21$  - @palacioplanalto) and ( $n_2 = 104$  - @governosp). This approach allowed us to be consistent in terms of identifying the predominant category (or few categories) of content. The Bolsonaro team tends to publish long videos in which he speaks to his supporters. Thus, there are instances in which multiple unrelated themes are addressed. Our approach is consistent with the recommendations offered by content analysis guides, such as Weber’s (1990). The author notes that “large portions of text, such as paragraphs and complete texts, usually are more difficult to code as a unit than smaller portions, such as words and phrases, because large units typically contain more information and a greater diversity of topics” (Weber, 1990, p. 3).

For inter-coder reliability, we first selected a subsample of twenty percent of the data to be coded independently by the two authors - 4.2 for the @palacioplanalto page, so we coded 5 posts and 20 posts for the @governosp page. Once we ensured the categories worked for both coders, we employed Krippendorff’s alpha reliability test and came up with a result of .80, which is considered the norm for a good reliability test. (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007). Additionally, focusing on still images and texts enabled us to provide a more consistent comparison between the two pages because the @governosp page published a small number of videos. We were still able to assess how visual images complement written text, helping the viewer achieve coherence faster and creating meaning (Russmann et. al., 2019, p. 120). As the authors put it, “studies in the field of visual communication have shown that pictures have a powerful impact by increasing viewers’ attention and retention” (Russman et.al, Ibid; Fahmy et. al., 2014, p. 133).

After collecting the data, we analysed the posts in relation to two main categories – frequency of communication and types of themes.

**1) Frequency of communication about the pandemic:** whether the post addressed issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic or not. Here, we simply analysed whether the post made any reference whatsoever to the pandemic and/or Covid-19 and or Coronavirus. One of the @governosp posts, for instances, listed the symptoms caused by contracting the influenza virus, but made no reference to Covid-19, thus we did not consider it to be about the pandemic. In an Excel spreadsheet, we simply marked “0” if a post did not mention anything about the pandemic or Covid-19 or “1” if it did (see Figure 1).

**2) The types of themes explored when tackling the pandemic:** after conducting exploratory research, we established 9 main thematic categories, which are not mutually exclusive. Here, after assigning “1” to the post because it was about the pandemic, we would assign “1” to the category or categories of content that would apply to that post. Our starting point were the themes used for a previous study of the Federal Government communication on Facebook (Joathan, Medrado and Medeiros, 2021). However, we made the following adaptations: a) included the category of vaccines because vaccines were not available in the early months of the pandemic; b) removed the category of “implications of the pandemic for public safety” because they were applicable to the content of a favela community page that we analysed for the previous study but not really relevant for this study<sup>iii</sup>; c) we included the category of “attacks to the media” in a wider “attacks and conflict with various actors and spheres of power”. In the current stages of the pandemic, the Federal Government posts were not directing attacks to the media to an extent that they would deserve an exclusive category. In what follows, we provide the descriptions of our types of thematic categories.

- a) Reports/accountability: health, legal, and social measures carried out by the Federal and São Paulo State Government to fight the pandemic. This includes sending equipment, vaccine doses and tests to hospitals, municipalities, or the Ministry of Health, and updates on the number of people infected and fatalities. This category does not include economic measures, such as the emergency salary, or financial rescues to states and municipalities.
- b) Prevention/guidance: posts that inform people about what they should do to avoid catching Covid-19, as well as the characteristics of the disease. This also includes posts about the need to wear face masks and guidance about the time that people need to wait between vaccine doses.
- c) Economic policies, aid and investment: this includes measures to counterbalance the costs of the pandemic for the job market, the country’s or the state’s economy. Measures for the

maintenance of jobs in the private sector, the distribution of financial aid for people in situation of economic vulnerability because of the pandemic.

- d) Denial of the dangers or trivialisation of the disease: posts that advocate for a return to normal life and free movement. Posts that oppose social distancing measures, shutting down of cities and urban spaces (including lockdown), minimising risks, or spreading scientifically unfounded information.
- e) Attacks and conflict with different spheres of power, such as the Supreme Court, the states, and municipalities. These are posts that criticise measures taken by these spheres, as well as the work of Health Ministers. This category also includes critiques to the media coverage of the Covid-19 crisis, accusing it of fearmongering and creating hysteria.
- f) Treatments and drugs: information on research about and/or recommendations to use hydroxychloroquine (or chloroquine), ivermectin, and other drugs with questionable effectiveness to treat Covid-19.
- g) Offers of condolences: posts that express condolences to the victims and their families and that manifest appreciation for health workers.
- h) Vaccines: posts that offer information about the vaccines available to combat covid-19. This also includes posts that share information about vaccination booking, vaccine passports and certificates, calendars, procedures, and discussion about the risks or advantages of getting a Covid-19 jab.
- i) Other: posts that did not fit into any of the previous categories.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	Author	Text	Date	Link	Covid-19 Reports/Prevention	Economic Denial	Attacks/Treatment/Condolences	Vaccines	Other							
14	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro par	31-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
15	Planalto	Nesta terça-feira (17), o Preside	01-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
16	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro assu	02-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
17	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro entr	02-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	1	1										
18	Planalto	Presidente Jair Bolsonaro partic	02-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	1											
19	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro entr	03-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0		1									
20	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro rece	03-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
21	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro e o	04-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
22	Planalto	O Presidente Jair Bolsonaro e mi	04-Feb	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/planalto">https://www.facebook.com/planalto</a>	0											
23																
24	Governo SP	SP já está pronto para iniciar a v	05-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	1											
25	Governo SP	A imunização de crianças de 5 a	05-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	1											
26	Governo SP	Mais agilidade para acionar a Po	05-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	0											
27	Governo SP	O Governo de SP anunciou a ent	05-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	0											
28	Governo SP	E aí, você viu as novidades? A im	06-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	1											
29	Governo SP	O Governo de SP inaugurou nest	06-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	0											
30	Governo SP	#VacinaParaTodos Mais vacin	07-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	1											
31	Governo SP	Tem dúvidas para diferenciar os	07-Jan	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/govsp">https://www.facebook.com/govsp</a>	1	1										

Figure 1: Screen shot of Excel spreadsheet used in our content analysis

To complement our content analysis, we have conducted observations on the two pages during the same period. Here, we were inspired by Robert Kozinets' (1998) ideas on netnography, applying anthropological concepts such as “dense description” and participant observation to studies of media consumption and media use online. In this case, we, the two authors are followers of both pages and thus, members of the online communities we set out to observe. Over the one-month period analysed, we collected screen shots of comments of

followers that referred to issues of permanent campaigning (Blumenthal, 1980) or attitudes towards misinformation and disinformation and scientific communication (Oliveira, 2022), such as scepticism towards vaccines. Due to the high volume of comments posted on the two pages, we collected comments that were shown as “most relevant” in our feeds in posts that there were part of the sample analysed. The aim was to enrich our content analysis with some of the positive and negative reactions to different levels of Government – State and Federal. To conclude, it is worth noting that social media usage is one of the most popular online activities in Brazil. Approximately 66.5% of the population (141.5 million users) are on social media and users spend on average almost four hours per day on social networking platforms. The most popular platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube (Navarro, 2020).

### **Palácio do Planalto Facebook Page: Are we experiencing a pandemic?**

Our observations revealed that the @palacioplanalto Facebook page adopted three main styles for publishing content: a) Bolsonaro talking straight to camera, which was often lived streamed via Facebook; b) short videos advertising Government programmes and initiatives, produced by his communication team; c) posts which consisted of photos or still-image designs and text. We focused on the third category for the reasons explained in the methodology section, analysing a total of 21 posts, published between 05 January and 05 February 2022.

Our first observation was in relation to the frequency of communication (type 1, explained in the previous section). Only 4 out of 21 posts –19% of the posts – mentioned the pandemic, Covid-19, or the coronavirus. This was striking given that the country was experiencing a spike in number of cases as well as hospitalisations with the new Omicron variant. The most predominant theme was “Economic policies, aid and investment”, featuring in all 4 posts, which means 100% of the posts about the pandemic had an economic angle. Here, the tone was consistent with the Bolsonaro Government’s rhetoric that the pandemic’s main consequence is damaging the country’s economy, downplaying the virus’ health dangers, and creating a false dichotomy between life/health and the economy.

The following posts fell into this category (translations by the authors):

- 1) Published on 28 January at 19:51 – President Jair Bolsonaro launched a National Programme of Volunteer Civil Service in Palácio do Planalto in Brasília. See: <https://www.facebook.com/palaciodoplanalto/posts/2374336239370895>
- 2) Published on 31 January at 12:35 – Positive balance for generating jobs in 2021. See: <https://www.facebook.com/palaciodoplanalto/posts/2376377659166753>
- 3) Published on 02 February at 19:32 – President Jair Bolsonaro delivered the 2022 Presidential Message to the National Congress. See: <https://www.facebook.com/palaciodoplanalto/posts/2378239805647205>
- 4) Published on 02 February at 23:58 – President Jair Bolsonaro participated in the solemn session to inaugurate the legislative year in Brasília. See: <https://www.facebook.com/palaciodoplanalto/posts/2378391398965379>

The 28 January post illustrated this economic angle well. It communicated the launch of the National Programme of Volunteer Civil Service whose aim is to reduce the impact of Covid-19 in the job market. The mechanisms of this programme consist of offering job qualification courses for people between the ages of 18 and 19 who are unemployed. When taking these courses, the participants of the programme receive a stipend of half a minimum salary and are expected to do volunteer work for “activities in the public interest” in different municipalities (see Figure 2). In terms of visual elements, we noticed that not one single woman featured in the photos of Federal Government staff. Standing formally, with hands on their chests as if signing the national anthem, in addition to Bolsonaro himself, all politicians and staff tended to be white, middle aged and male. Another example of the economic category was provided by the post published on 02 February at 23:58. Accompanying photos of Bolsonaro and other politicians in formal occasions in the National Congress, the text mentioned that Bolsonaro spoke of “his measures to fight Covid-19, saving lives and protecting the economy”. This finding echoed the Government’s discourse that it was mostly concerned with Covid-19’s economic impact (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021, p. 226)

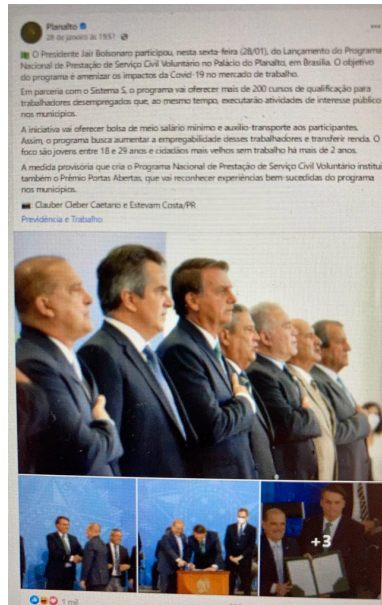


Figure 2: Screenshot of post published on 28/01 in which Bolsonaro launches the National Programme of Volunteer Civil Service

One post out of the 4 that addressed the pandemic – or 25% - illustrated the category of “attacks and conflict with different spheres of power”. The post, which was all type, advertised that the Federal Government presented a positive balance in terms of generation of jobs: 2.7 million. According to the post, this was achieved despite a “careless close-it-all” attitude, which caused inflation and unemployment. This represented an indirect attack to State Governments and municipalities that implemented lockdown and social distancing measures. This approach by the Federal Government goes against recommendations in crisis communication literature that stress the importance of cooperation between different levels of government (La et. al., 2020). In Brazil, our content analysis unveiled a fragmented scenario in which different spheres of power would often contradict or work against each other.

Additionally, the same post illustrated an approach of “denying the dangers or trivialising the disease” as it openly opposed social distancing or lockdown measures as if these were all out of proportion and the only risks brought by the pandemic had to do with job and economic losses. Again, this confirmed the President’s rhetoric of questioning the seriousness of Covid-19 as an illness.



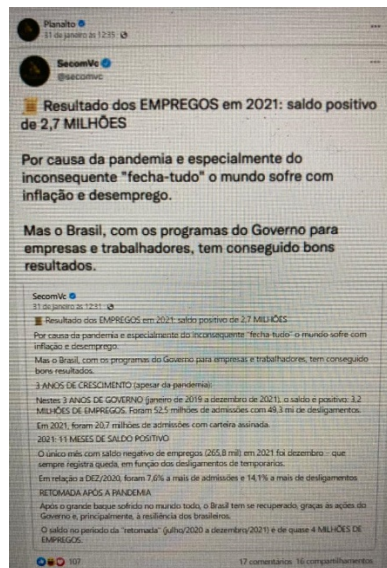


Figure 3: Screenshot of post published on 31/01 in which the Federal Government announces a positive balance in generation of jobs.

We found that the “denial and trivialisation” category manifested mostly in what was not said rather than in what was said on Facebook by the Federal Government. In a moment when a new variant was spreading and the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (Anvisa) had approved vaccination for children, the number of posts that acknowledged that we are experiencing a global pandemic seemed strikingly low. In the posts we analysed there were no references whatsoever to the Omicron variant. Indeed, one would even be tempted to question whether we are experiencing a global pandemic at all? There was also no guidance being offered in terms of how to prevent catching Covid-19.

Interestingly, we also found no evidence of misinformation and disinformation (Fallis, 2015; Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017) related to the promotion of unproven drugs such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin in the posts we analysed. There are a few possible reasons for this. First, in our previous study (Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021), most of the misinformation and disinformation content was shared by Bolsonaro himself in piece-to-camera lived streamed videos. For this chapter, we excluded these from our sample, which might explain why the category did not feature so prominently. Additionally, as we mentioned previously, in April 2021, the Brazilian Parliament started investigating the President’s actions to establish who was responsible for the country’s failed response to the pandemic. The probe aims to establish who took decisions on issues such as the distribution of medical supplies and vaccines. Journalists and public health experts believe that Bolsonaro

could be hurt by the investigation as they might reveal his role in promoting unproven cures, declining offers of vaccines, and refused to implement lockdowns (Guedes, 2021). Therefore, he might have toned down his rhetoric to reduce the impact of the investigations.

One of the posts, published on 02 February, communicated Bolsonaro's delivery of the annual 2022 Presidential Message to the National Congress. The post includes a link to this message, which consists of a PDF document (Brazil's Presidency, 2022). Once again, we were struck to spot only 4 short paragraphs about the pandemic in a 12-page document. The text mentioned that the Federal Government "maintained its two premises: to save lives and to protect jobs" (which reinforces the economic angle); "strengthened the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde or SUS, in Portuguese)" and that "the Government acquired and distributed 400 million doses of vaccines after they had been approved by the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (Anvisa)" (Brazil's Presidency, 2022, p. 6). Here, it is worth stressing that we are not downplaying the importance of focusing on jobs and economic policies, particularly in a country like Brazil, with its stark social and economic inequalities. The pandemic had a gigantic impact on the livelihoods of lower-income families in the informal market who do not perform jobs who can be done from home. At the same time, it is revealing that the only brief reference to vaccination came in this linked document, but not in the actual post. Such deafening silence was a strong indication of the Federal Government's anti-vaccination stance on Facebook (Bradshaw et. al., 2020).

Finally, we found no condolences or messages of solidarity to people who lost loved ones to Covid-19 in posts that addressed the pandemic. Interestingly, there were 2 posts to communicate the deaths of Olinda Bolsonaro, Bolsonaro's mother, on 21 January 2022, and Olavo de Carvalho, a far-right self-proclaimed philosopher who became Bolsonaro's political guru, on 26 January 2022. Even though Carvalho died days after announcing that he had contracted Covid-19, the virus was not mentioned in any part of the post or texts published to pay tribute to him. Thus, these posts could not be included in our sample of posts that addressed the pandemic, which, again attested to the denialist attitude towards Covid-19.

To conclude, our (n)ethnographically inspired collection of comments on the @palacioplanalto page identified three main themes. Some of the comments focused on expressing support for Bolsonaro's 2022 Presidential Campaign. These are expressed in phrases like: #AquiÉBolsonaro22 ("here it's Bolsonaro - in response to the post on 28

January) and #FechadocomBolsonaro22 (“I’m with Bolsonaro22” in response to the post on 31 January). The comments related to a perception that the President’s communication might be oriented towards permanent campaigning (Blumenthal, 1980; Bowman, 2000, p. 63; Joathan, 2020).

However, we also found several critical manifestations, including comments that alerted Bolsonaro to the fact that he was being investigated by a Parliamentary Enquiry and could go to jail. Examples of this trope of comments include: “He had to go to the Federal Police and testify” (in response to the post on 28 January) and “I will be arrested before my mandate is over. The End” (in response to the post on 02 February). Other followers questioned what they perceived as a lack of a consistent government project for Brazil: “is there a project or planning in this government?”, “the title should be Pinocchio’s projects” and (in capital letters) “THERE WAS NEVER A PROJECT FOR THE PEOPLE, ONLY FOR HIS GROUPS, ONE MORE PROJECT, TO FINISH WITH BRAZIL”). All these comments were published in response to the Presidential Message to the National Congress on 02 February 2022.

In a sense, Bolsonaro’s Facebook communication approach seemed to stand in contrast to ideas of leadership in times of crises as these revolve around the politician acting as a channel to voice perspectives of experts (Kahn, 2020, Coman et. al., 2021). Instead of finding reliable guidance, it seems like followers were left with many gaps in terms of essential information that could save lives during a pandemic – how could citizens avoid catching covid-19? what were the benefits and risks of vaccines? When would vaccines be available? Where? What were the concrete measures for financial support for economically vulnerable families? As followers summed up in their comments: what were the main health and economic projects for Brazil? Many questions and no answers.

### **The São Paulo Government Facebook Page: Vaccines for all.**

Located in the Southeast region, São Paulo is Brazil’s wealthiest state. Its economy is based on automobile and aviation industries, as well as financial services, commerce, textile, coffee, and sugarcane production. The population is diverse with a strong presence of immigrants from various countries, such as Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bolivia. The city of São Paulo, capital of the state of São Paulo, is a metropolitan hub and the largest city of the Southern Hemisphere.

The São Paulo Governor, João Dória, is a leading figure in the centre-right party, the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (with the acronym PSDB, in Portuguese). The PSDB was the main opposition party against the Workers' Party (PT) presidential mandates of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff from 2003 to 2016, playing a key role in Rousseff's impeachment. Prior to the PT mandates, the PSDB was in power with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso between 1995 and 2003. In 2018, during the presidential election campaigns, Dória openly supported Jair Bolsonaro. Such alliance was often described in Brazil's mainstream media and by Dória's campaign team as "bolsodória". However, in the beginning of the pandemic, the two men publicly fell out. Dória was outspoken against Bolsonaro's firing of his first Minister of Health, Henrique Mandetta. He also criticised Bolsonaro's denialist attitude in relation to the pandemic and his anti-vaccine stance.

However, the São Paulo Governor figure has himself become known a polarising figure in Brazilian politics. It has been widely reported that Dória, a wealthy businessman, entered politics in 2016 with the goal of winning the presidency. The two races he won – for Mayor of the city of São Paulo in 2016 and Governor of São Paulo in 2018 – represented steppingstones. For the presidential elections in 2022, having governed Brazil's richest state, he is positioning himself as the third way, breaking the dichotomy between Lula (who has been freed and will run in 2022) and Bolsonaro (Reuters, 2021).

Dória also has a well-oiled marketing machine behind him. Analysts have complimented his social media skills both during campaigns and in government (Ribeiro, 2017). Our analysis of the São Paulo Government indicates that significant efforts are invested in communicating with citizens/voters via Facebook. Between 05 January and 05 February 2022, the page published a total of 104 posts which consisted of images and texts, a number almost 5 times greater than what was published by the Federal Government page (21). The page also published short video adverts and news video reports, but these were not included in our analysis as we explained in the methodology section. Unlike Bolsonaro, the Governor of São Paulo did not publish live-streamed piece to camera videos to speak with his followers. When comparing the two pages, our first finding was that out of 104 posts, 64 explicitly mentioned the pandemic. This represented 61.5%, a percentage more than three times greater than the Federal Government's 19%.

The centrality of “vaccination” as a theme represented another outstanding difference. Out of the 64 posts that mentioned the pandemic or Covid-19, 55 posts were dedicated to sharing information about vaccination booking, vaccine passports and certificates, calendars, procedures, and discussion about the (small) risks and (big) advantages of getting a Covid-19 jab. This means that almost 86% of the posts that talked about the pandemic mentioned vaccines. It also suggests that the vaccination programme is associated with Dória’s permanent campaigning strategy (for President) during his mandate (as Governor). Indeed, with his prolific use of social media, Dória became nationally known for being the first politician to bring Covid-19 vaccines to Brazil.

Other interesting elements were found in @governosp’s Facebook communication about vaccines. First, the posts often featured the character Lottie Dottie Chicken (Galinha Pintadinha – see figure 4), which is hugely popular with children in Brazil, with millions of videos on YouTube. In 2015, Bromelia Produções, the studio that produces Lottie Dottie Chicken featured as one of the 150 most powerful licensed brands in the world (License Global, 2021). Once again, this is an indication of the State Government’s high levels of marketing investment. Second, the São Paulo Government started to use the expression “the Butantan Vaccine” to refer to the CoronaVac jab, developed by China’s Sinovac and manufactured by São Paulo’s Butantan Biomedical Institute. This explicitly linked the vaccine with the State of São Paulo rather than with China. It also offered a response to Bolsonaro’s rhetoric of raising suspicion against “Chinese vaccines”. Moreover, the common usage of the term “Butantan Vaccine” fits within Dória’s permanent campaigning (Blumenthal, 1980; Bowman, 2000, p. 63; Joathan, 2020) strategy of positioning him as a champion of vaccination campaigns, which might be beneficial if he runs a presidential campaign in 2022. In general terms, Brazilians tend to have a pro-vaccine stance. According to a global survey conducted at the end of January 2021, approximately 86 percent of Brazilian respondents were willing to get a Covid-19 vaccine once it became available (Mendoza/Statista, 2021). Third, the child chosen to receive the first shot of the Covid-19 was Davi Seremramiwe Xavante (see figure 5), an indigenous Xavante child. Davi is the son of an indigenous chief – Jurandir Siridiwe – and currently lives in São Paulo where he gets treatment for a genetic illness. This, once again, placed São Paulo in opposition to the Federal Government, which has been accused of persecuting Brazil’s indigenous population and destroying their homes. Moreover, the gender and ethnic diversity of the people featured in @governosp’s posts (with images of women and people of colour) differed from

@palacioplanalto's photo opportunities of Bolsonaro being surrounded by middle-aged white males.



Figure 4: Screenshot of post published on 04/02, featuring the Lottie Dottie Chicken<sup>iv</sup>.



Figure 5: Screenshot of post published on 14/01, featuring Davi and Jurandir Seremramiwe Xavante<sup>v</sup>.

The second thematic category that featured in the posts published by @governosp was that of “prevention/guidance” with 12 posts<sup>vi</sup> (out of 64 posts that mentioned the pandemic, or 18.7%). These posts contained information about what people should do to avoid catching Covid-19 and about the characteristics of the disease. One example also illustrates a pro-mask wearing attitude by the São Paulo Government. The post shows a chart with the different types of masks and the time that it takes for an infected person to spread the virus to a non-infected person (see figure 6). According to the source cited in the post, the Wall Street Journal, it would take 25 hours for an infected person to spread Covid-19 to a non-infected person if she or he was wearing a N95 mask. The post provided yet another contrast to Bolsonaro’s frequent public appearances with no masks on or wearing them incorrectly

(Joathan, Medrado, and Medeiros, 2021, p. 226), which can also be seen in images on Facebook.



Figure 6: Screenshot of post published on 10/01, with information on different types of face masks and their protection against Covid-19<sup>vii</sup>.

The third most common category of content was that of “reports/accountability”, which included health, legal, and social measures carried out by the São Paulo State Government to fight the pandemic. In total, 6 posts fit into this category, or 9.3% of the posts that mentioned the pandemic<sup>viii</sup>. One post that exemplified this category was published on 12 January when the Government announced that São Paulo had acquired 2 million rapid antigen Covid-19 tests, investing 12 million Brazilian Reais on testing and monitoring cases<sup>ix</sup>.

A total of 3 posts, or 4.6% of posts that addressed the pandemic fell into the category of “other”: a post about a Winter Festival in the city of Campos do Jordão (which also fell into the “vaccine” category for mentioning the requirement of vaccine passports); a post that advertised the Government’s Telegram channel (which also mentioned “vaccines” and “prevention/guidance”); and a post calling for blood donations, as blood supply levels fell during the pandemic. Finally, our analysis did not identify any posts that addressed the pandemic and fit into the categories of “denial of dangers or trivialisation of the pandemic”, “treatment and drugs”, “economic policies”, “offer of condolences” or “attacks and conflicts”. The last category seemed particularly interesting: there were no direct attacks to the Federal Government but, at the same time, the pro-vaccine, pro-mask, and pro-social-distancing rhetoric adopted by @governosp stood in direct opposition to that of the Federal Government.

As for our (n)ethnographically inspired collection of comments on the @governosp page three main themes emerged. The first connected to issues of Dória's permanent campaigning (Blumenthal, 1980; Bowman, 2000, p. 63; Joathan, 2020), with critiques to the Governor for opportunistically aiming the presidency. A few examples included: "this investment is made with public money, nobody is doing us a favour, a bunch of thieves, this is what they are, they only aim elections (in response to the post about investment in test kits published on 12 January) and "he has his eyes on the presidency, but it won't happen" (in response to a post published on 29 January). The second theme manifested in followers questioning the efficacy of the vaccines and pointing out that people who had jabs were still contracting Covid-19: "what good do vaccines do if people are still dying and still catching..." (in response to a post on 07 January); "summarising, everyone has been jabbed and the vaccines didn't work, pretty soon they will want to close everything again" (in response to a post on 12 January). Here, interestingly, the São Paulo Government seemed to respond by adopting the "Expert Appointee Prominence Model" (Kahn, 2020; Coman et.al., 2021). The page clarified that vaccines represented a barrier but not a guarantee against being infected and provided data on how vaccinations were proven to be efficient in terms of preventing people from developing serious symptoms, being hospitalised, or dying. The Government also set up a webpage – [vacinaja.sp.gov.br](http://vacinaja.sp.gov.br) – with a section on frequently asked questions (FAQ) and drawing information from specialist scientific sources, such as the Butantan Research Institute. The third theme consisted of users celebrating the achievements of science, the Butantan Institute, the Unified Brazilian Public Health System (SUS) and vaccines, in general. Examples here include: "Bravo, science, Bravo, SUS, Bravo vaccines!" (in response to a post on 23 January). These illustrated some of the ways in which scientific communication has become politicised (Oliveira, 2022). Indeed, users celebrated science and the vaccines as ways to position themselves against the Bolsonaro government.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Our research demonstrated that strategies of permanent campaigning were central to both pages. Here, we noticed an updating of these strategies to a social media era. As followers pointed out in our (n)ethnographic observations, constant image management seemed to matter more than catering to citizens' needs in a time of crisis when such catering was urgent. In terms of how leadership styles manifested, we noticed the predominance of a "Politician Prominence Model" in the Federal Government's as opposed to an "Expert Appointee



Prominence Model” in the São Paulo State’s Facebook communication strategies. Yet, the Brazilian context revealed some peculiarities. Although the figure of Bolsonaro was certainly prominent on the page, the President consistently tried to discredit experts rather than to accept and channel their advice to the public. Additionally, although the São Paulo Governor echoed expert scientific perspectives on vaccines, such as those produced by the Butantan Institute, Dória was still perceived as a key controversial figure and someone who was opportunistically taking advances of the vaccines for political gains.

The current context of “uncivil society” (Sodré, 2021) seemed to manifest, particularly on the @palacioplanalto page, in a sense there was no plurality of voice and no willingness to engage in dialogues in terms of how to best respond to a global pandemic which caused a dramatic loss of life in the country. However, in our analysis, this “uncivility” manifested more in denialist silences than in direct attacks. It is somewhat shocking that so little references were made to covid-19 as if we were not experiencing a global pandemic that took the lives of almost 640 thousand people in Brazil. It was also revealing that 100 percent of the posts published by the Federal Government that addressed the pandemic focused on economic measures whilst almost no content covered issues of health, such as prevention, guidance, and vaccines. This fit within the neoliberal rhetoric that is associated with the uncivil society, as Sodré (2021) argues. Overall, one cannot avoid the perception of a widespread indifference to death, a lack of empathy that is typical of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003), naturalising people’s - particularly those in marginalised groups – daily humiliations and confrontations with death. Here, it was also revealing that the two pages had no posts to express condolences to the victims of Covid-19 and their families.

Finally, posts that contained explicit misinformation and disinformation content were not found in our sample. However, this might be attributed to our methodological choice of not analysing Bolsonaro’s live streamed videos as well as a context in which the President was being investigated on the matter by a Parliamentary enquiry. This opens a further direction for studies analysing and contrasting government communication (in different levels of government) in private messaging apps, such as Telegram and WhatsApp. This would enable us to investigate whose voices echo misinformation and disinformation messaging. In the meantime, it seems reasonable to conclude that silences can also send strong messages.

## References

### abstract

---

## References

Barbara, V. (2022).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/07/opinion/bolsonaro-brazil-vaccines-kids.html>

BBC News Latin America

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-36028117> (accessed 02 September 2020)

BLUMENTHAL, Sidney. **The permanent campaign**: inside the world of elite political operatives. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1980.

Boadle, A. (2022).

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-reports-rise-new-covid-19-infections-omicron-variant-spreads-2022-01-07/>

Bowman, K. (2000). Polling to Campaign and to Govern. In: Ornstein; & T. Mann (Eds.), **The Permanent Campaign and its Future** (pp. 54–74). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

Brazil's Presidency (2022).

<https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/mensagempresidencial/2022/0/iniciomcn2022.pdf>

Fallis, D. (2015). “What Is Disinformation?” *Library Trends* 63 (3): 401–26. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2015.0014>.

Glasper, E. A. (2021) Reducing the Impact of Anti-Vaccine Propaganda on Family Health, *Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Nursing*, 44:2, 79-85, DOI:

10.1080/24694193.2021.1912988

Guedes, O. (2021)

<https://g1.globo.com/politica/blog/octavio-guedes/post/2021/04/27/cpi-da-covid-governo-bolsonaro-recusou-11-vezes-ofertas-para-compras-de-vacina.ghtml>

Hayes, A. F. & Krippendorff, K. (2007). Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data. *Communication Methods and Measures* 1,1:77-89.

Jack, C. (2017). *Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information*. Available from [https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety\\_LexiconofLies.pdf](https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety_LexiconofLies.pdf) [Accessed 20 July 2021].

Mendoza, J. (2021).

---

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1200489/latin-america-attitudes-covid-19-vaccine/>

Navarro, J.G. (2020). *Social media usage in Brazil – Statistics & facts*. Retrieved from: <https://www-statista-com.uow.idm.oclc.org/topics/6949/social-media-usage-in-brazil/>

Reuters, 2021.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/sao-paulo-governor-doria-wants-run-president-brazils-2022-vote-2021-04-20/>

Ribeiro, G. (2017).

<https://brazilian.report/power/2017/10/24/sao-paulos-mayor-doria-pellet-faux-pas/>

Skyrms, Brian. 2010. *Signals: Evolution, Learning, and Information*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199580828.001.0001/acprof-9780199580828>.

Speis, S. (2020).

<https://mediawell.ssrc.org/literature-reviews/defining-disinformation/versions/1-1/>

Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017). “Information Disorder: Towards an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy-Making”, Council of Europe. Available from <https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-research/168076277c> [Accessed 12 July 2021].

<sup>ii</sup> 25 February 2022

<sup>iii</sup> This was the case because many debates revolved around the need to stop police operations in the favelas during the pandemic. Favela activist groups, such as Coletivo Papo Reto, analysed in our previous study demonstrated that people were dying of Covid-19 and hunger. They should be spared of the police brutality and killing of innocent people which often characterises these police operations in favela areas.

<sup>iv</sup> The original post can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/governosp/posts/10160207445408653>. Summarised translation from Portuguese: It’s tomorrow! On Saturday (5), we have the C Day for children’s vaccination in the State of São Paulo. The objective is to speed up children’s vaccination and to ensure that parents and carers who work or have other commitments during the week take their kids to get a Covid-19 jab.

<sup>v</sup> The original post can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/governosp/posts/10160167090963653> Summarised translation from Portuguese: #AllChildrenSafe – Davi Seremramiwe Xavante, 8, is a young indigenous child who lives in the Xavante tribe, located in the State of Mato Grosso, and the first child to receive the vaccine against Covid-19 in São Paulo and in Brazil.

<sup>vi</sup> Out of these 12 posts, 6 posts were coded as “prevention and guidance” only whilst 6 posts fell into the prevention category but also mentioned vaccines, thus were counted in both categories (“prevention and guidance” and “vaccines”).

<sup>vii</sup> The original post can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/governosp/posts/10160159358473653>. Summarised translation from Portuguese: Facemasks have become essential allies when fighting Covid-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, they have been adopted as protection measures to help reduce the spread of the virus.

<sup>viii</sup> 2 of these posts were coded in 2 categories “reports/accountability” and “prevention/guidance”; 3 of them were coded in 3 categories “reports/accountability” and “vaccines” and one was coded as “reports/accountability” only.

<sup>ix</sup> See original posts here: <https://www.facebook.com/governosp/posts/10160163013228653>. Summarised translation from Portuguese: The State of São Paulo is acquiring 2 million rapid antigen test kits for covid-19. With an investment of 12 million Reais, this initiative aims to increase testing and monitoring for Covid-19 cases. Preliminary data before the end of December shows that São Paulo has performed 22.4 million tests during the pandemic, becoming the state with the highest number of tests in Brazil.

