Disputas discursivas, legitimação e desinformação: o caso Veja x Bolsonaro nas eleições de 2018

Discursive struggles, legitimation and disinformation: *Veja* x Bolsonaro case in the 2018 elections

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Resumo: *O presente artigo foca na temática das disputas discursivas que ocorreram no Twitter durante a campanha eleitoral presidencial de 2018, particularmente no caso da matéria publicada pela Revista Veja no dia 28 de setembro, onde a mesma relatava o processo de divórcio do candidato do PSL, Jair Bolsonaro. Neste, acusações de corrupção e violência eram explícitas. Para a análise partimos de um corpus de 110 tweets originais com o maior número de retweets, onde analisamos as estratégias de legitimação e seu impacto na desinformação. Como resultados, observamos que a disputa se deu, principalmente, entre os veículos noticiosos e a militância apoiadora do candidato. Além disso, o discurso anti-Veja que se sucedeu à matéria utilizou estratégias de legitimação baseadas em moralidade e desinformação para contrapor os danos causados.*

Palavras-chave: *desinformação; disputa discursiva; legitimação; twitter; eleições.*

Abstract: *This article focuses on the theme of the discursive struggles occurred on Twitter during the presidential election campaign of 2018, particularly in the case of a piece published by Veja on September 28th. The piece reported the divorce process of PSL candidate Jair Bolsonaro. In this news, accusations, corruption, and violence were explicit. We analyze a corpus of 110 original tweets with more than 100 retweets, looking for legitimation strategies used and their impact in disinformation. In the following analysis, we note that the dispute was mainly*

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between news vehicles and the militant support of the candidate. In addition, the anti-Veja discourse that succeeded in the subject used legitimacy strategies based on morality and disinformation to counteract the damage caused.

Keywords: *disinformation; discursive struggles; legitimation; twitter; election.*

Introduction

The presidential campaign of 2018 in Brazil was very atypical. The sequence of controversies in the campaign, from the candidacy of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (PT), prohibited by STF2, and replaced by his vice-president, Fernando Haddad; the controversial declarations of Jair Bolsonaro (PSL) regarding minorities, women and the democratic process itself3; the attack he suffered in September 20184; deepened an extreme political polarization in the country. This polarization had been built through a series of prior event, since the election of Dilma Rousseff (PT), in 2014, with a small difference in votes, and her subsequent and controversial impeachment, in 2016, the scandals that filled the government of her successor, Michel Temer (PMDB).

This division, that already began to show up in the period before the campaign, generated a conducive scenario to spread the so-called "fake news", among other types of misinformation, as well as the discursive disputes generated by them. Hyperpartisan outlets and militants often created alternative information to those that harmed their candidates, spread by the mainstream media, and that were later shared in social media channels5. In this field, these channels became fields of disputes of meaning, among "alternative" news and narratives, seeking to reach voters, and, in a last resort, influence vote decisions.

Therefore, Twitter also acted as an important tool of contact among candidates, militants and voters, as well as, due to its more public character and with the participation of important actors (SOARES; RECUERO; ZAGO, 2018), like the candidates themselves and the media outlets, one of the arenas where a great part of the disputes began. Therefore, to understand how these disputes were built and whose actors were engaged is important so we can, also understand the discursive and communicative narratives of political conventions.

2   https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/08/31/politica/1535731172_241117.html
3   https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/frases-polemicas-do-candidato-jair-bolsonaro/
4   https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atentado_contra_Jair_Bolsonaro
5   https://www.boatos.org/politica/50-fake-news-eleicoes-2018.html

In this study, we seek to investigate an emblematic case: the discursive dispute that happened around the news shared by Veja, in September 28th 20186, a few days before the first round of elections. In this piece, which won the cover of the magazine, journalists reported a legal process, which they had access to, of Jair Bolsonaro's divorce. In the process, the former wife made a series of accusations, including corruption, violence and concealment of property. Right after the publication, the magazine was accused of having received 600 million reais to harm Bolsonaro, an information that was largely spread by social media channels by Bolsonaro's supporters7, partisan outlets and militants and political personalities8 (even though it was denied by a few supporters9, in addition to the mainstream media10). Thus, the bomb of the process was fought by the candidate's campaign, both on social media and in sites and videos, with other stories, false ones.

These two actions generated a discursive dispute that will analyze in this article. The main issue that guide this work, however, is: "How did the discursive dispute occur in the narratives against and for Bolsonaro in the case of the piece of Veja on Twitter?". We want to observe these narratives through the prism of misinformation and legitimation of discourses as part of the electoral campaign. For that discussion, we bring data collected from Twitter with the aid of *crawling* tools that will later be presented along with the methodological proposition.

6   https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/ex-mulher-acusou-bolsonaro-de-ocultar-patrimonio-da-justi-ca-eleitoral/
7   https://theintercept.com/2018/09/28/campanha-de-bolsonaro-fabricou-um-boato-e-o-usou--como-antidoto-contra-a-reportagem-da-veja/
8   https://www.diariodobrasil.org/sobre-os-supostos-r-600-milhoes-antagonista-diz-que-jornalistas--da-veja-sao-integros/
9   https://www.oantagonista.com/brasil/fake-news-contra-veja/
10   https://gauchazh.clicrbs.com.br/politica/eleicoes/noticia/2018/10/veja-a-lista-dos-boatos-mais--lidos-sobre-candidatos-a-presidencia-cjmw7m6s502g201piaauc6h7y.html

Political conversations, discursive disputes and legitimacy

The studies of political conversations and the role of digital media in the construction and legitimacy of citizenship and the democratic participation are very common in the literature (PAPACHARISSI, 2002; CHADWICK, 2009; GIL DE ZÚÑIGA e VALENZUELA, 2011, STROMER-GALLEY e WICHOWSKI, 2011). Part of these studies focused on the gains for democracy and the citizenship of the presence of those arenas of discussion in the easy access to this arena (MENDONÇA e ERCAN, 2015; AGGIO, 2019). Later, other studies relating these conversations to incivility and intolerance as problems to these conversations also arise (ROSSINI, 2019), bringing elements that also showed problematic instances for democracy and the so-called "democratic deliberation" (MAIA, 2008) in these arenas. Beyond these issues, professors also raised the reduction of offline political participation due to social media websites (HAMPTON, SHIN e LU, 2017), the negative propaganda (ROSSINI *et al*., 2018) and even the lack of diversity in the political debate (GRUZD e ROY, 2014; RECUERO e GRUZD, 2019) as equally problematic elements for those conversations.

This study focuses on the discourse and the Critical Discourse Analysis. Thus, we analyze the conversations on Twitter through the discursive point of view, not properly deliberative. Because of that, we will investigate the notion of the discursive dispute as a narrative dispute in the deliberative process (ROSSINI, 2019) on Twitter, marking maybe new elements related to political conversations in the digital arena.

The notion of discursive dispute is related to the dispute for a hegemonical narrative regarding a fact. Thus, tweets, while texts that build and share meanings, dispute among themselves, in the public sphere of debate, the meanings about an event. The discursive disputes, therefore, are parts of strategies to legitimate or delegitimate narratives (PAIVA, GARCIA e ALCÂNTARA, 2017). The concept is fairly central in the literature focused on the critical analysis of discourse (ACD), particularly related to disputes of power and legitimacy (BARROS, 2014). The

concept of discursive dispute is particularly relevant for the discussion of computer-mediated conversations related to the electoral campaign of 2018. That is because, during this event, we can observe that tools like Twitter were largely used to build and legitimate different versions of one fact, many times, fake or manufactured versions11 known by the name of "*fake news*". The discursive disputes can occur between (a) media outlets; (b) between outlets and actors; and (c) between actors (PAIVA, GARCIA and ALCÂNTARA, 2017). Those three dimensions can also represent different spaces of dispute of symbolic power (BOURDIEU, 1992), which is related to the dispute for hegemony of discourse. To Bourdieu, the symbolic power is related to the dispute for "structuring" power, where symbolic systems are constituted by language in the pursuit for integration and social "consensus". These systems, thus, directly relate themselves with the process of domination, once the "consensus" in question is the naturalization of domination and, consequently, the hegemony of meaning.

In this sense, the texts contained in tweets become strategies to look for legitimacy of narratives that seek to influence the public opinion about the elections and the candidates to Presidency. The strategies, however, contain dispute, resistance and debate to this naturalization of narratives, disputes, therefor, for the symbolic power.

In order for us to can understand how the discursive strategies impact on these disputes, we also need to understand the strategies of legitimacy that are employed. Legitimacy is understood as the validation of the proposed discourse. Van Leeuwen (2007) discusses these strategies beside four macro perspectives. According to the author, the legitimacy strategies are: (a) authorization, when the text refers to a personal or institutional authority who, due to their social status, legitimates the content, or the tradition, habit or law (p. 92); (b) moral evaluation, when the legitimacy is anchored in a value system within a society or group (even though these references may be, according to the author, often oblique); (c) rationalization, when the legitimacy is

11   https://especiais.gazetadopovo.com.br/eleicoes/2018/fake-news/

anchored in knowledge, argumentation or cognition; (d) *mythopoesis*, in other words, the validation for the construction of stories where there is a reward for the "good" and a punishment for the "evil". These forms of legitimation are also strategies that will act on discursive disputes. The validation of discourse and the narrative proposed in discursive disputes, thus, also unfolds under the form of the pursuit for legitimation within the political conversation of the actors.

The effective legitimation, on Twitter, also happens through affordances of the platform. Studies on the social and discursive practices of the actors in this space have pointed out to that. Boyd, Golder and Lotan (2011), for example, relate the retweet as a legitimating practice within Twitter's conversations. Therefore, for the authors, when an actor retweets a certain text, he also acts in a way of legitimating this discourse. Newer practices could also be added to the retweet, such as the "like" button within Twitter itself. Therefore, the strategy of reproducing a certain tweet a dozen times, or a certain hashtag during a debate (RECUERO, 2014), another example, also related to strategies of visibility which, in a last analysis, are related to disputes for legitimation.

Those discursive disputes on Twitter also influence the polarization of the conversation. This polarization is anchored on the creation of the so-called "chambers of echo" (SUSTEIN, 2001), greatly due to the filtering of content that is legitimated (and shared) or de-legitimated (and silenced) by the group. The mass legitimation of a certain narrative, thus, generates a chamber of echo, in other words, a group where only one narrative reverberates and is legitimated, while other narratives that defy the hegemonic narrative are erased. Due to the strategies used on social media, such as the dispute for the trending topics or the use of hashtags (RECUERO, AMARAL e MONTEIRO, 2013) as forms of declaring support to a certain candidate or narrative. In fact, even the exposure of these polarized groups to opposed discourses, often seem to increase even further the extremism of these poles, instead of reducing it (BAIL *et al.*, 2018).

For the discussion we propose in this study, these elements supply an important context for the discursive dispute and the strategies of legitimation used on Twitter. The theme, however, is more complex. What happens when we are not simply talking of different narratives of the same fact, but disputes of misinformation? In the next section, we will briefly discuss the concept and its effects on conversations.

Misinformation and social media

The concept of misinformation has been widely discussed on the literature, especially regarding decisive political processes (BASTOS and MERCEA, 2019; TUCKER et al. 2018; DERAKHSHAN e WARDLE, 2017 and others). Misinformation belongs to the so-called "informative disorders", which would comprise disinformation (intentional) and misinformation (unintentional) as well as mal information (DERAKHSHAN and WARDLE, 2017). Therefore, as disinformation would comprise forms of fake news intentionally created to influence people (manipulated news or taken out of context), misinformation would be related to error, in other words, with a fake information presented as fake, however, due to a mistake of the receiver, is perceived as true. Falls under this category the parodies and satires that, with some frequency, are taken by mistake as truthful narratives. Finally, the category of mal information is related to private information that are taken public to target someone specific. Therefore, it is set apart from the others first for being related to private information (while the other categories focus on public information), and for being related to individuals (the previous categories focus mainly on the public) and information that are not necessarily fake. In the informative disorders, information, therefore, are used to create doubt and discredit, in other words, misinform.

Informative disorders, in a last analysis, are also a part of the complex ecosystem of political conversations in the last years of social media (TUCKER et al. 2018). In this study, we consider social media the phenomenon of collective conversation that emerges from the tools of digital mediation, which particularly utilize the structures of networked publics

(BOYD, 2010). The networked publics were defined by Boyd (2010) as simultaneously "simultaneously (1) the space constructed through networked technologies and (2) the imagined collective that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (p. 39). In other words, the concept comprises simultaneously the affordances of technologies that allow the construction of a collective public environment, the audience emerged by it and their social practices. Social media, thus, emerges from the practices of information allowed by the affordances of these platforms, however, it refers, exclusively, to the informative and communicative actions of the actors (and not every social practice) that, through their own evaluation, end up giving visibility to certain information and silencing or erasing others. It's in the core of the own concept of social media the dispute for visibility and, therefore, the discursive dispute.

In the field of the notion of misinformation, however, social media loses its conversational character. There, it becomes a weapon that, through political activists (SOARES, RECUERO and ZAGO, 2018), automatization through networks of bots (BASTOS and MERCEA, 2019), the massive stream of information and the manufacture of information (TUCKER et al. 2018) seeks to interfere in the public sphere and manipulate the result of the political battle. The discussion about the "weaponization12" of social media to influence public opinion and the vote intention through this type of action, thus, also is the background for the study of discursive disputes, as, in this case, it is not about symbolic power disputes for the hegemony of versions of one narrative, but, often, explicit interferences of circulation of fake news. The notion of disinformation and its influence on the discursive dispute is particularly relevant for this study due to the discursive dispute we chose to analyze.

12 The term "weaponization" focuses the question of social media channels being used as weapons in informational guerrilla.

Method

The central question proposed in this study, therefore, is: "How do the discursive disputes of the narratives anti and pro-Bolsonaro in the case of the news in Veja on Twitter happened?". Within this question, we would like to further discuss: (1) Which were the strategies of legitimation used in the discursive disputes about the Veja case? (2) How do these strategies result in the legitimation (or not) of these narratives? (3) How does disinformation acts in the discursive dispute?

The case chosen for this analysis refers to an article in the magazine Veja which gathered information contained in the process of divorce of the then candidate to Presidency in Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro (PSL). The article in the magazine, published on September 28th, 2018, brought a revision of the process of litigious divorce, which had a series of accusations towards the candidate, including domestic violence, corruption and theft13. The case quickly spread through social media, particularly on Twitter, where groups competed for the visibility of the hashtags "#Veja600milhoes and #BolsonaronaCadeia", each one supporting an opposed narrative.

Data Collection

The data used in this analysis were collected through Social Feed Manager14, installed on a local server, which automatically collected the tweets that had the keywords "Bolsonaro" and "Veja" in the period between September 28th (when the article was released) and October 7th (the first round of the election)15. The collection was performed hourly, within the API limitations of Twitter. These procedures resulted in a general set: 83.254 tweets. From this set, we got 10,947 unique tweets

13   https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/capa-veja-ex-mulher-bolsonaro-acusacoes/
      https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/ex-mulher-acusou-bolsonaro-de-ocultar-patrimonio-da-justi-
      ca-eleitoral/
14   https://gwu-libraries.github.io/sfm-ui/
15   Even though dozens of hashtags and other words had been used for this discussion, we chose
      a more neutral keyword to allow to observe the construction of discursive dispute with a bigger
      amplitude and not only taking activists through hashtags.

(original tweets, without counting retweets), from which 1,206 with at least one retweet. The image below shows the distribution of retweets (RTs) per unique tweets in a set of data. As we can see, the distribution shows some tweets with high visibility and a big number of retweets, dropping quickly to below 100 retweets.

Image 1: Distribution of tweets and retweets in a data set (log 10).
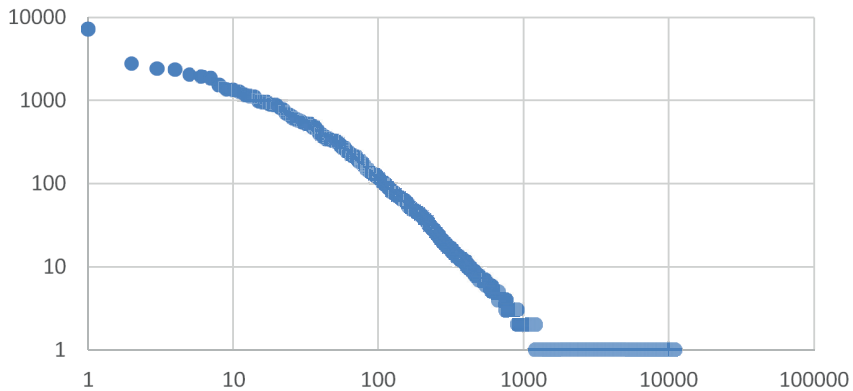
Created by: The author.

Data analysis

For the data analysis, we used a combination of methods. First, we used for the analysis only those tweets that were more legitimated through retweets (as we've discussed on the theoretical section of this study). Therefore, we decided to analyze tweets with at least 100 retweets (those tweets with a bigger impact), in order to discuss the narrative dispute. This arbitrary limit was chosen because (1) it was necessary to limit the data set for this analysis and (2) as we can see on Image 1, there is a steep decline of impact below 100 retweets, consisting in 110 original tweets. These units were, then, divided into those who legitimated the narrative of Veja and those who wanted to counterpose this narrative through the construction of alternative narratives. Through these two subsets, in the

field of discourse, we will analyze the strategies of legitimation used by the authors and the discursive disputes in conversation.

Case Study

For this analysis, we want to understand (1) the strategies of legitimation used by the more successful tweets in both sides of the dispute (VAN LEEUWEN, 2007); (2) the instances of narrative dispute (PAIVA, GAR-CIA e ALCÂNTARA, 2017; BARROS, 2014) and (3) the effects of the dispute in the sharing of disinformation.

Discursive Disputes

Data show that the main discursive dispute happened around the narra-tive proposed by Veja. The tweet that announced the cover article was the most retweeted in the data set (7,164 RTs). At the same time, howev-er, other impactful tweets brought narratives opposing or contradicting the article of the magazine. Therefore, on one side, we have those who reproduced the article or otherwise legitimated and on the other, those who defied the proposed narrative, within the dispute we will analyze.

Veja's narrative

Among the tweets that support Veja's narrative, we have 35 posts with up to 100 retweets and a total of 19,182 retweets. From these, 22 were coming from news outlets, including mainstream outlets, as @veja itself and the magazine @exame, in addition to left-winged outlets, such as @ DCM, @cartacapital and @theinterceptBR (which would also indicate a bigger circulation of information by the left-winged actors). We also found 13 tweets of actors, from which one candidate, @geraldoalckmin, from PSDB. Therefore, we notice that the magazine's narrative was first-ly legitimated by media outlets.

On Table 1, we can see the most frequent themes of the tweets:

Theme 1: Themes of the tweets in the pro-Veja narrative

Themes	*Original Tweets*	RTs
Bolsonaro corrupt	17	4.888
Voters	5	2.990
Veja corrupt	3	665
Fake News	3	1.102
Bolsonaro e veja corrupt	2	456
Process	2	7.284
Violent Bolsonaro	1	120
Joice Hasselman	1	314
Madonna	1	1.363

Made by: Author.

The majority of the most retweeted tweets mentioned the corruption accusations to Bolsonaro in the process (19 original tweets and 4,888 RTs) (Bolsonaro and the theft of the safe; In a cover article, Veja says that former wife of Bolsonaro accuses him of stealing safe and omit equity in process…). Other five tweets (2,990 retweets) questioned Bolsonaro voters about the anti-corruption discourse of the candidate and the complaints (Bolsonaro's robots failing after the article published by Veja #*BolsonaroNaCadeia*). Other three tweets (665 retweets) complained about the magazine itself, in the sense of despite legitimating the complaint, they pointed out the magazine was not trustworthy (Veja was always on PMDB's side. *That was openly said even in the political enquiry of mensalão).* Three tweets (1,102 retweets) pointed towards a dispute that was happening, expressly saying that the supposed complaint that Veja had received money to talk negatively about Bolsonaro was unjustified (*Bolsonaro's campaigned created a rumor and used it as an antidote against Veja's article*). Two tweets had links and information about the supposed process (7,284 retweets, the biggest repercussion within this data set). Finally, other three tweets made reference to the lack of credibility of the supposed author of the complaint of receiving

money from Veja, the deputy candidate Joice Hasselman (PSL); to the violence reported towards Jair Bolsonaro; a third tweet taked about the singer Madonna having criticized Bolsonaro.

The tweets pointed out here focus, mainly, on the candidates reputation, pointing towards the contradiction between the candidate's discourse and the facts present in the article. Among the outlets (even the left-winged media outlets), there is a more factual and descriptive approach to the story. Among the actors, however, there are tweets linked to the political campaign. It is interesting to notice that many, despite legitimating the magazine's piece, delegitimated the magazine as a non-partisan informative outlet. However, the tweets with the biggest repercussion (*retweets*) are especially those who linked the supposed original process and defied Bolsonaro's voters.

Below, we will discuss the legitimation strategies of these tweets (Table 2):

Table 2: Types of legitimation per original tweet

Type of legitimation	*Original Tweets*	RTs
A/M	14	11.780
A/AM	10	5.245
A/M/AM	3	844
AM	5	600
AM/M	2	434
A/R	1	279

Made by: The author.

The first strategy of legitimation in this data set is linked to the authorization (A). The original article, for instance, from Veja itself, explains: "EXCLUSIVE> In a process of over 500 pages, to which VEJA got access, ex-wife accuses Bolsonaro of stealing from safe". It is not, therefore, Veja who "accuses", but the "ex-wife" of the candidate, someone who, supposedly, would have personal authority, due to marriage, to expose the fact. In addition to that, the materiality of the information (the legal

action) is presented right at the beginning of the text, implying a factuality. However, in a second moment, when the original tweet is retweeted, the authority is diluted, becoming, at the same time, from the source itself (Veja magazine, news outlet) and the story reported that is credited to the ex-wife. Therefore, the other outlets and the actors that shared the information utilize the magazine and its reputation to generate institutional (journalistic) authority for the report ("The process of separation between Bolsonaro and Ana Cristina, revealed by "Veja", brings…"). The personal or institutional authority, therefore, will constitute the category of authorization as form of legitimation. This strategy goes through almost the entirety of the texts analyzed, which would be expected, since the basis of the information is the "journalistic credibility" of the article. There is a total of 28 tweets that use the strategy of authorization, always in combination with other forms of legitimation. As we've observed on Table 1, the authorization was always used in combination with another legitimating strategy. The most frequent sets were authorization and moral evaluation (A/ME), with ten tweets and authorization and *mythopoesis* (A/M) with 14 tweets. We also can see in Table 1 that the strategies with bigger impact in terms of retweets are, precisely, those supported in authorization as a form of legitimation.

The category of mythopoesis (M) refers to the use of stories for the legitimation of discourse. There's a total of 19 tweets that use this strategy somehow. In this case, reports from news outlets in general fit into that category, using authority in conjunction with story (A/M), 14 tweets. We have here the case of Veja's tweet, where the story was credited to the candidate's "ex-wife" and the tweets of the other outlets (ex-wife accused Bolsonaro of omitting wealth, says Veja). We see here the personal authority of the former wife and the magazine ("ex-wife accuses" and "says Veja"), as well as the story that the candidate would have hidden wealth. This strategy is characteristic of journalism, which always seeks to credit the source of the report of the fact and was mainly observed among the outlets and seem to be the strongest legitimation category in this narrative.

The moral evaluation (ME), according to Van Leeuwen (2007), is the strategy that refers to a system of values, where practices, actions and subjects are "good" or "evil". Twenty tweets used this strategy somehow. As we've said, the majority of the analyzed tweets made explicit or implicit reference to the corruption of Bolsonaro, indirectly acting over his reputation. The main category that used ME was the one that used it conjointly with authorization (A/ME), with ten tweets. This category was mainly observed in the comments used to share the article, and mainly by actors, not outlets ("Veja's article is very alarming…"). In the example, we can see the moral evaluation (*very* alarming) in conjunction with authorization (Veja's *article*).

The trio moral evaluation, authorization and mythopoesis (ME/A/M) also appeared on data (three tweets). An example is the tweet "at @veja: bolso hid wealth, had collected 60k/month from an unknown origin and was accused by the ex of stealing from a safe", we see that, under the appearance of reproduction of the fact, the author makes reference to the authorization of the magazine, but says that Bolsonaro "hid" wealth and "had collected" money from an unknown origin. Therefore, the author makes a direct moral evaluation, tells a story and equally uses the magazine's authority.

The moral evaluation also appeared in conjunction with *mythopoesis* (ME/M), when the stories shared was used, along with the evaluation, to legitimate the discourse (two tweets). Finally, we also found moral evaluation (ME) as an only form of legitimation on five tweets. Often times, the moral evaluation wasn't only used as a strategy to legitimate Veja's article, but equally, to delegitimate Bolsonaro supporters (*2014: Lula and Dilma on the cover of Veja. Bolsominions: THIS IS TRUE! OUT WITH PT! 2018 and a process with 500+ pages showing that Bolsonaro is dirtier than the colostomy bag he uses. Bolsominions: FAKE NEWS!!! COMMUNIST VEJA!... you, bolsominions, are a joke*).

Anti-Veja Narrative

On the other hand, the narrative built through the anti-Veja discourse is considerably bigger than the one who legitimated and gave visibility to the article on Veja. Here, we had 73 original tweets (with over 100 retweets) and a volume of 40,878 total retweets. In opposition to the narrative that Veja published, this set of tweets has an expressive majority of actors (69) and only four outlets, all partisan (@politzoficial, @conexaopolitica, among others). Therefore, we see, that in this instance of discussion, the narrative dispute happens mainly among actors (in the anti-Veja side) and media outlets (in the pro-Veja side).

The themes discussed by these tweets are also wider (Table 3). First, the two strategies of attack to the Veja narrative were mainly related to the sensationalism of the article (16 original tweets and 6,035 retweets) and to the illegality of the access to the process (14 *tweets*, 2.935 *retweets*), as, for instance, "Veja took, using bribery and in an 100% illegal way, a confidential process in which Bolsonaro is the AUTHOR to accuse him of awful things (…). However, the tweet that received the biggest repercussion and legitimacy, was precisely the false information that Veja had received 600 million reais from the Workers Party to attack Bolsonaro (15 *tweets* and 12,976 *retweets*) (*Former Veja journalist Joice Hasselmann exposes that the magazine received 600 million reais to destroy Jair Bolsonaro in the election week*). In addition to that, there is a narrative that the magazine journalists would be involved with the left-wing in general (PSOL and the Workers Party) with nine tweets and 5,681 retweets (One of the authors of the CRIMINAL article from Veja is affiliated with PSOL. *And the "lawyer" who was interviewed is an associate to Dias Toffoli's wife.*); the narrative that the article would be "fake news" with nine tweets and 4,443 retweets (Veja is so bad at creating fake news that they didn't realize the author of the process was Bolsonaro, not the ex-wife), the fact that Bolsonaro's ex-wife who is in the process (who was running for deputy) would have refute the declarations in the legal proceeding (four tweets and 2,945 retweets) (Bolsonaro's ex-wife defends herself from the attacks from Veja and Folha gets emotional…);

accusations of media persecution to Bolsonaro (three tweets and 2,735 retweets) (You can be certain of that: Veja would love to find a corruption scandal or some other crime against Bolsonaro…); accusations that the sources used by the article would be criminals (three tweets and 1,108 retweets) (Veja's source to incriminate Bolsonaro is the guy who stole from the bank's safe); threats to the magazine and to the left-wing in general (one tweet, 878 retweets) and the news that Bolsonaro would have created a case asking to stop the sales of the magazine (one tweet, 123 retweets).

Table 3: Most common themes in the anti-Veja narrative:

Themes	Original Tweets	Retweets
Sensationalism	16	6.035
Bribe	15	12.976
Proceedings	14	2.935
Left-wing	9	5.681
Fake News	9	4.443
Refuting	4	2.945
Persecution	3	2.735
Robbers	3	1.108
Threat	1	878
Taking it out of the shelves	1	123

Created by: The author.

About the legitimation strategies employed (Table 4), here we also found differences. First, the vast majority of the original tweets was concentrated in one category, linked stories that would deny or question Veja's article and moral evaluation, judging the attitude of the magazine (M/ME), with 45 original tweets and the biggest number of retweets (23,172) (Veja published a confidential case to vilify/defame Bolsonaro…). Within this category, we also find stories regarding the collection of money so that Veja would attack the candidate (We already know who received 600 million to try to destroy Bolsonaro, Veja did. *Now, we need to know who paid #Veja600milhões*). The mythopoesis category,

precisely working with stories, appears on 55 tweets analyzed, mainly in conjunction with other strategies (notedly the moral evaluation). That was expected, since the anti-Veja narrative sought alternative stories that would question the accuracy of the article and the credibility of the outlet and its journalists.

Next, we have texts with moral evaluation (Shame on Veja!... or the trashy journalists are desperates, now Veja's Fake news, Bolsonaro robbed a safe… hahaha). Moral evaluation (ME) was the category that, in conjunction with others, had the biggest presence in the data set (62 original tweets). Such strategy was expected, since that, in the narrative dispute, Bolsonaro supporters sought to present alternative narratives to Veja's article, which, then, was invalidated by the group due to the lack of credibility through a morality evaluation of what was published (for example, in the accusations related to the "sensationalism" of the article or the "persecution" of the media against the candidate).

Table 4: Anti-Veja strategies of legitimation:

Strategies	*Original Tweets*	RTs
M/AM	45	23.712
AM	9	5.205
M	5	2.959
R/AM	5	1.982
A/M	3	3.923
A/M/AM	2	734
A/AM	1	2.060
R/M	1	187
R	1	1.116

Created by: The author.

Finally, we also see some tweets with rationalization, that appear for the first time on data, even though it is punctual (seven tweets). One example is the tweet #*Veja600Milhões Veja*, Folha, Uol, etc… I still haven't seen anyone change votes with your ordinary and inappropriate posts. In the text, the author explains that the magazine "strategy" that

wanted to reach Bolsonaro because of the payment (#Veja600milhões) would be useless, because "I've never seen someone change votes" because of media articles. The strategy here is rationalization, from the moment you seek to make a logical cause-consequence relation. Another category that was present was tweets with authorization (six tweets). Here, we saw references to Bolsonaro's ex-wife denying what was said. Therefore, she, in the place of being involved, would discredit the legal proceedings. These cases point that other strategies were also used to legitimate the narratives proposed by the tweets, but in a smaller scale.

The use of hashtags here also appears with strength. The use of the hashtag is seen as a strategy to give visibility to the narrative, counterposing it to their rival's hashtag. Therefore, among the tweets, we also found the requests of use of a determined hashtag to give visibility (in this group, mainly #Veja600milhoes).

Analysis: discursive disputes, polarization and disinformation

In the specific case analyzed in this study, we could observe, first, that the discursive dispute happened, mainly, among the mainstream media outlets that shared Veja's article (in addition to the magazine itself, obviously) and Bolsonaro supporters that wanted to delegitimate it (PAIVA, GARCIA e ALCÂNTARA, 2017). The dispute, therefore, happens in a very particular field, enabled by the affordances of the social media itself and the networked audiences (BOYD, 2010). This instance of dispute, where the narratives built by the supporters can compete equally and even surpass the circulation of the narrative made by mainstream media outlets, is something new and characteristic of the social media. In the case we've studied, we clearly see that the anti-Veja narrative was more popular and received more legitimation. That seems to suggest that the discursive disputes that happen between actors and media outlets, on social media, may be disputed with greater engagement by actors themselves, which, despite obtaining less individual visibility (Veja's tweet, for

instance, had the biggest impact), they are more engaged in replicating stories that reproduce their own points of view, even if these stories are face. Disinformation, thus, becomes a dispute weapon for hegemony of the narrative and a weapon in the dispute for symbolic power (BOUR-DIEU, 1992).

The most popular strategies of legitimation (VAN LEEUWEN, 2007) in each group seem to reinforce this idea. While in the texts supporting Veja we see authority on the parties involved and the magazine itself, as well as other outlets as one of the main strategies, along with texts that bring materiality and specific information (mythopoesis), on the other side, the main legitimation strategy is the moral evaluation of the article, used in conjunction with the circulation of alternative stories. These two strategies were aligned with the publication of disinformation (particularly the fake news that the magazine would've received 600 million to attack Bolsonaro) and the moral judgement of the magazine (sensationalism). Thus, while on one hand it seems that the credibility was central for legitimation, on the other, there's a deconstruction of the article based on the morality of the attack towards the candidate. Notedly, the anti-Veja strategy was to attack the credibility of the outlet and the journalists involved, either through fake news or fake connections among facts. Another relevant fact is regarding the discredit of the magazine appearing both in the group legitimating the article and in the other. That means that, in the anti-media discourse, which builds a narrative of manipulation and delegitimating of mainstream media outlets was not exclusive to one of the groups, and, therefore, can also be related to the reduction of the impact of the magazine article. Therefore, disinformation was used as a weapon to bury and get back at the magazine article, in a similar way to what is exposed in Tucker et al.'s work. (2018).

n this sense, the discursive dispute is intimately linked to the dispute for visibility, which, on Twitter, seem to be strongly connected with Trending Topics. The use of hashtags connected with the narratives that each group stands for (in this case, #Veja600milhoes on the anti-Veja group, which made an explicit reference to the story of an illegal

payment to the magazine; or #BolsonaronaCadeia, to those aligned with the other narrative, Veja's, who reported the complaint of the candidate's ex-wife) and the creation of strategies to "make them a trend"16. This articulation of militancy is also important, because it demonstrates that disinformation is intentional (DERAKHSHAN and WARDLE, 2017).

These data, aligned with the formation of echo chambers (SUSTEIN, 2001), suggest that the polarization on Twitter, in the political conversation about the candidate, begins through the discursive alienation of the groups, where in one of them circulate alternative stories and disinformation, and on the other, the information given by the outlets. There is, thus, an attempt to mold the social reality according to the political alignment of the actors, more than with the materiality of information themselves. In the case we've analyzed, the factuality brought prejudice to the candidate Bolsonaro and enabled the circulation of fake news in his supporter groups simply because these would offer an alternative reality, more aligned with the perception built of him.

We see, thus, that the main discursive strategy of the anti-Veja group was to present stories that would reduce or question the outlet's and journalists' credibility (mainly manufactured information, such as the reception of 600 million reais, or manipulated information, such as the attempt of aligning the magazine and its journalists with left-wing parties). Disinformation, through the proposed stories, is associated to the value judgement where Bolsonaro supporters put him in a moral place that is higher than the media, the article and the magazine ("trashy journalists", "sensationalist", "insanity", etc.) (TUCKER *et al.* 2018). Thus, the narrative appears, at the same time, to flood the space of discussion with disinformation, in a way of delegitimating the magazine discourse and other outlets.

Therefore, we can point as one of the important characteristics of this discursive dispute, among actors and media outlets in the field of political conversations: 1) The support gives the actors a great power

16   In Twitter jargon, using the hashtag repeatedly so it would appear on trending topics and become visible to all users.

to deconstruct and delegitimate the narratives of the outlets with alternative stories that can be more popular; 2) these stories can be based on disinformation, notedly, manufactured information to respond to the original narrative, which means the use of disinformation as a weapon for the hegemony of the narrative; 3) in spite of that, due to the effect of echo chambers, it seems that the narratives circulate among polarized groups and, therefore, can take these groups to isolation and alienation.

Conclusion

In this study, we seek to explore the form through which happened the "discursive disputes" on Twitter during the 2018 presidential campaign, in a case study of the article in Veja that made several accusations about the then presidential candidate, Jair Bolsonaro (PSL). We see that the discursive dispute in question happened mainly among mainstream media outlets and Bolsonaro supporters. We can still observe that the disinformation was used as a discursive strategy, in the sense of counterposing the information published by Veja. Therefore, fake or distorted information used by supporters and supporting outlets sought to combat the visibility of the original article. Still, we've seen that this discourse used several forms of legitimation, but particularly moral evaluation, related to a critique to Veja's "moral behavior" and their reasons to make the article public, more than the content itself. Disinformation, in this context, acted in a way to attain the reputation of the magazine and the journalists involved. On the other side, among the legitimation strategies of those who reproduced Veja's discourse were supported on the authority of the magazine and the parties involved (the candidate's ex-wife) and in elements of the article itself, seeking to present its veracity and credibility (*mythopoesis*, were the candidate would preach strict morals, but wouldn't have a strict moral himself). We also see that the predominant narrative in the data set was anti-Veja, much more actively propagated. That would indicate an involvement of militancy in the sense of using this discourse as a way of combating the article itself, burying it in the

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middle of the discussion of the magazine's credibility (the case of the fake news of 600 million).

This study is part of a bigger study focused on Twitter conversations during 2018's presidential elections. It's a case study, focused on a specific article, and therefore, with results limited to that specific case. Other studies are necessary so that we can see the real impact of these legitimacy forms.

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