

Stop the Steal Part 2: HOW YOUTUBE AND META ARE DISMANTLING BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY



Introduction

With just a week to go before Brazil heads to the polls to elect its new President, social media platforms are being flooded with ads and content questioning the integrity of the elections process. For months, President Bolsonaro has implied he won't accept the results of the election and that he's prepared to "go to war" if he doesn't like the outcome. Last week he claimed that "If [he doesn't] win the first round, it's because something odd has happened at the Superior Electoral Court."

Over a seven day period, from 10-16 September, SumOfUs researchers reviewed thousands of social media posts, ads and videos relating to Brazil's elections, and found an ecosystem of content seeking to undermine the electoral process – for example by spreading disinformation about electronic ballot boxes, attacking judicial authorities and promoting a coup.

The findings show that, despite Meta and Google's claims that moderation of election content is a priority,³ Facebook, YouTube and other platforms are being used by far-right groups to spread conspiracy theories and amplify doubts about the integrity of Brazil's electoral process. Key findings include:

- Meta approving and running dozens of ads that cast doubt on the integrity of the electoral process, which researchers believe is just the tip of the iceberg;
- Ads spreading disinformation about ballot boxes

- and vote-counting and promoting a military coup;
- High levels of engagement with Brazilian 'stop the steal' videos, including 22 million views off of just 10 YouTube videos and 2.3 million Facebook interactions;
- Evidence of YouTube continuing to monetize and profit off disinformation channels, despite the Superior Electoral Court ordering social media platforms to block payments to election disinformation spreaders.

Google and Meta have taken some action to combat election disinformation in Brazil – for example YouTube's takedown of voter fraud videos⁴ and Meta's launching of an "Election Hub" – but these actions are woefully insufficient in the face of an avalanche of disinformation. Despite the platforms' efforts to remove original disinformation content, our research shows that copies can often be found on other channels and pages on the same platform.

From our Meta investigation, the high number of video ads in the sample (35 video ads out of the total of 56 problematic ads) suggests that the company's automated mechanisms for blocking and removing electoral disinformation are not working well for videos in Portuguese.

And our dive into election disinformation on YouTube shows how little is being done to combat the threat to Brazilian democracy, with election



disinformation videos raking in tens of millions of views and evidence of YouTube profiting directly off these lies.

Brazilian authorities, like the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), have made efforts to rein in the President's unfounded allegations. In August, they ordered that an inflammatory speech in which Bolsonaro repeated conspiracy theories about electronic ballot boxes be removed from his Instagram and Facebook accounts.⁵ On September 11th, a Superior Electoral Court justice prohibited Bolsonaro's campaign from making use of images of rallies from September 7th, Brazil's national day and a focal point for the antidemocratic movement, in his campaign materials.⁶ Such well-intentioned efforts are, however, dwarfed by the flood of election disinformation circulating on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, where videos are reposted multiple times across different platforms. And each time Bolsonaro makes another inflammatory remark, it spreads like wildfire across social media and the cycle begins again. This is a direct attack on democracy.

As we saw with the Stop the Steal movement gaining ground in the US during the 2020 election, when social media platforms allow this type of content to spread unchecked on their platforms, the consequences can be devastating – including real world violence, and even insurrection.

This investigation falls into two parts. The first is a deep dive into Meta's ads library, which shows how the company is profiting from ads that are casting doubt on Brazil's elections system, with the aim of softening the ground for contesting the results should Bolsonaro lose. The constant stream of election disinformation is landing in a fraught electoral landscape, where distrust of the voting system is already high. One recent poll indicated that a third of Brazilians only trust voting machines a little, and 20% not at all.⁷

The second looks at the spread of election disinformation and incitement of violence on YouTube. This is important because YouTube acts as a breeding ground for far right propaganda about the election that is reaching millions of people, with videos flowing from YouTube's verified channels to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, as well as onto messaging apps including WhatsApp and Telegram. We also uncover how YouTube's announcement to stop payments to election disinformation spreaders is misleading as the platform continues to monetize and profit off the lies.



Meta Ads library: Monetizing election lies

SumOfUs researchers did a thorough sweep of Meta's ads library using 7 specific keywords to search for content during 2022, (the key search words were: Urna eletrônica, STF, Urnas eletrônicas, Alexandre de Moraes, Fachin, Pesquisa eleitoral, TSE). For the search terms STF and Alexandre De Moraes, the number of results was too great to be manually processed, and so the timespan for ads related to those keywords was reduced to 7 days. If the whole ad sample had been analyzed the number of problematic ads may have been even higher.

With just a short time span and only 7 key search terms, we discovered 56 ads peddling election disinformation, which had collectively racked up almost 3 million impressions. These included ads that:

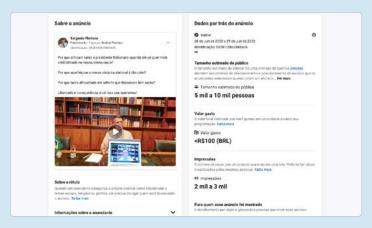
- Made baseless claims about electronic ballot boxes;
- Attacked the credibility and integrity of institutions overseeing the election;
- Promoted civil unrest in response to an unfavorable election outcome.

The high number of video ads in the sample indicate that Meta's AI moderation systems

are failing to identify and remove election disinformation in Portuguese. Below are some of the most egregious examples of Facebook ads peddling election disinformation.

Peddling myths about electronic voting

We found dozens of ads sowing doubt over Brazil's electronic ballot box system. This ad Preposts a clip of Bolsonaro attacking electronic voting and the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). In the clip Bolsonaro claims "Datafolha (a respected polling institute) shows numbers that TSE will use later to prove and support the result", and then goes on to accuse the TSE of



▲ AD ATTACKING THE TSE

Ad of Bolsonaro video clip attacking electronic voting and the TSE



conspiring against him. The video racked up 2,000-3,000 impressions.

This Facebook video ad posted by a Bolsonaro ally and electoral candidate makes similar claims that the TSE is allowing voter fraud and questions the right of TSE to oversee the elections process. The ad gained 25,000-30,000 impressions. And this ad p, which received over 250,000 impressions pushes the false claim that voting electronically does not allow the vote to be audited.



▲ VOTER FRAUD AD

Bolsonaro ally and electoral candidate makes voter fraud claims in ad



AUDITING AD

Ad claims electronic votes are not audited

Some of the ads we surfaced in our research misrepresent the views of public officials. This video ad posted by a Congressional candidate, which received between 150,000 and 175,000 impressions, implies that ministers and public officials are not being transparent about the electoral process, and that the TSE's rejection of armed forces involvement in supporting the electoral process is proof that the institution and election lacks integrity.



▲ TRANSPARENCY AD

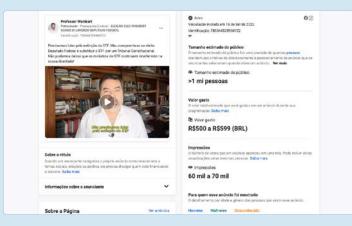
Congressional candidate runs ad claiming lack of electoral transparency from public officials and that the rejection of armed forces in the process is evidence that the elections lack integrity

Attacks on public officials, ministers and democratic institutions

Some of the most alarming ads discovered by researchers incite violence against ministers and public officials and make direct attacks on the legitimacy and future of institutions like the Supreme Federal Court and the Superior Electoral Court.

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▲ "SHUT IT DOWN" AD

Ad posted two separate times claims "We need to fight for the Supreme Court's extinction. If elected I will shut it down."



▲ BOLSONARO SPEECH AD

Electoral candidate posts Bolsonaro speech spreading conspiracy theories regarding the election. This ad was approved despite Meta and several platforms taking down the original



▲ BOLSONARO SPEECH AD

Ad falsely claims Supreme Court Justice freed Lula from prison and can't be trusted to oversee elections

This ad P, posted two separate times, sees a Congressional candidate and Bolsonaro ally calling for the Brazilian Supreme court to be shut down. He says: "We need to fight for the Supreme Court's extinction. If elected I will shut it down." The two ads in total received around 70,000 impressions.

These two ads here pand here pare reposts of Bolsonaro speeches where he peddles false conspiracy theories about the integrity of the previous year's municipal election results. The first video has already been removed by several platforms, but here Meta is profiting from it being reposted by this electoral candidate. The second video makes the false claim that Supreme Court Justice Edson Fachin freed Lula from prison and can't be trusted to oversee the elections. Together these ads received just under 30,000 impressions.

Supreme Court minister Alexandre de Moraes is another target for the far right, and Meta is monetizing attacks on this minister. In this ad 🖳



▲ DE MORAES ATTACK AD

Attack ad on Supreme Court minister claiming he set up a secret electoral service to subvert election outcomes

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an electoral candidate repeats the conspiracy theory that De Moraes set up a secret electoral service to subvert election outcomes.

A series of ads prom State Congress candidate Vicente Cascione has also racked up over 630,000 impressions, attacking de Moraes for being part of a conspiracy to shut down Bolsonaro's election campaign.

This alarming ad pictures both De Moraes and Luis Roberto Barroso, a Supreme Court Justice, facing military officials, with the slogan "Open War". The text of the ad indicates that the armed forces oppose these judicial ministers and are "the only real guarantee of democracy in Brazil". The ad received 2,168 interactions on Facebook and totalled 10,000-15,000 impressions.



▲ "OPEN WAR" AD

Ad claiming "Open War" between Supreme Court officials and the military, and that the military is the "only real guarantee of democracy in Brazil"

Attacks on the electoral system in ads from pro-Bolsonaro electoral candidates are common. In this ad video , Adail Inglês, a candidate for the Republican Party of the Social Order, makes debunked claims about the integrity of the vote-counting process – for example that they are counted in a "secret room, where nobody has access" – and openly promotes a military coup, which is a federal crime in Brazil. He says: "The nationalist and patriotic Armed Forces stood up for us in 1964 [when there was a military coup in Brazil] and they will stand up for us again in 2022." The video received 4,000-5,000 impressions.



▲ INGLÊS AD

Ad by candidate spreads false claims about the electoral process and openly promotes a military coup

And in this ad , a candidate for National Congress directly attacks the integrity of the TSE and calls for the military to be involved in the elections process, writing: "Do you trust the TSE to count the election votes? First they stop the printed vote, now they stop the Armed Forces from counting. It looks like they are hiding something." This gained 2,000-3,000 impressions.





▲ "HIDING SOMETHING" AD

Ad by candidate spreads distrust in the TSE and calls for the military to be involved in vote counting

Fake news about the polls

In some of the ads our researchers surfaced disinformation and lies about how Bolosonaro is faring in the polls. Consistently, the polling shows Lula Da Silva to be leading in the Presidential contest, but Facebook is approving and profiting from ads that are casting doubt on respected and credible polling institutes. For example this ad by a Congressional candidate falsely claims Bolsonaro is leading with 41% of voters backing him. It received 70,000 to 80,000 impressions.



▲ "41 PER CENT" AD

Ad falsely claims Bolsonaro is leading with 41% of voters backing him

This ad which backs the claim that Bolsonaro is ahead in some of the key electoral districts in Brazil received 800,000-900,000 impressions. And this ad claims Lula da Silva is only leading in polls that are "rigged".



"RIGGED" POLLS AD

Ad falsely claims that Lula is only leading in polls that are rigged



YouTube's hitlist of hate

YouTube has long been a global breeding ground for content that has helped to fuel far-right extremism, with Neo-Nazi and fascist groups even using the platform to recruit teenagers. Brazil has not escaped this trend. A recent report by NetLab, at Rio de Janeiro's Federal University (UFRJ), found that YouTube prioritizes extremist pro-Bolsonaro videos in its recommendations to users.

Using the Crowd Tangle tool to analyze the journeys of 10 "stop the steal" videos, from verified YouTube channels, our researchers demonstrated that the impacts of this are not limited to YouTube. Rather, there is a cascading effect, with extremist content created and monetized on Google platforms rapidly spreading to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and reaching millions of users and new audiences.

The 10 videos analyzed mimic the 'stop the steal' narrative propagated in the US in 2020, throwing doubt on the elections process and the courts and spreading disinformation about electoral integrity and opposition candidates. They highlight YouTube's structural role in the spread of election disinformation and in

stoking anti-democratic sentiment, both lending legitimacy to sources of disinformation via its verification process (all bar one of the 10 videos appeared on verified channels) and significantly boosting its reach.

Since these ten videos were published, all in the period since June 2022, they have gained 22 million views on YouTube and 2.3 million Facebook interactions. They have also generated significant engagement on Instagram and Twitter, although this is harder to measure, since data on Twitter interactions is limited to the previous seven days on Crowd Tangle and recent changes to the tool mean shorter videos are no longer tracked on Instagram.

Below we describe some of the videos our researchers looked at in more detail.

A megaphone for disinformation: amplifying Bolsonaro's lies directly

Bolsonaro has repeatedly made incendiary comments questioning the integrity of the electoral process, spreading lies about his rivals



and calling on his supporters to prepare for a military coup. And YouTube is helping to amplify them. By magnifying the reach of pro-Bolsonaro extremist videos in an already fraught electoral landscape, YouTube is helping to grow and entrench a Brazilian stop the steal movement that seeks to undermine democracy – and it is making money while it does it.

This video was posted by Foco do Brasil, a hyper partisan, pro-Bolsonaro channel with 2.9 million subscribers that has been investigated by the Federal Police for spreading extremist content. The video includes an interview with Bolsonaro, on his recent trip to London, in which he stokes a stop the steal narrative by overstating his own support and preemptively accusing the electoral courts of corruption. He says: "For what we've been seeing all around Brazil, if I don't win [the elections] in the first round, it's because something odd has happened inside the Superior Electoral Court."

In fact, Lula has been consistently ahead in the polls. The video hit 50,000 views in one day. In total, it received:

- Almost 51,000 YouTube views
- Over 400 direct link Facebook interactions
- Over 1,500 additional Facebook interactions
- Almost 1,200 Instagram interactions

In another, hour-long, video posted on September 6 – one day ahead of massive, anti-democratic rallies across Brazil – Bolsonaro is given free rein to build his stop the steal narrative, denigrating the courts, electronic ballot boxes, opposition candidates, opinion polling institutes and the media. He suggests he will not accept "untrustworthy" election results if he loses. The video was posted on the verified YouTube channel of Jovem Pan, a hyper partisan news channel which, despite having only a small presence on cable news, has found an audience of 5.7 million subscribers on YouTube. Recent research by NetLab, from Rio de Janeiro's



▲ FOCO DO BRASIL YOUTUBE VIDEO

YouTube channel Foco do Brasil (2.9 million subscribers) features interview with Bolsonaro stoking a stop the steal narrative



▲ JOVEM PAN INTERVIEW

YouTube channel Jovem Pan (5.7 million subscribers) features an hourlong interview with Bolsonaro where he is given free rein to build his stop the steal narrative



Federal University (UFRJ), found YouTube favored Jovem Pan's Bolsonaro support videos in its recommended content, including "stop the steal" content. The video received:

- Over 3 million YouTube views
- Over 13,000 direct link Facebook interactions
- Almost 80,000 additional Facebook interactions
- Almost 1,500 Instagram interactions

Again, Bolsonaro is given a platform to develop his 'stop the steal' narrative in this five-hour interview posted on Flow, a far-right channel with 4.4 million subscribers, whose co-founder has advocated for a Nazi party in Brazil (he was subsequently expelled from Flow, but the channel continues to promote a far-right world view). This is a striking example of YouTube facilitating the spread of stop the steal talking points, since the video has rendered thousands of short clips that have spread far and wide

across multiple platforms. This video gained:

- Over 15.5 million YouTube views
- 117,600 direct link Facebook interactions
- Almost 1.9 million additional Facebook interactions

Ecosystem of liars: boosting pro-Bolsonaro champions

As well as helping Bolsonaro to build out a stop the steal narrative and maximize his audience, YouTube has helped to bolster many antidemocratic voices supporting him.

In this video , posted by Jovem Pan on September 15, hyper-partisan political commentator and Bolsonaro champion Caio Copolla throws doubt on the integrity of the Superior Electoral Court in discussion with a guest, suggesting erroneously that there is an anti-Bolsonaro conspiracy between Lula and the



▲ FLOW YOUTUBE VIDEO

YouTube channel Flow (4.4 million subscribers) features a 5-hour long interview with Bolsonaro where he spreads his narrative of stop the steal. This video rendered thousands of short clips which spread far and wide across platforms



▲ JOVEM PAN YOUTUBE VIDEO

YouTube channel Jovem Pan (5.7 million subscribers) features video casting doubt on the Superior Electoral Court



court justices. It has gained:

- Over 3 million YouTube views
- Over 13,000 direct link Facebook interactions
- Almost 80,000 additional Facebook interactions
- Almost 1,500 Instagram interactions

Another video from Foco do Brasil, from September 1, starts with the "breaking news" that Bolsonaro is ahead of Lula in the polls. This is false information and fits into the stop the steal narrative, laying the ground for Bolsonaro to bolster arguments that the system is rigged against him. It received:

- Over 171,000 YouTube views
- Almost 1,000 direct link Facebook interactions
- Almost 15,000 additional Facebook interactions
- Almost 2,000 Instagram interactions

One Bolsonarist YouTuber, Te Atualizei, has been helped by the platform to reach an audience of millions with her disinformation-fuelled videos. Despite being under investigation by federal police in an inquiry into a fake news network designed to destabilize Brazilian democracy and favor a military coup, her videos are still racking up high numbers of views.

In this video , which received over half a million views in less than two days, she says – against all the evidence – that Bolsonaro will likely win the election in the first round, seeking to sow distrust of the media and opinion research institutes ahead of the election. It received:

- Over 650,000 YouTube views
- Almost 14,500 direct link Facebook interactions
- 30.500 additional Facebook interactions
- Over 22,000 Twitters interactions (direct link)



▲ FOCO DO BRASIL YOUTUBE VIDEO

YouTube channel Foco do Brasil (2.9 million subscribers) claims Bolsonaro is leading in the polls which lays the ground for the stop the steal narrative



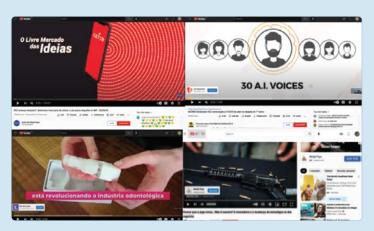
▲ TE ATUALIZEI YOUTUBE VIDEO

Bolsonarist YouTuber, Te Atualizei, who is under investigation and blocked by law to receive funding through her content, sows distrust in the media and opinion research institutes



YouTube profits off lies — even if the disinformation spreaders can't

The Superior Electoral Court ordered that content creators like Te Atualizei and other election misinformation spreaders must stop receiving funds from ad revenue.8 In response, YouTube announced it was suspending payments to 14 Brazilian YouTube channels.9 But SumOfUs research shows that Google is still allowing at least four of the channels named in the court order to be monetized (Te Atualizei, Jornal da Cidade Online, Vlog do Lisboa, Folha Política), and it's very likely that the other 10 channels are also continuing to have ads placed on their videos. So even though Te and others are blocked from receiving the funds, Google continues to profit from their lies.



▲ AD REVENU

Authorities have blocked election disinformation spreaders from receiving ad revenue but YouTube continues to profit off their lies



Conclusion

Our last report, *Stop the Steal 2.0: How Meta is subverting Brazilian democracy* (September 5, 2022), showed how far right forces were using Meta's platforms - Facebook and WhatsApp - to fuel the growth of an antidemocratic movement in the run-up to Brazilian Independence day, and ahead of the Brazilian general election. Now, with less than a week to go before the first round vote on October 2, this investigation lays bare the structural role YouTube and Meta are playing in entrenching this movement's narratives – pumping extremist videos and ads to millions and softening the ground to challenge the integrity of the election result, should Bolsonaro be defeated.

The vast reach of some of the ads and videos identified in the research offers a glimpse into how these platforms have allowed extremists to hijack the political conversation – pushing unfounded allegations and wild conspiracy theories, potentially exposing millions of new people to disinformation and seriously undermining the democratic process. Deliberate and coordinated efforts to cast doubt on the integrity of Brazil's electronic voting system, with unfounded allegations of conspiracies among public officials to subvert the election

outcome and attacks on the public institutions charged with overseeing the electoral process, are further eroding public trust.

Just days out from this pivotal election, this is the last chance for Meta and Google, who still have time to mitigate some of the damage if they act with the urgency and focus required. From this report, we can see that these tech giants' moderation systems are falling far short of what is needed to rein in rampant election disinformation, despite promises from both companies to prioritize the region. If they are to show that these promises are more than just words, Meta and Google must urgently follow the recommendations of 90+ Brazilian and international civil society organizations, including SumOfUs, by:

- Beefing up its content moderation systems, including by hiring more content moderators with sufficient understanding of the local political context; and providing them with fair pay and decent working conditions;
- Improving its ad account verification process so as to more effectively filter out accounts posting content that undermines the integrity of elections;



- Assessing, mitigating and publishing the risks posed by their platforms to human rights in the countries in which they operate;
- Publishing details of the steps they've taken in each country and in each language to ensure election integrity;
- Increasing transparency by listing full details of all ads in the Meta ad library, including intended target audience, actual audience, ad spend and ad buyer;
- Allowing verified independent third party auditors to check whether the company is doing what it is saying, and to ensure it can be held accountable;
- Publishing its pre-election risk assessment for Brazil;
- Responding to the 90+ Brazilian civil society organizations' policy recommendations in their report The Role Of Digital Platforms In Protecting Electoral Integrity In The 2022 Brazilian Election.

Furthermore, Meta must immediately deploy a policy to fact check political ads; and we invite the Electoral Tribunal to assess the candidates and profiles exposed in this report, and apply the relevant legislation to demand their removal when in breach of the electoral legislation.

Annex



Further content collected during the research period



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=442512761235163
An ad from a Bolsonaro ally raising questions about electronic ballots during an interview, throwing doubt on the integrity of the electronic ballot boxes. The ad had 1,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1036721473649235 A video ad that is casting doubt on the security of the electronic ballot boxes. "In Brazil everything can be hacked except the electronic ballot boxes..... TSE should share this incredible technology with the rest of the country. (...) Not even Nasa can do it, or even the CIA, but Brazil's electronic ballot box can do it, what a beauty. Hurray for the Brazilian electoral system, nobody can fraud it, it's a beauty.... but with everything else, that can happen, even to us. Let us pray." The ad received 1,000 to 2,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=416517893761517

An ad from a far-right media outlet advertises an article by a well known Bolsonaro ally and writer, Rodrigo Constantino, casting doubt on electronic ballots, which have been used for decades in Brazil. The post says, "If Bolsonaro says drinking water is good for your health, we will have a lot of politicians, along with the press, warning of the incredible dangers of drinking too much of it". The ad had 35,000 to 40,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1723315501339630 In this video attack on presidential candidate Lula, the influencer begins to question the electoral system and polling data. He then says that the electronic voting system is faulty and unable to provide accurate results and the results can't be audited. The ad had 70,000 to 80,000 impressions.





https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1145116983010902
This video ad plays back a segment of Bolsonaro's speech questioning the integrity and security of the electronic ballot boxes, during a political event earlier this year. The ad had 10,000 to 15,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1081450459131120 In this ad, the author throws doubt on the integrity of the electronic ballots and claims they cannot be trusted, nor can the results. The ad had 3,000 to 4,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1077267492881527
This ad which was run on multiple occasions, says,
"Supreme Court x Military
The Freedom war
Follow us at Instagram."

In this 51 minute ad, the author attacks electronic ballots, the Superior Electoral Court judges and left-wing politicians. He says "This discourse that says Bolsonaro is attacking democracy is bullshit. Something invented at the Supreme Court and planted in newsrooms across the country". He republished the ad several times and it totalled 56,000 to 74,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1262197647874467 In this text ad the author casts doubt on electoral court judges and their defense of the electronic ballot boxes. He says: "You have to be mentally weak or malicious to want to talk about the reliability of a closed iron box, with an inaccessible computer system, where who knows what happens once voting time comes. Logical data must be accessed logically." The ad had 3,000 to 4,000 impressions.





https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=3158816921021508
This ad is a speech from a Congresswoman asking for a parliamentary commission of inquiry over the Brazilian electronic voting ballots.
She says, "What we cannot accept is this dogma that the system is completely safe. None can be assured that it is 100% safe". The ad had 10,000 to 15,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=492684542377737 This ad simply calls for the end of electronic voting ballots and voting secrecy. The ad had 90,000 to 100,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=366434851666792 This video ad throws doubt on the integrity of the electronic ballot machines. The ad had 2,000 to 3,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1976534795840664
This ad throws suspicion over electronic ballots and mentions the
Brazilian Armed Forces support for Bolsonaro's claim of lack of security
over the ballots. The ad says, "The Armed Forces demand explanations
over electronic ballots to the Superior Electoral Court." The post
suggests that the court is not responding to military queries on the
integrity of the electronic ballots. The associated image suggests that
the military is obeying the President. The ad received 2,000 to 3,000
impressions.





▲ FACEROOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1076325256313076
This ad says, "Why do some groups insist on not having a completely transparent process? I, for instance, want to be sure that the system is really impenetrable. And do you agree with the participation of the Armed Forces in the elections to contribute to the electoral process?" The ad had 15,000 to 20,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=485156030290468
This ad shows a Brazilian state congressman who is suggesting gun violence and writes, "Let's face criminality together! Elect me... cause a bandit's place is in jail. ..." The candidate is holding an assault rifle in the video. The ad had 45,000 to 50,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=772295443983734
This ad uses fake news to attack the Supreme Electoral Court as well as the Supreme Federal Court, including its ministers. The ad says, "They can be watching your WhatsApp messages and social media... Who? The Superior Electoral Court and Supreme Court ministers". He continues by saying the solution is to vote for him. The text in the ad post says, "Watching your WhatsApp? Are you letting them take away your freedom?" The ad had 60,000 to 70,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1241194963321172
This ad by an election candidate uses misinformation to attack electronic ballots with the image of Brazil's Defense Minister and close ally to Bolsonaro. The ad says, "Attention! Electronic ballots! After Defense Minister asked the Supreme Electoral Court, it will have Brazil's Armed Forces for ballot inspection". The ad had 10,000 to 15,000 impressions.





https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=600928708175046 In this 10 minute video ad a Bolsonaro ally and candidate for congress attacks the electoral system, electoral judges, electronic voting ballots and casts doubt over the expected results using misinformation, mistakenly highlighting that they cannot be audited, and that they have been investigated for fraud in the past. The ad had 1,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=733368304537343

This ad is pushing a long conspiracy theory that Oracle has provided the system used for the Brazilian electronic ballots and that Oracle is owned by the BlackRock investment fund which owns many of the big media outlets in Brazil. The ad had 10,000 to 15,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=540915937711254
This ad, which was run by a candidate allied with Bolsonaro, casts

doubt on the electronic ballot system and says, "It's getting even more difficult for them to ensure that the ballots are 100% secure. But we know that everything that's hidden comes to light." The image says "Bomb: almost 40% of the electronic ballots where not submitted for public tests, says Defense minister". The ad had 1,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

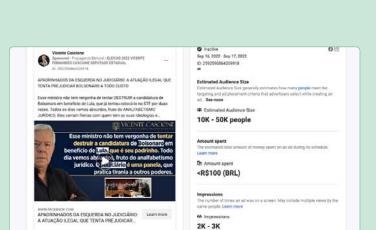
https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=450350699908528

This ad uses misinformation to cast doubt against electronic ballots. The site promoting the ad is a far-right outlet allied to Bolsonaro. The ad shows a video of Bolsonaro pushing a well-known misinformation claim that he won the last election during the first round of voting, and there was a second round only because he was cheated by the electronic ballots. Bolsonaro has repeated this point on multiple occasions regardless of the evidence against the claim. The ad had 1,000 to 2,000 impressions.



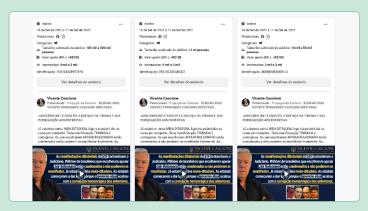


https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1079935982890452
This video ad shows an election candidate verbally attacking the
Supreme Court and Minister Alexandre de Moraes, as well as calling for
the September 7th antidemocratic rallies. The ad was used 136 times,
each time focusing on one specific city in Brazil. One iteration of the ad
had 8,000 to 9,000 impressions.



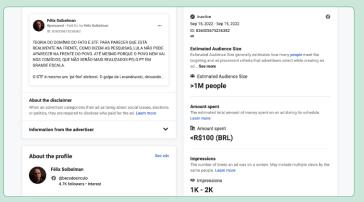
▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=2592590864209918
This ad shows the same candidate again casting doubt on the Supreme Court and Supreme Electoral Court. In this ad, he says, "This minister has no shame in trying to destroy Bolsonaro's candidacy to benefit Lula." The ad had 2,000 to 3,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=593164328957376 In this ad a candidate for congress and ally of Bolsonaro attacks Supreme Court judges for his campaign. He says, "The judiciary is infected by the disease of tyranny and its persecution of patriots". The ad had over 10,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=826005675236382

This ad is a long text post where the author accuses the Supreme Court as well as some of its ministers of favoring Bolsonaro's opponent Lula, in order for Lula to come back to power and help a 'deep state takedown' of Bolsonaro. The ad had 1,000 to 2,000 impressions.





▲ FACEROOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=454077099997723
This ad is by candidate for Congress, Vicente Cascione, a very vocal opponent of the Supreme Electoral Court and the Supreme Court. The ad says, "Coup ahead: lawyer points out facts that show that court justices want to take down Bolsonaro's candidacy." He continues by sowing doubt about the election outcome by saying, "The election can be robbed". Combined, the ads had 35,000 to 40,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=791002498607609
This ad is by far-right media outlet, Revista Oeste, which is using a long excerpt from an opinion article of a journalist which says the Supreme Court, Supreme Electoral Court and left-leaning politicians, as well as the media are united in preventing Bolsonaro's re-election. It continues by saying, "The people will stand and take the streets again to defend the truth, as they did during the September 7th rallies." The ad had 20,000 to 25,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=all&country=BR&view_all_page_id=130327837014119&search_type=page&media_type=all

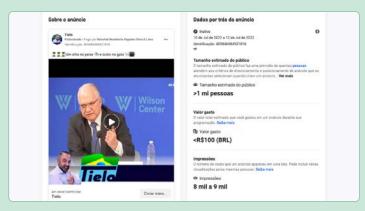
Again an ad campaign by candidate for Congress, Vicente Cascione. He had six ads in September questioning the Supreme Court and Supreme Electoral Court judges motives, their relation with presidential candidate Lula, and accusing them of being a part of a conspiracy to take Bolsonaro down. This ad had 630,000 impressions.



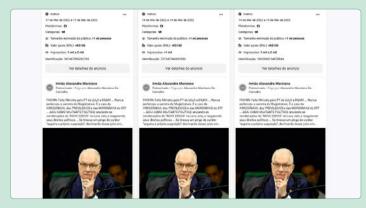
▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1093678234575033
This ad is a long post arguing that the political left in Brazil, alongside the Supreme Court and others, are united against Bolsonaro in a big conspiracy. The ad had 3,000 to 4,000 impressions.





https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=405846584921816
This ad shows a candidate and political ally to Bolsonaro promoting distrust of the electoral system. It uses out-of-context speeches by Supreme Court and Supreme Electoral Courts judges to conclude that the authorities already know the results and that the elections are rigged. The ad had 8,000 to 9,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=547467890282789
This ad made by an anonymous advertiser uses a CNN article to accuse the Supreme Court minister and previous Superior Electoral Court president of using his position to benefit and help Lula to win the elections. The ad had 3,000 to 4,000 impressions.

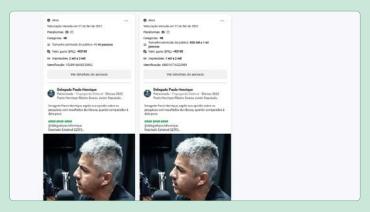


▲ FACEBOOK

This ad uses an image of Lula and a left-leaning media article to spread mistrust of the electoral system. It says, "The response from the

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=423135542964197

streets shows that President Bolsonaro will win on the first round... however the electoral tyranny, headed by the STF/TSE of Fachin, Moraes, Barroso and associated leftist and irresponsible press, insists in manipulating the polls, to prepare voters for electoral fraud..." The ad has 3,000 to 4,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=1528916644235862

This ad shows a congressional candidate's three minute excerpt from an interview of him on a far-right podcast saying, "Bolsonaro is going to win!". In the interview, both the candidate and interviewer question the latest national polls. He says, "I do not believe in polls, but instead the "people's polls"...Bolsonaro can gather such a crowd at his rallies, it's obvious that the polls are lying and he is going to win the first round." The ad had 4,000 to 5,000 impressions.



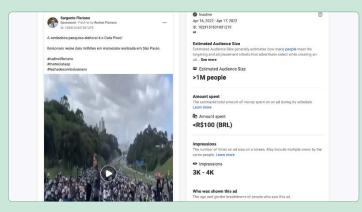


https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=604906121144860
This is an ad run by a candidate allied with Bolsonaro which says that he is ahead of Lula in the most important electoral districts in the country, which counter the official polling data. The ad had 800,000 to 900,000 impressions at the time.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=412185984310909
This ad run by a congressman shows a photo of Lula saying that he is only leading in rigged polls, paid off by himself. The ad had 35,000 to 40,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=political_and_issue_ads&country=US&id=520160899617071&view_all_page_id=296305600946894&search_type=page&media_type=all
This ad reads, "The true electoral poll is the people's poll! Bolsonaro gathers 2 million at his rally in São Paulo". According to official São Paulo's state police numbers, only 5,000 attended the rally. The ad had 4,000 to 5,000 impressions.



▲ FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=411706927561881
This ad shows a congressional candidate saying, "Do you trust TSE counting votes? First they denied printed votes, now they deny the Armed Forces to count the votes too. It looks like they are hiding something." He continues by saying, "Why can't the most credible Brazilian Institution, the Armed Forces, participate in the vote counting?" The ad had 2,000 to 3,000 impressions.





▲ YOUTUBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKL4_7ikqvs

This vídeo is hosted by a well known influencer and supporter of Bolsonaro, Caio Copolla. In the video Caio Copolla and a guest cast doubt on the Supreme Electoral Court ministers and suggest they are teaming up against Bolsonaro. This video gained:

361,889 YouTube views 3,197 direct link Facebook interactions 30,189 other Facebook interactions 11,158 Instagram interactions 125 Twitter interactions



▲ YOUTUBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NwvHrEGtJc

This video of Pátria Amada Brasil, a hyper-partisan channel which has 177,000 subscribers, received over half of a million views in less than 24 hours. The video is ten hours long with a title that reads, "Live!!! Impeachment of STF m1nister! Urgent reunion!! Bolsonaro wins". The actual video is of a Brazilian congressional committee meeting in which allies of Bolsonaro in the government criticized the Supreme and Electoral Court minister Alexandre de Moraes. This channel often uses sensationalist and fake titles to get audience attention.

The video gained:
431,345 YouTube views
1,986 direct link Facebook interactions
1,050 other Facebook interactions
61 Twitters interactions (direct link)



▲ YOUTUBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnsr2Jw8cMY

In this video by Te Atualizei, a Bolsonaro supporter and influencer who has 1.7 million subscribers, she questions the integrity of electronic ballot boxes and Superior Electoral Court ministers, including their motivations. Te Atualizei was investigated by Federal Police in a Supreme Court inquiry about a misinformation and fake news network involving politicians, businessmen and influencers to destabilize Brazilian democracy.

The video gained: 745,732 YouTube views 12,841 direct link Facebook interactions 103,911 other Facebook interactions



▲ YOUTUBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTzU_pmuGME

This video of Alexandre Garcia, a well-known journalist and spokesperson of the Brazilian presidency, and YouTube influencer with 2.39 million subscribers. The video is titled "Our distrust in election voter verification". During the 13 minute video he reads from an article he has written which casts doubt over the Brazilian electoral system and electoral authorities. He explains how reasonable these doubts are, despite providing no evidence to back up his assertions.

The video gained:
137,288 YouTube views
2,187 direct link Facebook interactions
758 other Facebook interactions





A VOLITLIBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSNGBRHIFtw

This video by Aconteceu agora - Plantão informa, a YouTube channel which often plays sensationalist misinformation clips and fake news. The channel has 182,000 subscribers on YouTube. This video is focused on the fictional Alexandre de Moraes impeachment, which is a disinformation theme Bolsonaro supporters have been pushing on their channels. In the video it says, "Everything discovered!...It's over for Moraes, Justice done!"

The video gained: 807,593 YouTube views 2,723 direct link Facebook interactions 78 Twitters interactions (direct link)



▲ YOUTUBE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EToS1HBw64Q

In this widely shared five hour interview on Flow, a controversial YouTube channel and podcast supported by the far-right, Bolsonaro speaks freely about the Brazilian "stop the steal". He raises questions about the integrity of electoral authorities and electronic ballots. This long interview has rendered many smaller clips which have been used and shared by Bolsonaro supporters.

The video gained: 15,584,909 YouTube views 117,600 direct link Facebook interactions 1,897,936 other Facebook interactions 13 Twitters interactions (direct link)

Endnotes



- 1. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/world/americas/brazil-election-bolsonaro-coup.html
- 2. https://pledgetimes.com/something-abnormal-in-the-tse-if-it-doesnt-win-in-the-1st-round-says-bolsonaro/
- 3. https://www.zdnet.com/article/social-networks-partner-with-brazils-electoral-justice-to-tackle-fake-news-during-elections/
- 4. https://www.france24.com/en/livenews/20220322-youtube-to-remove-unfoundedbrazil-vote-fraud-videos
- 5. https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/brazil/2022/08/supreme-court-takes-down-videos-in-which-bolsonaro-lies-to-ambassadors.shtml
- 6. https://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2022/noticia/2022/09/16/campanha-de-bolsonaro-nao-podera-usar-imagens-do-7-de-setembro-decideministro.ghtml
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- 8. https://g1.globo.com/economia/tecnologia/noticia/2021/08/27/youtube-suspende-pagamentos-a-canais-apos-decisao-do-tse-sobre-fake-news.ghtml https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2022/07/youtubers-desmonetizados-pelo-tse-passam-chapeu-para-arrecadar-via-pix.shtml
- 9. https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ youtube-suspends-payments-brazilian-accountsover-election-disinformation-2021-08-27/

For more information on our work, please contact: corporate@sumofus.org

