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**“Trump and Bolsonaro: Disrupting Liberal Democracy- A Communicative Approach
to the Strategies of Populists in Power”**

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Abstract

In the 2020 US election, Donald Trump, then active president of the US, made continuous serious accusations of electoral fraud. Trump lost this election and rejected the results. On the 6th of January, when the US Senate met in Washington DC to confirm Joe Biden's Electoral College win, Trump organized his "Save America March" rally a few blocks away. After the president finished his speech, he incited his supporters to walk to the capitol. This resulted in chaos and violence, including the death of five people, and led to Trump's second impeachment. With the upcoming Brazilian presidential election, in 2022, Jair Bolsonaro has been intensifying his supposed distrust of the national voting system and appears committed to contest a likely defeat. This study explored the strategies deployed by Trump and Bolsonaro to challenge the integrity of elections in the US and Brazil. Building on existent literature, populism was approached as a set of communicative processes and framed in a contemporary context of political communication. Studying populism as a set of communicative processes entailed a focus on performativity. Using grounded theory, two performances were analyzed: A sample from Trump's speech in Washington DC and another from one of Bolsonaro's weekly live streams on social media (from Brasilia). The samples analyzed allowed me to identify specific instances in which the actors could be captured performing populism. This paper demonstrated that both actors enacted a similar crisis of sovereignty by painting elections as a procedure that is corrupted by the elites. It explained how the core of this message can be broken down in three organizing features of populist ideology (Sorensen, 2021). It also explored how this narrative was captured and re-transmitted by the legacy media. In a final stage the role of the new media was considered through a close reading of a small sample of Trump's tweets and some comments made by Bolsonaro in a more recent live stream. Ultimately, I demonstrated that the prescriptions laid out by Sorensen (2021) to study populism as a set of communicative processes can be applied to study actors in power.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

To place populism in the context of political communication, the literature review (chapter 2) deploys a contextualist approach, laying out some of the key paradigms in the study and practice of political communication. These patterns are primarily of a political concern. They point to a fall in participation, party-identification, ideology and political efficacy which threatens liberal democratic modes of representation. The way in which these trends are approached connects them to changes in media structures. Arguing that representation is overwhelmingly achieved through processes of mediation (Coleman, 2011), the media is placed at the center of these paradigms.

Populism is presented as a symptom of the tension inherent in our political and media systems (Berman, 2019). I explore the ideas of early populist theorists such as Edward Shils (1956), Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (1969), Ernesto Laclau (1977) and Margaret Canovan (1981), and outline some of the key debates that are inherent in contemporary populist literature. These debates fractured populist theory onto different schools. I explore some of these schools, such as Cas Mudde's (2004) approach to populism as a thin-centered ideology and Kirk Hawkins' (2009) depiction of populism as a form of discourse. Ultimately, I look for a communicative angle on populism which I find mainly by drawing on Benjamin Moffitt (2016) and Lone Sorensen (2021) who both recognize the need to focus on the performative dynamics of populism.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological choices for the performance of this study. My methods are qualitative, and the theoretical framework adopted is a constructivist approach to grounded theory. A comparative and inductive effort allows me to test some of the assumptions that have already been laid out in the literature on populist communication. By focusing on populists in power I adjust existing frameworks to approach the performances of populist actors in government from a communicative angle.

The methodology deployed entails that this study was conducted without an *a priori* hypothesis. My objective here is to tackle the objects of study at hand by approaching the research question: “How can a communicative approach to populism be applied to study actors in power?” Due to the qualitative nature of this research the question is answered by providing a theoretical framework to study populists in power. Ultimately my aim will be achieved by building a theoretical blueprint “that fits the real world, works in predictions and explanations, is relevant to the people concerned, and ... is readily modifiable” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 – cited in Holton and Walsh, 2017, p.3).

The findings and analyses (chapter 4) capture populism’s communicative dynamics in the context of Trump’s disruption of the 2020 elections in the US and Bolsonaro’s current attempt to contest the legitimacy of next year’s (2022) elections in Brazil. Two performances are analyzed: Trump’s speech in Washington on the 6 January 2021 (appendix 2) and Bolsonaro’s live-stream on Facebook (and other social media platforms) on 1 July 2021 (appendix 1). I adopt a constructivist approach to mediation and proceed to capture how the performances were curated in the media focusing on online newspapers and social media. In the conclusion, I summarize my findings and suggest that we might be witnessing a new paradigm in right-wing populism in which players and especially those in power disrupt the most basic democratic procedure: elections. In a final note, I ask others to ponder on the roots and the possible effects of Bolsonaro’s strategy to disrupt the Brazilian presidential elections next year.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Political communication is an extremely fluid discipline (Blumler, 2016). Populist communicative functions are shaped by but also shape their environment by taking advantage of this fluidity (Sorensen, 2021). There are three (often intersecting) ways of approaching fluidity in this field (Schulz, 2014). The first uses analyses of media content, the second explores concepts, and the third uses a process of stage models. This literature review is a mixed approach between the stage model and the conceptual approach. It is divided in two parts:

The first part lays out a contextualist approach to political communication guided by the timeline offered in Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) *The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features*. It historicizes (broadly) some of the main developments in the field since the post-war period, leading to the contemporary state of political communications in liberal democracies. The second part explores representation and introduces the concept of Populism, historicizing its use and its mutations in contemporary usages.

2.2. Three Ages of Political Communications

Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) spoke of three ages of political communication. The first age flourished in the post-war decades when patterns of political participation in most democracies were generally characterized by high levels of party identification (Clarke and McCutcheon, 2009) and low voter volatility that reflected deep cleavages of social structure (Korpi 1983, p.35). Campaigns were not perceived as detrimental to the results of elections (Berelson *et al*, 1954). The relation

between politicians and journalists was a positive one and the media ran “more with than against the partisan grain” (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999, p.212). This was dubbed the system of the boss and machine-politics, referring to the power enjoyed by party elites (Newman, 1994).

The rise of television shook the pillars of the public information industry and gave rise to a second age of political communication (Davis, 2019). Early television channels were centralized and made considerable efforts to expound journalistic values such as pluralism and impartiality (McQuail, 2016, p.3). They exposed viewers to more balanced diets of political information that took “politically interested audiences away from their partisan presses” (Davis, 2019, p.11). This legitimized an attitude of political participation based on a “conditional and wary commitment” (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999, p.212).

To respond to the volatile nature of public opinion that began to shake voting patterns, parties adapted competitive approaches. Around that time, Otto Kirchheimer’s (1966: 190) idea of “catch all parties” came to light. It captured a paradigm in which parties were seen to move away from embracing ideologically driven class values in order to accommodate more views across the spectrum. Daniel Bell (1960) had also touched on these processes when he declared the “end of ideology” (Bell 1988: 415). Television equipped political players with tools to develop campaigns “that revolved around the crafting of political images” in ways that machine politics did not (Newman, 1994:2). Parties began scheduling events in coordination with scheduled news programs and changing their language to suit the “informational aesthetic” of television (Corner, 1999).

In the third age of political communication, party-membership and the traditional social cleavages of the post-war era were much less pronounced in most liberal democracies (Korpi 1983; Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999). The once centralized channels of television that had pluralized news broadcasting were forced to compete with a new range of privately-owned channels, diversified into

complex categories molded to reach increasingly specific demographic segments, thus creating flows of “centrifugal diversification” with hundreds of channels, some with 24-hour cycles of news and entertainment of all forms and formats (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999). Some of the new channels were less inspired by the virtues of ethically balanced, impartial and objective journalism. The media at the turn of the century was regarded as overly concerned with contentious incidents with “vast sectors of the mass media becoming reason-free zones, devoid of explicit political content, though frequently pursuing their own populist political agendas” (Coleman, 2002, p.2).

Political parties and politicians had to keep re-adapting to the changing media environment. In this process politicians’ communication strategies often sought to break down the population into increasingly specific demographic segments which they could reach very precisely through targeted marketing techniques (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999). This personalized the nature of many political messages, it also meant that most politicians began to consistently target certain segments according to their presumed interests. Handling the conflicting interests and views of the diverse segments they sought to reach often entailed a style of governance focused on the median voter (Newman, 1994; Downs, 1957). This furthered the decline of the grand old ideologies and gave rise to a way of politics that seeks to control public opinion by “responding” to it, in other words propaganda was to an extent replaced with “marketing” (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2011). Politicians were ever more frequently caught in situations in which they could not consistently live up to the interests of such a wide diversity of people and interests and citizens became increasingly disaffected with mainstream modes of political representation (Katz & Mair, 1995). At the turn of the century several authors had scrutinized the performative functions of television, its informative aesthetics and their consequences for public knowledge (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999; Coleman, 1998, 2002; Corner, 1999). But in the following years the rise of the internet accelerated some of these trends and replaced others. Coleman explains: “What Blumler and Kavanagh described in 1999 as an emergent ‘third age of political communication’ (...) evolved into a radical

reconfiguration of traditional techniques, technologies and aesthetics of representation.” (Coleman, 2011, p.40). What he refers to here is that the rise of the digital sphere forced scholars to re-think the entire way in which political communication was approached through notions of gate-keeping media logic and traditional journalistic values of objectivity and impartiality (Mcquail, 2016). As Blumler recognizes that “with the onset of abundance digital communication and the Internet, scholars have sought to apply, adapt, and revise some of the inherited theories to the new conditions and to freshly mint new ones” (Blumler, 2015, p.427).

2.3. The 4th age of political communication

We are now living in what many have coined the 4th age of political communication (Davis, 2019; Coleman, 2011; Blumler, 2016). The “once more or less bounded quantities” of political communication (Blumler and Coleman, 2015, p.111) characterized by “relative uniformity, coherence and simplicity” are replaced by new flows “laced with complexity, multiplicity, variety and cross-currents” (Blumler, 2016, p.28). Horizontal forms of communication gave a platform for many voices to be projected but they transfigured the role of traditional media institutions.

Traditional mediums and journalists were forced to compete with user generated content that flooded the market, taking advertising revenue alongside it (Davis, 2019). Citizen journalists, you-tubers, bloggers, and regular users equipped with smartphones and laptops emerged as competitors to traditional institutions and corporations. They were powered by accessible technology that affords communication “from many to many” (Mounk, 2018; Benkler, 2006; Jenkins, 2008). This allowed new forms of mediated communication to operate outside of the area of gate-keeping jurisdiction (Gurevitch *et al*, 2009).

In liberal democracies, the recent rise of disinformation forced scholars to ponder how much of a toll public knowledge actually paid for these changes as advertising revenues gravitated from journalists to “specialist advertising platforms, news aggregators and clickbait websites” (Davis 2019, p.147). It has been asserted that “the tilt toward convenience over substance has put at risk peer review and scientific processes upon which research, invention and innovation have been based since the Enlightenment” (Jeff and Quinn, 2010, p.2). The new environment is changing the ways journalists and journalism operate. Even behind closed doors a phone can leak information sparking a web of reactions that puts pressure on the legacy media to report on events precipitously and often with little substance (Bennett and Livingston, 2018).

Some of this pressure is absorbed by politicians. Representatives are exposed to unprecedented levels of scrutiny that blur the distinction between their performances as representatives but also as private citizens (Papacharissi, 2010). From another perspective, they too have access to the new media which allows them to send unfiltered messages to the electorate (Coleman, 2011). Politicians, once bounded by a “media logic” can now “perform to media as gatekeeper-audiences” or “within” it “when they use and adapt to media’s affordances” (Sorensen, 2021, p.259). For this, some have invested in the concept of hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2013). Hybridity in political communication emerges out of a dialectical relation between a more traditional media logic and new modes of managing communications, building upon interactions between old and new media and their associated technologies, genres, norms, behaviors, and organizations (Chadwick, 2011; Sorensen, 2021). Through the concept of hybridity scholars have captured the complexities of mediated performances, tracing their steps within the “media ecology” (Sorensen, 2021) or the “political information cycle” (Chadwick, 2013).

2.4. Democracy and Representation

Democracy was not a given for some of the US founding fathers. James Madison distinguished in the federalist papers between an Athenian model of democracy and a republican model. The former, he argued was subject to the “whims of the masses” the latter was “guided by elected representatives who were held accountable by an effective separation of powers” (Moller and Skaaning, 2012, p.18). Thomas Payne (1791) recommended an intermixing between representation and democracy pointing to a process in which “representation is ingrafted upon democracy” (Payne, 1791, p.137 – cited in Moller and Skaaning, 2012). Although these are distinct notions, each carrying its own conceptual baggage (Pitkin, 2004), even a minimalist conception of democracy (post-enlightenment) like that of Schumpeter (1942) emphasizes the centrality of representation decided through regular and competitive elections. Other conceptions of democracy are more selective. Electoral conceptions of democracy demand for example that elections are free and fair. In Dahl’s idea of a poligarchic democracy there must also be political and civil rights and freedoms. Liberal democratic definitions add the importance of the rule of law (Moller and Skaaning, 2012).

Representation has broadly been described as a process of “making present (...) something which is nevertheless not literally present” (Pitkin 1967, p.143). Through this definition we notice one of the many paradoxes inherent in liberal modes of representation. Representatives can never consistently represent the interests of all the people as to render them present – literally – in a given scenario (Mouffe, 2009). Hanna Pitkin, in her seminal work on representation, spoke about a sense of genuine representation in which representatives and represented respect each other’s autonomy and acknowledge the gap between them, warning that claims to eliminate such a gap were the bread and butter of authoritarian and totalitarian forms of representation (Pitkin, 1967). Stephen Coleman claims that representatives’ can “never hope to embody the represented” consistently and therefore processes of representation are never a true projection of the voice of each citizen (Coleman, 2011,

p.39) Laclau (1996) had claimed that it is of the essence of the process of representation that “the representative contributes to the identity of what is represented” (1996, p.87 – cited in Coleman, 2011, p.39), and in many ways this contribution is the result of processes of mediation - “representation is inherently an act of mediation” (Coleman, 2011, p.45). It is mostly through mediation that representatives can be “seen” to represent as they claim to speak for the people; and it is also through mediation that constituents can judge their claims and possibly feel represented (Coleman, 2011, p.45). Notions of visibility illustrate this dynamic (Coleman, 2011). Coleman claims that more than ever politicians must be seen representing and they should be perceived by voters as doing so authentically. They must manage their images not only as policymakers but also as private citizens (Papacharissi, 2010). In short, processes of mediation are always changing and with them we witness changes in the way politicians and constituents negotiate notions of representation. But as the scholarship reflects, conceptions of representation in the study of populism remain “under-theorized and hardly linked to empirical analysis” (Sorensen, 2021, p.44). In other words, populism's “reliance on new media technologies, its relationship to shifting modes of political representation and identification (...) need explaining.” (Moffit, 2016, p.3).

2.5. Populism

Shils (1956) argued that populism should be studied as a “widespread phenomenon”, as something that emerges where an “ideology of resentment” is brandished against a “ruling class” (Shills, 1956, p.100 – 101). He laid out two core principles of populism. To the first pertain the notion that the people are sovereign and above their government and that populists paint a crisis of sovereignty. The second establishes the idea of direct alignment between the public and public representatives, rejecting notions of genuine representation (Pitkin, 1967). Shils was also influential in underlining

some of the manifestations of populist politics such as “distrust of politicians and elites, frustration with bureaucracy, anti-intellectualism and demagoguery.” (Moffitt, 2016, p.13).

Ionescu and Gellner’s (1969) early work, coined the “the definite collection on populism” (Taggart, 2000, p.15); explored the nature of populism and how it could be approached, testing various notions and their relation to the concept. The authors never settled, however, on a clear definition and they set a new precedent there (Deiwiks, 2009). Laclau (1977) claimed that few concepts had been “so widely used in contemporary political analysis” although few had “been defined with less precision” (Laclau, 1977, p.143).

Laclau, was among the first to ask the question “Is populism a type of movement or a type of ideology?” (1977, p.143). For this author, trying to make sense of populism as an ideology, a manifestation of a “distinct social class”, did not explain how the same processes of political behavior emerge in the most contradictory environments. He believed that an excessive focus on the ideational particularities of each populist movement diluted the conceptual value of the term. He therefore argued that “the strictly 'populist' element does not lie in the movement as such, nor in its characteristic ideological discourse” as these are shaped by class assumptions; instead, populism can be captured “in a specific non-class contradiction articulated into that discourse” (Laclau, 1977, p.164). These discursive contradictions can thus be identified as a means of understanding how the people, the elites, and the populists are signified and invoked through dichotomous notions of the people and the elite that can adopt unlimited forms in unlimited contexts.

Canovan (1981) also asked the question: How could the same concept be used to approach the self-designated populist agrarian movements of the 19th century (such as the People’s Party in the US and the Russian Narodnichestvo) and the diverse range of political movements (left and right) that were deemed populist at some point throughout the 20th century. One problem for Canovan was that

some authors like Laclau, provided solely “the essential features of populism and the conditions under which it occurs” (Canovan, 1982, p.545). Although Laclau’s approach brought together different cases “under one theoretical roof”, it was limited to comparing examples and somehow sought to force “unity in diversity”, often using a South American matrix of populism that was not suited for other cases (Canovan, 1982, p.545). In contrast, Canovan (1981) offered a typology that essentially consisted of two main categories – agrarian populism and political populism - subdivided into seven subcategories.

In the 1970s and 1980s authors laid the seeds for the contemporary ramification of populist studies. Since the 1990s an authentic “revival” came about, both in the study and practice of populism (Mudde, 2004; Krastev, 2007; Roberts, 2007, p.3). A once palpable set of texts gave rise to dozens of new interpretations and populism was re-defined and re-approached in distinct ways. Sorensen (2021) and (Moffitt, 2016) conveniently break down these ramifications by dividing approaches to populism onto different categories. Building on their accounts, I shall focus on three: Ideological approaches; Discursive approaches; and (what I will call) Communicative approaches.

2.5.1. Ideology

As paved out by (Shils, 1956), the approach to populism as an ideology has become the “dominant position in the literature in the past decade” (Moffitt, 2016, p.17). The most cited definition of populism is perhaps that of Mudde (2004), who referred to it as a “thin centred ideology” that “considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’” (2004, p.543). But others developed further this conception of populism as a thin-centred ideology (Koen and Rummens, 2007; Fieschi, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Kaltwasser, 2012). This approach has provided empirical value for comparative studies (Akkerman

2012; Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2010). This is because of its ability to “transcend regional bias” and because the idea of a thin-centred ideology suggests that populism attaches itself to a host ideology, justifying how a similar phenomenon emerges in diverse political systems and navigates indiscriminately along the left-right spectrum (Sorensen, 2021). It also has its limitations. Indeed, Michael Freeden (1996), who developed the concept of thin ideologies, dislikes the classification of populism under such a title (Freeden, 2017). As the author noted, “anyone active in the field of analyzing ideologies should be wary of the clear-cut definitions” (Freeden, 2017, p.2). He suggests that no ideology should be analyzed in a singular tone and that there are many forms of populism just as there are multiple liberalisms and socialisms. Unlike green and feminists’ movements (Freeden, 1996) – and nationalisms (Freeden, 1998)— that usually attach themselves quite consistently to a host ideology, populisms enjoy a more casual relationship with other ideologies, so casual as that it becomes its own ideology (Freeden, 2017). Schroeder (2020), touched on a similar point, claiming that the case of Trump cannot be understood by its attachment to a right-wing host-ideology because his policies are so contradictory as to conflate typical left-wing stances for example “protectionism for workers and certain industries, plus pulling American forces out of foreign conflicts” (Schroeder, 2020, p. 22). However, these authors still believe that populism should be understood as an ideology; they just reject its classification as “thin-centred” (Freeden, 2017). Approaches to populism either as an ideology or as a thin-centered ideology are dominant throughout the literature and their common denominator is that they place ideas at the core of their analyses.

2.5.2. Discourse

There are also some who think of populism predominantly as an ideology but believe that an exclusive focus on its ideational features can ignore a missing link between different populist movements that is discursive (Canovan, 1984). However, those who consider populism an ideology

tend to believe that players are either populists or they are not (Moffitt, 2016, p.21). Those who study populism as a discourse usually perceive it as “a gradational property of specific instances of political expression” (Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013, p.8). Populism is put on a spectrum and “a political actor can be ‘more or less’ populist at different times depending on how and when they use populist discourse” (Moffitt, 2016, p.21). In this school populism is defined as a discourse that pits the people against an elite (Hawkins, 2009). Hawkins explains that a discourse lacks the “official texts and vocabulary that accompany an ideology”, which explains why there is no populist manifesto or a concise populist view of the state (Hawkins, 2009, p.30, cited in Moffit, 2016). Separating the ideational features of a political force from its discursive practices, Hawkins (2009) argues that whilst someone like Hugo Chavez may use a populist discourse, his ideology is still socialism and not populism in itself (Hawkins, 2009).

Those who subscribe to this approach must then find tools to measure the recurrence of populist discourse in the discursive practices of a given player or party. Both computer based (Armony and Armony, 2005; Pauwels, 2011; Reungoat, 2010) and classical content analyses (Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Koopmans and Muis, 2009) have been used in these efforts, each carrying several limitations (Moffitt, 2016). A key weakness in this discursive approach is that it limits itself to focusing on linguistic aspects of populism, leaving aside other important performative traits of populist communication. As an example, Hawkins and Kaltwasser (2018) noticed that whilst a great deal of populist discourse was deployed during Trump’s first campaign (2018), such use was inconsistent. They suggested that this reflected “the intervention of Trump’s advisors and speech-writers, such as Steve Bannon or Stephen Miller, who are known for their populist views” (2018, p.242) and that in his unscripted speeches at rallies the levels of populism were much lower. Although this might have been the case, the attempt to quantify populism in reference to the recurrence of very specific discursive processes is problematic. Indeed, once the coders were instructed to follow a more qualitative effort, they both “found that speeches in the first part of Trump’s (2016) campaign,

which scored fairly low overall, had a strong “anti-elite message” (2018, p.242). What was lacking was the celebration of “American people and their sovereignty” that I argue might not have been referenced in discourse but could be identified in every MAGA hat that was used in his rally (2018, p.242). Most importantly, because the populist claim to representation is direct, a communicative approach would have been able to identify the image of the populist speaking to a large crowd as the ultimate signifier of the celebration of the American people and their sovereignty.

2.5.3. Communicative approaches to populism

In 2005, Laclau still claimed that “notional clarity - let alone definition” was “conspicuously absent” from the domain of populism (Laclau, 2005, p.1). I am less concerned with Laclau’s conceptualization of populism as a political logic and more with his contribution to the study of populism as something that is done (Sorensen, 2021 Moffitt, 2016). Populism is not just a set of ideas or a style of discourse but a political practice and, as Laclau puts it, “political practices do not express the nature of social agents but, instead, constitute the latter” (2005, p.33). These practices or performances can be discursive (Austin, 1975) but, as Laclau (2005) explained, they are also extra-discursive. Moffitt’s (2016) approach to populism as a political style is inspired by these same assumptions. Authors with a performative focus tend to “make sense of populism’s ability to cut across a number of different political, ideological and organizational contexts by focusing on its performative dimension” (Moffitt, 2016, p.152). The political and electoral success of populist actors has brought scholars to recognize that populism is efficient and responds to a true demand for new kinds of representation (Sorensen, 2021). They understand the role of the smaller performative functions such as body language (Casullo, 2020), dress (Sorensen, 2018), speech, scenarios and recognize their functions.

2.6. Key Assumptions

I adopt Moffitt's notion of the leader as the performer. The latter claims in our "mediatised times" it is the leader that should be our main focus (...) given they are the figures that ultimately do populism" (2016, p.51, 52). As Moffitt explains, this turn "towards focusing on performance resonates with a "constructivist turn in studies of political representation" in which my study is fitted (Moffitt, 2016, p.,38). This performative turn borrows the work of Jeffrey Alexander. Populism is perceived almost as a cultural performance, defined as "the social process by which actors, individually or connected, display for others the meaning of their social situation" (Alexander, 2011, p. 28).

My approach to populism is inspired mainly by that of Sorensen (2021), who broadly presents populism as a set of communicative processes. Sorensen (2018) had previously relied on an approach to populism as a thin-centred ideology which also included analyses on the performative dynamics of populism both discursive and extra-discursive (Alexander, 2011; Austin, 1975; Butler, 1997). In her recent book, *A Communication Approach to Political Populism: Ideology, Performance and Representation*, these ideas are further developed. Sorensen consolidates "populist ideology and performance into a unified process of communication" (Sorensen, 2021, p.272). Focusing on six disruptive performances by two parties, she integrates the ideational dynamics of populisms into her theory but explains that when it comes to populism "we need to pay less attention to the ideas themselves and more to how ideas or narratives are reproduced through social practices to achieve certain political purposes." (Sorensen, 2021, p.78). Performances of populist disruption can broadly be thought of as "the manifestation of populist ideology in disruptive performance" that challenge "the establishment's mode of representation by channeling and reconstituting the voice of the silent majority through a process that harmonises with the new media ecology." (Sorensen, 2021, p.289). She does not reject the notion that in the field of ideologies populism is "thin-centred"; the reason why such a vague set of ideas can resonate so well

with so many people is that what populism lacks in ideational character it makes up for its tendency to absorb political culture, which she defines as “the meaning it constructs (...) consistent with popular knowledge, beliefs, understandings, feelings and myths about politics” (Sorensen, 2021 p.75). Political culture determines the resources (popular feeling) populists can extract from their society and recycle for political purposes. There are two other central elements that constrain/enable populist actors’ ability to absorb and redefine meaning according to Sorensen (2021). The first is host-ideology (Mudde, 2004): populist movements borrow from one or multiple ideologies and whilst their commitment to these host-ideologies is not always defining, a certain degree of cohesion is required (Sorensen, 2021). Sorensen borrows the final element from the cultural sociology - social power - understood here as the power held by an authority to “shape or interfere with the populist communication process” (Sorensen, 2021, p.123). This pertains to the power held by institutions and the perceived state of these institutions as well as the norms and rituals in which they manifest themselves. Equally important is how the elites navigate these institutions, whether there is a low degree of corruption and a high adherence to the rule of law or vice-versa. As Sorensen (2021) puts it: “Cutting across both (...) is the level of democratic responsiveness and mode of political representation” (...) “The construction of social power as illegitimate and a matter of crisis gave the populists their *raison d’être*” (Sorensen, 2021, p.123). Populism is rooted in the claim that social power is unresponsive and illegitimate by painting a picture of a crisis. She claims that “the hybrid media system not only is an environment for populists to perform disruption but also is an integral part of their act” (Sorensen, 2021, p.200). Sorensen (2021) provided the necessary framework to study populism as a set of communicative processes, noting that “further research is required to test and adjust the functions to disruptive performances by a greater variety of populist parties and actors, especially those in power.” (Sorensen, 2021, p.186).

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Philosophy

The ontological assumptions grounding this study stem from the proposition that populism can and should be analyzed as a set of communicative processes that are mostly mediated. For this I adopt a social constructivist approach to mediation as a “process of communication” (Couldry and Hepp, 2013, p.197) that “has to be grasped as a process of mediating meaning construction” (Hepp and Krotz, 2014, p. 3). I aim to capture various dynamics “within media flows”, flows of “production”, “circulation”, “reception” and “re-circulation” (Couldry 2008, p.8). I use qualitative data retrieved through systematic observation of academic and media sources to support an inductive analysis of the disruptive performances of Trump and Bolsonaro (Jensen, 2012).

3.2. Data and sampling

For *projected live performances*, I picked and sampled two disruptive performances by former US President Trump and Brazilian President Bolsonaro. These are clips from Trump’s Save America speech in Washington DC (appendix 2) and an official live stream on Facebook by Bolsonaro (appendix 1). I provide a transcript for the video sources in which I capture the speech and other basic visual elements involved (Appendices 1 and 2). In the case of Bolsonaro most elements of this research were translated from Portuguese.

As Klaus Bruhn Jensen (2012) explains, when collecting samples for a qualitative study in political communication, “while a first step identifies a relevant context of communication, the next step will single out certain of its media, users, or communicative interactions for detailed study” (Jensen,

2012, p.268). For *mediated performances* I look at how the message communicated in the main samples was received by the legacy press. Here my samples are limited to a one-week time frame of online news articles. They are also restricted to two (online) newspapers in each country: *O Globo* and *Folha de Sao Paulo* in Brazil; and *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* in the US. At a final stage I consider the performances of Trump and Bolsonaro and the performance of the new media, placing them on the wider context of the hybrid media. Here I provide a small qualitative analysis of a series of Trump's tweets that used the words and the hashtag "Stop The Steal" and some of his final Tweets before he was suspended indefinitely from mainstream social media platforms. This exercise is a close reading of a limited set of tweets; it is not meant to represent even the most important tweets or what the tweeter was talking about around this hashtag. For Bolsonaro, I reflect briefly on his response to the press reporting of some of the themes approached in the main sample.

3.3. Design and Methods

Researchers are often perceived as "interpretive subjects" and whilst this is true in any scientific endeavor, what separates qualitative research from the rest is the "pervasive nature of interpretation throughout the research process" (Jensen, 2012, p.266). This relates to the inherently subjective nature of many topics in social sciences and also to how researchers are often able to tilt their findings by choosing their data strategically. That said, my design is comparative, which "entails studying two contrasting cases using more or less identical methods" (Bryman, 2016, p.64 – 65). When the comparative design is applied to a qualitative research strategy, it "takes the form of a multiple-case study (Bryman, 2016, p.66 – 67). This approach places the researcher in a stronger position to establish whether a theory holds when tested under different contexts; and in this sense it improves theory building. It has also been deemed to offer "an even greater opportunity, because

the researcher will be in a position to examine the operation of generative causal mechanisms in contrasting or similar contexts” (Bryman, 2016, p.67 – 68).

3.3.1. Grounded Theory

The methodology deployed in this dissertation is a constructivist approach to grounded theory which assumes that theory “can and should be grounded in the field of study, that is, generated in a constant interplay with the social actors and interactions in question” (Jensen 2012, p.278).

Grounded Theory is a theoretical framework for qualitative research. It is an inductive methodology “that calls for a continual interplay between data collection and analysis to produce a theory during the research process” (Bowen, 2006, p.13) The researcher’s starting point is a general theme without any *a priori* hypotheses.

This starting point, once defined, is placed tightly in a research area. One of the underlying bases of a grounded theory is that “theory must fit the substantive area to which it will be applied” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.238). Once this is done, the researcher dives into an open process of research, assuming an interpretive role which mediates the relations between the data collected and the theoretical assumptions adopted. Through a set of distinct processes, the researcher’s creativity and the processes of collecting and interpreting data are reconciled. The structure of the samples collected is not predetermined; rather it is guided in accordance with the theoretical relevance that different units of data add to the study. Systematic comparisons of data lead to the formation of conceptual categories. Once this process of systematic comparison is exhausted and can no longer provide useful information for the establishment of new categories (and properties) or the bettering of already selected ones, the researcher reaches a point of theoretical saturation and the process of collection of data is completed (Glaser and Stauss, 1967). Hypotheses flow out of a comparative analysis of data samples which allow the researcher to determine significant similarities and

differences. The categories are validated by their repetition and their individual variability within the samples analyzed. In a second phase, the researcher proceeds to utilize the axial coding paradigm (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019). Through this process the relation between the different categories is identified and a central category is highlighted. In turn, selective coding utilizes the axial paradigm to place the main category in a hierarchical structure that highlights its relationship with other categories and properties. As Strauss and Corbyn (1990) explain, the researcher should examine the data and the codes “based on a coding paradigm that focuses on and relates causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences.” (Vollstedt and Rezat 2019, p.87). The development of a grounded theory approach should be aided by the use of memorandums (Strauss and Corbyn, 1990). These allow the researcher to reflect on their categories, to conceptualize new categories and new patterns of relation between categories. Memos are written by the researcher for his own use to keep a hold of “process, thoughts, feelings, and directions of the research and researcher—in fact, the entire gestalt of the research process” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 218). Once the researcher has drawn relations between his discovered categories and properties, he is in position to delimit his model and conclude his theoretical proposal.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter draws similarities between the ways in which Trump and Bolsonaro communicate but also between what they are communicating. I argue that throughout the 2020 election campaign in the US and the 2022 election campaign in Brazil, Trump and Bolsonaro declared a crisis of sovereignty threatening the most basic democratic process - elections. I argue that the performers' disruption of the electoral process and the crisis of sovereignty that is enacted for this purpose is one that is rooted in their anti-elitist claims. I look at how different elites are framed in both performances to illustrate this anti-elitist essence. The second half of the chapter explains how the logic articulated in these performances can be broken down in three organizing features of populist ideology: moral essentialism; mimicry and exceptionalism. In the case of mimicry, I conduct an original assessment of a song played in Bolsonaro's live stream. In a final section I look at how the press performed in its reporting of Trump's rally and Bolsonaro's live stream focusing on online newspapers and exploring some of the dynamics of the hybrid media system.

4.2. Stolen elections – The ultimate crisis?

Trump's speech was delivered just a couple blocks from the White House in Washington DC. For thousands in attendance, his speech was mediated only by a sound system, but millions around the world watched it live on television and on social media. Bolsonaro's performance had a very different stage and was admittedly of an almost insignificant importance compared to the performance analyzed for Trump. Bolsonaro speaks in a room with a few of his own media staff and

a few politicians of whom only one, the president of the *Caixa Econômica Federal*, Pedro Guimarães (appointed) is portrayed in the footage. His performance was live streamed on Facebook and re-transmitted by a handful of television and social media channels. The interest of studying these performances at a comparative level stems from the fact that Bolsonaro, to disrupt the Brazilian presidential elections next year, is using the same communicative strategies that Trump used. In the literature review I spoke about the importance of elections for the legitimacy of liberal democratic representation. These findings capture the disruption of democratic elections through populist modes of communication:

In this speech, Trump argues that the 2020 US presidential elections were unfair: “our election was so corrupt that in the history of this country we've never seen anything like it” (Trump, 2021). The purpose of his performance in Washington DC is to challenge the results of the election, in his own words to: “stop the steal” (Trump, 2021). Trump tells the crowd “you don't concede when there is theft involved” (Trump, 2021). Similarly, Bolsonaro asserts: “we cannot face these elections next year with the ballots that we have” (Bolsonaro, 2021a). He warns that he won't admit a fraudulent electoral system, using a threatening tone to explain that if the system is not reformed as he suggests there will be “problems in the elections next year.” (Bolsonaro, 2021a).

Trump's skepticism regarding the electoral process and his unwillingness to accept defeat was evident on multiple occasions during his first presidential race. As Tymothy Luke explains, Trump, “always ‘the Performer’ playing to his devoted base of supporters rather than ‘the Policy Manager’ responding effectively to threats, rebooted his 2016 campaign scripts from the victory over Hilary” (2021, p.1) Behind in the polls, Trump once again sowed doubt regarding the integrity of the process, particularly but not solely by criticizing the use of mail-in ballots which he warned would result in fraud. Knowing that Democrats would encourage voters to vote by mail, Trump's central strategy was to instigate doubt on the integrity of this process.

Bolsonaro also used similar tactics before he became president. In the 2018 elections he questioned the legitimacy of the Brazilian digital voting system. When he won the elections, these claims were largely dropped. However, with the presidential elections approaching and facing low odds of re-election he is once again arguing that the Brazilian electronic voting system is liable to corruption (Bolsonaro, 2021a). What is interesting to find is that these problems in the electoral process (i.e the use of mail-in ballots or the electronic voting system in Brazil) are not the central focus of the performers' critique. Their target is the people who they claim are controlling the ballots – the elites.

4.3. Anti-elitism

4.3.1. The media as the elite

In Trump's rally, his first emphasis is the media: "We have hundreds of thousands of people here and I just want them to be recognized by the fake news media." (Trump, 2021). This is a recurrent trait throughout the speech. Trump claims that the media "is not free", that it is "corrupt" and the "enemy of the people", ultimately claiming: "we don't want to see our election (...) stolen by the fake news media" (Trump, 2021). Trump also focuses on the new media "Big tech is now coming into their own. We beat them four years ago. (...). We took them by surprise and this year they rigged an election." (Trump, 2021). According to him, the media is equally guilty of defrauding the people. Bolsonaro adopts the same logic: "the great Brazilian Press is a disgrace", he describes the press as "petty" and as "crap that I don't read" (Bolsonaro, 2021a). An interesting statement by an actor who publicly examines printed online news articles on weekly basis. Bolsonaro often criticises the media in relation to specific news articles that he presents to his viewers in his live streams. He picks up news reports and "unveils" the lies they contain. Although this is not achieved through a

rational form of analysis, he is able to fire back at the press and create his own narrative through an “entrepreneurial” form of managing visibility (Sorensen, 2021).

4.3.2. The opposition elites

“Using the pretext of the China virus and the scam of mail-in ballots, Democrats attempted the most brazen and outrageous election theft” (Trump, 2021). Trump might say that the mail-in ballots, or the lack of supervision at the polls were catalysts to the corruption of the election, but ultimately it was the democrats who stole the election. Trump claims that whilst this was “the most brazen and outrageous election theft” in US history, election fraud is something that “for years, Democrats have gotten away with” (Trump, 2021). In his narrative, America has been “under siege for a long time”, he suggests for example that Mitt Romney might have won the presidential election in 2012. The main culprits are the democrats embodied in the image of Joe Biden. Throughout his political career, Trump demonized all his adversaries but his attacks at democratic leaders were particularly ferocious. His attitude towards the opposition inspired the creation and circulation of numerous conspiracy theories. Concerning Joe Biden, in the build up to the 2020 elections several of these theories were circulated. Some regarded Biden’s health: one his son’s involvement in corruption schemes in Ukraine (Cervi *et al*, 2021, p.6) – which Trump speaks about in his speech; others even claimed Biden’s involvement in cults of pedophilia (Luke, 2021, p.1). When Trump asks, “does anybody believe that Joe had 80 million votes?” (Trump, 2021) he is alluding to the preconceptions that his supporters have of Joe Biden and the elites. He is not just questioning the integrity of the electoral process; he is also implying that under no circumstance could Biden, a corrupt and senile career politician, get 80 million votes from the “people” (Trump, 2021).

Bolsonaro has an equally aggressive attitude towards the opposition. He refers to Lula da Silva as the “nine fingered guy” (Bolsonaro, 2021a) and he points nine fingers at the camera to mock Lula who lost his finger working at a factory in his youth (Greenwald, 2021). Bolsonaro makes the case for why Lula and the Workers Party (PT) were bad for Brazil. He claims that under PT’s rule Brazil invested in communist countries instead of investing in Brazil: “So the people who like that nine fingered guy, look at what he did in other countries and look at what he left on our country” (Bolsonaro, 2021a). He also points to Lula’s corruption charges: “Because of Petrobras we are paying today more than 20 billion a year for the crimes of the past” (Bolsonaro, 2021a); and to the levels of government spending in the years of PT rule. Bolsonaro also claims that the 2014 Brazilian elections were rigged in favor of PT, an accusation that Aécio Neves, who lost the election that year against Dilma Roussef has denied (Dias, 2021). In Bolsonaro’s narrative, a conspiracy is unfolding with the ultimate goal of electing Lula as the next president of Brazil. As he contends, “they removed the thief from jail. They made him electable. In my understanding to be president yes, but through fraud because through votes he won’t win, he won’t get votes from anyone” (Bolsonaro, 2021a). Both the performers highlight the impossibility of their opponents winning through fair means. Trump claims that “Biden had 80 million computer votes” (Trump, 2021), just as Bolsonaro claims Lula could only win by fraud because no one would ever vote for him (Bolsonaro, 2021a).

4.3.3. The traitor elites

Trump’s speech took place at a time in which many of his fellow republicans had condemned his undemocratic behavior (Bennett, 2021). When criticizing those whom he calls “weak” and “pathetic” republicans, he claims he was the one who gave them a platform: “Many of the Republicans, (...) I helped them get elected. I helped Mitch get elected (...) I could name 24 of them,

let's say, I won't bore you with it" (Trump, 2021). Trump also questions the character of his vice president: "Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a, a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution." (Trump, 2021). He suggested that the 2012 elections were corrupted by the democrats. However, while doing this Trump also criticizes the attitude of Romney and other "weak republicans" who did not "go back and look at the facts" (Trump, 2021). Bolsonaro goes a step further performing his critique of the traitors. Although he claims he does not have time to read books because he is too busy running the country, he uses a book to intellectualize his critique. He reads from the book:

"There are three classes of ingrates (...) those who silence themselves after a favour (...) those who charge you for your favours (...) and those who take revenge (...) in politics you find the three classes and sometimes the three classes in the same person." (Bolsonaro, 2021a).

Bolsonaro also claims he will not "give out names" and whilst he does not have a party, he even claims that the Social Liberal Party (PSL), the party through which he got elected but later cut ties with, "gave me an agenda" and that most elected representatives from the PSL (some of which in attendance) are "aware and conscientious" (Bolsonaro, 2021a). However, he manifests dissent towards a "minority" of "ingrates", that "ruined the party" (Bolsonaro, 2021a). He also states about PSL: "They get 8 million a month in partisan funds, they have television time as big as PT" (Bolsonaro, 2021a). Here he is alluding to the fact that whilst PSL might share an agenda with him they are still a party of the system, governed by the interests of elites.

4.4. Disrupters-in-chief

In liberal democracies, elections are what ultimately legitimize the power of the key political institutions (Moller and Skaaning, 2012). Degrading the legitimacy of this process entails questioning the legitimacy of all democratically accountable institutions. In these performances, the institutional power held by representatives and institutional leaders is delegitimized and democratic accountability is painted as non-existent. The fact that, at the point of analysis, both performers represent the top of many institutions is a central point here. When in opposition the performers threatened to reject a possible defeat, their ability to disrupt the elections was constrained. As incumbent presidents' their power to manipulate institutional settings is much higher. Trump nominated three supreme court justices and he was frustrated to find that they did not aid his quest against the electoral system: "I'm not happy with the Supreme Court. They love to rule against me. I picked three people. I fought like hell for them." (Trump, 2021). He claims in a distorted way that the Supreme Court of the US is driven by a media logic:

"I read a story in one of the newspapers recently how I control the three Supreme Court justices. I control them. They're puppets (...) "And now the only way they can get out of that because they hate that it's not good in the social circuit. And the only way they get out is to rule against Trump." (Trump, 2021),

Most importantly he told his supporters:

"We're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them" (Trump, 2021).

What happened after the speech, when Trump's supporters stormed the capitol, raised obvious questions concerning the level of responsibility that Trump bears for his actions. In presidential systems like the US and Brazil presidents are the head of many important institutions, including being commanders-in-chief. Former acting secretary of defense Christopher Miller reported to a panel of House representatives that Trump had requested him to "do whatever is necessary to protect demonstrators" (Wolfe, 2021). Reuters reports that the president wanted "troops to protect his supporters" at the rally before the storming of the capitol building. In his speech he evoked institutions like "the military" "the secret service" and the "police law enforcement", claiming "I'd love it if they could be allowed to come up here with us." (Trump, 2021). The nature of these statements is exceptionally relevant as they are spoken by a president in front of thousands of loyal and angry supporters. Trump did not only perform his speech but was also ultimately responsible for the violence that followed (Austin, 1975). The threat posed by Trump to the legitimacy of the American democratic process is a serious precedent in one of the world's oldest electoral systems. Meanwhile, Bolsonaro shows equal disregard towards Brazilian institutions. He claims that: "there are three in the Supreme who do not want the auditable vote and they are looking for parliamentary leaderships so (...) that they orient the people they lead to vote against the auditable vote." (Bolsonaro, 2021a). In his argument, in retaliation for his demand to substitute the digital voting system, judges are going after his allies and his family. "Could it be that only in the Supreme (court) there are some who don't have any limits?" (Bolsonaro, 2021a). He accuses politicians, judges, and other high figures of the Brazilian state of opposing a more transparent form of conducting elections. Ultimately, Bolsonaro articulates that all these groups: the media; opposition parties (PT); the courts and judges are all conspiring to fabricate the results of the elections next year.

4.5 Three organizing features of populist ideology

4.5.1. Moral Essentialism

Both the performers articulate the relationship between the people and the elite as always essentially corrupt and this creates anti-elitism: it pits people against the elite. Populists often seek to define the people in reference to the elites. As Sorensen explains, “the two sides of the binary are arranged so as to give centrality to visible social groups on the ‘bad’ side” (2021, p.125). By attacking the elites and the interests they defend, which are essentially opposed to the interests of the people, populists build the image of the people. The people are, broadly, those who feel cheated by the corrupt elites. Most of the analysis conducted so far has focused on exposing this essentialist dynamic of populist communication.

4.5.2. Mimesis

Populists must then distance themselves from the “others” in order place themselves on the people’s side of the “people–elite binary” (Sorensen, 2021, p.125). Here we witness the convergence of the identities of the populist and the people “in the ideological process of constructing social identities” (Sorensen, 2021, p.125). Mimesis is one of the processes that populists use to overcome the corrupted essentialism of the relationship between elites and the people. It is perceptible for example in the adoption of informal language and bad manners that mimic the behavior of the masse. As republican strategist Russ Scieffer notes for example of Trump’s public obsession with fast food “there is nothing more American and more of-the-people than fast-food” (Parker, 2016). Through symbolic demonstrations of authenticity extracted from the people through bottom-up

processes, the populist claims to possess an “innate understanding” of the common people “through lived experience” (Sorensen, 2021, p.125). Processes of mimesis capture the ways in which populists use symbolic actions to show this understanding. It is a key process in the creation of this populist conception of the people. A fascinating example of mimicry was captured in Bolsonaro’s performance.

O Ribeirinho

From the moment Bolsonaro’s live stream started, only four of the people in the room were visible to the cameras. They sat in front of a large meeting desk with a shelf of books covering the background. Three people sat at the desk and a fourth person sat behind them in a chair. My focus here is on Bolsonaro and the person who sits at the back. This man is not introduced by name, but he is referred to as a “singer” (Bolsonaro, 2021a). His dark skin contrasts with the pigmentation of the other people portrayed. The man is also dressed in much more casually than the others: a shirt with black and white diamonds and a cowboy shaped hat with a Brazilian flag. He also carries a guitar with a Brazilian flag attached. When this person is introduced, Bolsonaro makes it clear that he does not know him. He claims he just met him: “I don't even know who this guy is” (Bolsonaro, 2021a). I analysed one of the songs he performs as an opener to the live stream discussion:

Table. 1 Song In Bolsonaro’s live-stream.

Verses	Lyrics
1	<i>Brazil above everything</i>
2	<i>God above all of us</i>
3	<i>Ribeirinhos are no longer forgotten</i>
4	<i>Truck drivers can now be heard</i>
5	<i>Farmers can now produce more</i>
6	<i>Thanks to our president</i>
7	<i>And his ministers</i>
8	<i>Who talk and do</i>
9	<i>Who talk and do</i>
10	<i>And Promises</i>
11	<i>And delivers</i>
12	<i>Our flag</i>
13	<i>Will never be red</i>
14	<i>Our flag is green, yellow, white and blue</i>
15	<i>It has the green of the woods</i>
16	<i>The blue of the sky</i>
17	<i>The yellow of gold</i>
18	<i>Our largest treasure</i>
19	<i>The white of peace, of peace of peace</i>

The first two verses are a direct quotation of Bolsonaro’s famous campaign slogan. In the third verse, the singer establishes his identity as a *Ribeirinho*. *Ribeirinhos* are a “traditional population” in Brazil that typically lives by the Amazon river (Ramalho *et al*, 2021). The song claims that *Ribereirinhos* are no longer forgotten, an interesting point given that this region was one of the most affected areas in the world in terms of Covid-19 deaths, with experts pointing to problems with preventive legislative efforts (Ramalho *et al*, 2021; Naveca *et al*, 2021). These problems are captured in Bolsonaro’s live-stream when he claims that he never agreed to a single “useless lockdown” and accuses local governments of being responsible for the high levels of government spending under his presidency (Bolsonaro, 2021a).

Verses 4 and 5 claim Bolsonaro responds to the voices of workers and that he allows farmers to produce more. Whilst at this point these advances have only implicitly been connected to Bolsonaro

through the use of his campaign slogan, the coming verses make this explicit and attribute to the government (Bolsonaro and his ministers) the merit of remembering *Riberinhos*, and aiding truck drivers and farmers.

Verses 8 and 9 can be related to the notion that politicians are inauthentic, actors who are just performing politics in a derogative sense. In contrast, populists are authentic. Unlike the elites and their dishonest and staged behaviour Bolsonaro speaks and does, in other words, as the next lines suggest, he promises and delivers.

Verses 12 and 13 suggest that what is being promised and delivered is the Brazilian flag. They also claim that this flag will never be red, the colour red represents socialism and more specifically - PT. What is entailed here is that Bolsonaro remembers minorities, helps workers, and delivers the Brazilian flag. The Brazilian flag is described as one that “will never be red”, suggesting a dichotomy between Bolsonaro’s Brazil and Brazil under former PT leaders. In the final verses the colours of the Brazilian flag are described in relation to features of nature, from a strategical perspective this can be understood as a projection of nationalist sentiments that are usually vivid in right-wing populisms and are certainly vibrant in Bolsonaro’s populism.

Most important for this study is that Bolsonaro introduces the singer as someone he just met. In this vein, he frames the singer’s performance as completely organic and authentic: “this fellow was out there (...) he was there with his guitar, the sound was good, I invited him in and he will play two more songs before our live is over today.” (Bolsonaro, 2021); It is hard to believe that Bolsonaro had just met the gentlemen. His humble look, the way he speaks and the way he is dressed places him as part of a “disadvantaged plebe” (Sorensen, 2021, p.46). Bolsonaro is portraying himself as a common person who met an honest man outside and invited him in. The content of the song illustrates that the “morally decent” (Sorensen, 2021, p.46) majority is supportive of Bolsonaro and

even sings for him. Overall Bolsonaro is extracting from the singer what Sorensen (2021) would call a sense of a moral authenticity that derives from the populists' innate understanding of the people through processes of mimicking.

4.5.3. Exceptionalism

Through the means of essentialism and mimesis “populists stand in opposition to the elite” (Sorensen, 2021, p. 126). They often present themselves as outsiders and therefore not complicit with the elite's undemocratic forms of representation. The performers' distance themselves from the mainstream media and mainstream politics (even in their side of the political spectrum) in order to project their exceptional position in politics and society. They are exceptional in the sense that they stand in direct opposition to the elites' staged and corrupt behaviour. In this exceptional skin they also detaches themselves from the people and partly abandons principles of mimesis. This is because they claim to “occupy a position of epistemological privilege”, which allows them to “see through the elite's veil of deception and expose the truth to the ignorant masses” (Sorensen, 2021, p. 126). This position allows the populist grants to claim a role of “truth-teller and saviour” who will rescue the people's sovereignty from the dirty hands of the elites (Sorensen, 2021, p. 126).

4.6. The press

4.6.1. US

The Washington Post / The Wall Street Journal

In the American press, the immediate response to Trump's speech addressed the content of some of his statements. *The Washington Post* reported after Trump's speech: "As Congress was set to certify Joe Biden's victory, President Trump gave a speech filled with falsehoods" (Usero and Kelly, 2021). The article provides a video where some of Trump's claims are fact-checked. The official message in *The Post* that week was that Trump lied, he "made a fiery last stand and incited his supporters to storm and sack the U.S. Capitol as part of an attempted coup". (Rucker, 2021). *The Wall Street Journal's* (WSJ) editorial board painted the events as a "disgrace" (Editors, 2021). Claiming that a mob "Fueled by lies about a stolen election (...) overran police and stormed America's seat of government" (Editors, 2021). The press was particularly interested in the condemnation of the president's actions on behalf of his opponents, like Biden, who was reported by the WSJ to have referred to the attack on the capitol as "an insurrection" (Thomas and Parti, 2021), but also his former allies. One headline reads: "Pence and McConnell defy Trump — after years of subservience" (Parker, 2021). This article highlights the U-turn recorded by many republicans in the last weeks of Trump's presidency. Quoting Mitch McConnell, *The Post* reported "Voters, the courts and the states have all spoken — they've all spoken (...) "If we overrule them, it would damage our republic forever." (Parker, 2021). Both newspapers also report the actions taken by social media corporations against Trump in the days that followed his speech (Needleman, 2021; Romm and Dwoskin, 2021). Furthermore, whilst the opinion of journalists was split between those who believed the events symbolized an attempt at a coup d'état. like some who wrote "We just saw an attempted coup d'état. Blame Trump." (Robinson, 2021), and others who claimed that "The Mob on

the Hill Was Far From a Coup” (Luttwak, 2021). Apart from these divisions in opinions articles, the official narrative of the Post and the *WSJ* was that Trump lied and that he incited his supporters to commit acts of violence, damaging the integrity of US democracy.

4.6.2. Brazil

O Globo / A Folha de S.Paulo

O Globo reported in an early article (the day after Bolsonaro’s live stream) about a court order delivered by the superior electoral court in Brazil. This order gave Bolsonaro and his team a period of 15 days to present evidence of electoral fraud. This piece also mentioned some of the remarks made by Bolsonaro in which the president claimed he did not have to present evidence to “anyone” (Guillino, 2021a). A few days later the same newspaper reported the reaction of the Supreme Federal Court to the statements made by Bolsonaro on his live stream and elsewhere. The president of the Brazilian Supreme Court, Luiz Fux, announced that the supreme court “rejects the positioning of those who extrapolate constructive criticism and inappropriately question the reputation of judges of the court” (Muniz, 2021). This article also mentions the statements made by Bolsonaro about the president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), Luís Roberto Barroso. Bolsonaro had also accused Barroso of not believing in God and of defending ideas that go against the values of the bible. Bolsonaro claimed that Barroso is a “terrible minister” who wants to “destroy our democracy” (Muniz, 2021). The journalist explains that these attacks followed “the position taken by Barroso in relation to the printed electronic ballot” (Muniz, 2021). *O Globo* shared another article that week stating that “behind in the polls, the president has attacked the Brazilian electoral system without presenting evidence of fraud” (Guillino, 2021b). *O Globo* reports that Bolsonaro has been actively threatening that he will not accept the results of the election unless

his proposal to introduce a printed voting system is accepted, quoting the president: “Some side might not accept the result. That side is obviously our side.” (Guillino, 2021b).

A Folha picked up on the content of Bolsonaro’s live instantly. The first report explained that Bolsonaro “alleges without evidence that the electronic ballots can easily be corrupted” (Della Coletta, 2021a). Ricardo Coletta (2021a) breaks down Bolsonaro’s live-stream, highlighting some of the features I explored in the previous section such as his claims that Lula was released from prison to become president through fraud, and his attacks on supreme court leaders (Della Coletta, 2021a). *A Folha* also quotes Bolsonaro and the threat that his side might not accept the results of the election unless these are conducted according to his prescription (Carvalho, 2021). The article adds that Bolsonaro has claimed on several occasions that former elections in Brazil like those in 2014 were rigged in favour of PT, underlining the lack of evidence offered by the president (Carvalho, 2021). Perhaps most importantly the newspaper defends the use of the current electoral processes by listing some of its strengths (Carvalho, 2021; Coletta, 2021b). Coletta (2021b) points to Lula’s favoritism and claims that the president’s “strategy is to question the security of the electronic ballots (...) considered efficient and trustworthy by authorities and specialists in the country” (Coletta, 2021b).

4.6.3. Media performance

If one were to evaluate the performance of the mainstream press here, according to traditional standards for evaluation of political communication, the balance would be positive (McQuail, 2016). For the US case, both *The Post* and the *WSJ* condemned Trump for spreading lies regarding the legitimacy of the electoral process and painted him as the main culprit for the events that followed his speech in Washington. The same holds for the Brazilian case. There is a consistent line between *O Globo* and *A Folha* regardless of their inclinations on the left/right spectrum. Overall,

both newspapers recognize that Bolsonaro's claims are unproven and dangerous. In the broader scope of the hybrid media, the press played little more than a fact-checking role. Indeed, whilst the role of the legacy media might have been important to inform many Americans and Brazilians, for millions of Trump's and Bolsonaro's supporters the effect of the reporting might have just served to amplify their narrative (Tsfati *et al.*, 2020) and to reassure them that the "fake news media" is driven by the interests of the elites.

4.7. Hybrid Media

4.7.1 #stopthesteal

Trump talks in his speech about a term that he claimed, "all of you came up with": "stop the steal" (Trump, 2021). The fact that Trump claims that this is a term his supporters came up with is an interesting example of a populist claiming that he draws inspiration from the people - a process of mimesis. On closer inspection this idea of disrupting the results of the elections was far from an organic bottom-up movement. Evidence suggests Trump's campaign had already used the "stop the steal" phrase in 2016 both in the Republican primaries and in his race against Clinton (Luke, 2021).

Existing quantitative research suggests the online circulation of the words "Stop the steal" and the hashtag #stopthesteal reached their peaks around the day of the election and in the days around his rally in Washington DC (Digital Forensics Lab, 2021). This phrase was used by Trump's supporters and by Trump himself in the build up to the disruption of the Electoral College certification.

Consider these tweets:

Table 2. Trump’s use of the #StopTheSteal.

Date	Trump’s Use Of The #StopTheSteal
1st January 2021 (2:52:03 PM EST)	“The BIG Protest Rally in Washington, D.C., will take place at 11.00 A.M. on January 6th. Locational details to follow. #StopTheSteal!”
2nd January 2021 (5:52:04 PM EST)	“..And after they see the facts, plenty more to come...Our Country will love them for it!” #StopTheSteal
3rd January 2021 (9:20:33 AM EST)	“Georgia election data, just revealed, shows that over 17,000 votes illegally flipped from Trump to Biden.” @OANN [...] #StopTheSteal @HawleyMO @SenTedCruz @Jim_Jordan
5th January 2021 (9:50:49 AM EST)	Pleased to announce that @KLoeffler & @sendavidperdue have just joined our great #StopTheSteal group of Senators. They will fight the ridiculous Electoral College Certification of Biden. How do you certify numbers that have now proven to be wrong and, in many cases, fraudulent!

They illustrate that Trump communicated directly to his supporters his intention to disrupt the Electoral College. Social media platforms like Facebook and Tweeter took measures to stop Trump and others from spreading dangerous lies about the elections. Trump’s publications on social media were tagged as potentially misleading by the platforms themselves (Rodriguez and Graham, 2021) but this did not stop Trump who blamed the “big tech” for “rigging” the election in his speech (Trump, 2021). Regardless of this stance by social media giants, it was through the online sphere that Trump was able to mobilize his supporters. Even as the shocking events that followed his speech unfolded, Trump was using his Twitter account to attack Mike Pence, to further incite his supporters, and to initiate the disruption of yet another democratic procedure: Biden’s presidential inauguration (table 3). The final tweet in table 3 was Trump’s last before he was permanently suspended from social media sites. Trump’s plot to cling to power after losing the elections set a precedent that raises many questions regarding the dynamics of the new hybrid media system. This precedent will cast a shadow over the American political scene for a long time and will also have global implications.

Table 3. Trump’s final tweets.

Date	Trump’s Last Tweets
6 th January 2021 (2:24:22 PM EST)	“Mike Pence didn’t have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution (...)”
6 th January 2021 (6:01:04 PM EST)	“These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long (...)”
8 th January 2021 (9:46:38 AM EST)	The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!
8 th January 2021 (10:44:28 AM EST)	“To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th.”

4.7.2. Bolsonaro’s strategy

Bolsonaro is using social media platforms to spread his “warnings” of electoral malfunctioning. Like Trump’s, these claims of electoral malfunctioning are actually a deep campaign of disinformation. Since the time of main performance, I analyzed for Bolsonaro, parliament in Brazil has decided against his proposal for electoral reform (Barbiéri, 2021). Institutional leaders and the legacy media have taken measures to stop the president from spreading disinformation regarding the elections (Falcao and Vivas, 2021). In response, Bolsonaro has been resorting to social media platforms. In a more recent live stream, he dismissed claims by Moraes and Barroso as lies claiming that their position against a new auditable voting system is “a crime against democracy”. He also attacked the media, particularly by accusing *O Globo* of being allied to the interests of the TSE (Bolsonaro, 2021b).

4.7.3. The populist truth and representation

This back-and-forth sparring practice between the populist and the elites is pillared on a central aspect of communication that I have largely ignored so far due to its overarching significance— the populist truth (Sorensen, 2021). Contrary to a scientific meaning of the truth, the populist truth relates to notions of post-truth (Moffitt, 2016). As some have explained post-truism is to be found when “appeals to emotion are dominant and factual rebuttals or fact checks are ignored on the assumption that they are mere assertions.” (McIntyre, 2018, p.574). The “truth” as articulated by Trump and Bolsonaro in their performances is not usually connected to facts, but it is instead defined by their authenticity and the unreliability of the elites, this is ultimately what makes them exceptional. Populists claim that they can directly represent the interests of the people through their privileged access to the truth. The populist recipe for representations is rooted in this fraudulent conception of the truth which can potentially lead to undemocratic forms of government (Pitkin, 1967). As I have demonstrated, this recipe has become very successful in the last decades in the wake of our hybrid media systems in which actors can send unfiltered messages to their audiences. This ability to speak directly to “the people” offers populists the perfect platform to escape the rational scrutiny of the traditional media and claim that they “are not intermediaries between the people and power in the vein of ordinary representatives; they are the people.” (Sorensen, 2021, p.182).

Chapter 5. Limits and Conclusion

5.1. Limits

There were a few limitations in this project. One is almost inherent in political communication and it concerns its western, often Anglo-Saxon, bias. The four ages of political communication presented in the literature review are a good fit to contextualize the US case study but are not equally apt for Brazil. Another problem I encountered was that a strong focus on communication constrained my scope to explore political ideas and to discuss right-wing populism in that light. Furthermore, I was not able to provide a chapter exploring American and Brazilian political and media systems', and this resulted in less contextual clarity. Filling this gap demands from the reader considerable knowledge of the realities at play. Given the importance of Trump's rally and speech, I assumed that readers would be familiar with the environment and the highly mediated nature of the performance analyzed. More detail was offered regarding the settings in which Bolsonaro performed. Regarding the actual findings and analyses it should be clear that the examples utilized were chosen to highlight specific processes of communication that I used to demonstrate the performers' disruption of electoral procedures. These samples are not representative of the totality of the performances analyzed. Here I acknowledge the subjective aspect of qualitative research.

Future research focusing on the performances of populist forces in power must test some of the prescriptions for studying populism as a set of communicative processes that were not explored (or addressed) here. For example, paying more attention to the political culture, social power and host-ideology of the case-studies will allow researchers to overcome any contextual deficit. Additionally, qualitative research of this kind can usually be improved by increasing the number of samples and the size of the project itself. A future endeavor of this nature could focus on more performances. It could also pay tighter attention to how these performances are mediated in the traditional press but

also in television broadcasting and social media. This would ultimately lead to a richer and more substantial analyses of the modes of communication used by different populist actors.

5.2. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that Sorensen's (2021) framework to study populism as a set of communicative processes is suitably adaptable to study actors in power. Trump and Bolsonaro evoked a crisis threatening the sovereignty of the people. This crisis at first glance, stems from the lack of security inherent in elections. However, their distrust of the electoral process is not *de facto* rooted in the malfunctioning of the process itself; it is planted in the morally essentialist relationship that the populist cultivates between the people and the elites and in the exceptionalist claim that sets him apart from it. Appeals for a "genuine" sense of representation are replaced by the idea that the populist can represent by exposing the lies of the elites whilst embodying the true will of the people.

I explored populism's "reliance on new media technologies" and how these are related "to shifting modes of political representation and identification" (Moffitt, 2016, p.3). In both of the case-studies analyzed renowned newspapers were quick to dismiss Trump's and Bolsonaro's claims of electoral malfunctioning. Nevertheless, the fact-checking role adopted by the media to scrutinize these statements likely had little effect on those who support Trump and Bolsonaro. Populists are able to manage their visibility in ways that were impossible a couple decades ago. They can tell lies that will be dismissed by media and political institutions, but they mediate these ideas directly to their supporters' minds through a fraudulent version of the truth. This idea of the populist truth is a paradigm that justifies the rationale behind the organizing features of populist ideology. It is also a kind of truth that enters our public sphere through the flows of our hybrid media systems.

Navigating the hybrid media system, Trump and Bolsonaro apply specific modes of communication

to articulate ideas that are paradoxical with respect to the pluralist values of journalism and liberal democratic representation.

This study may be the first of its kind, not just because it studies the disruptive performances of populists in power through a communicative approach but also because it draws a clear parallel between the two the cases at hand. The fact that Bolsonaro is attacking the integrity of the elections in Brazil by following a strategy clearly laid out by his American counterpart points to a dynamic in contemporary populism that has perhaps been underplayed: the absorption of strategies from other populist movements. Finally, although more cases would be needed to confirm these tendencies, we might be witnessing a new paradigm in right-wing populism in which actors, particularly those in power, actively disrupt the legitimacy of the most fundamental basis of liberal democratic representation: fair and free elections.

By comparing Trump's disruption of Joe Biden's electoral college victory certification with Bolsonaro's Facebook live-stream I found striking similarities in the way both performers articulate the relationship between representatives, the media and the electorate. They both portray the media and other representatives as liars and thieves who take the sovereignty away from the people through manipulative rituals and procedures that are staged and corrupted. In this study this procedure was the ultimate democratic process. Trump's disruption of the electoral process is perfectly captured in the performance analyzed, which does not take place in institutional settings but was aimed at disrupting a constitutionally based process taking place in the Capitol a few blocks away. For Bolsonaro, the performance analyzed presents a definitive pattern which defines the predictive nature of this research. Whilst American institutions were able to temporarily block the populist threat, questions are now being raised regarding the ability of Brazilian institutions to take control of the democratic procedures once the time comes for Bolsonaro to hand over his presidential sash. For now, I would urge scholars with an interest in populism to pay close attention to Bolsonaro's behavior in the upcoming months. How will the results of his disruptive

performances differ from the case of Trump in a country with high levels of corruption and an adolescent democratic culture?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Bolsonaro's live-stream on social media 01/07/2021 - sample of transcriptions of narrative data.

The main source used for this performance was Bolsonaro's YouTube account and a full version of his live stream can be accessed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VbAAqb7Rns&t=144s> (Bolsonaro, 2021a). The sample used extends from minute 00:00 to minute 22:33. A full transcript of the sample is provided both in English and in Portuguese. Due to the conversational nature of this performance, the transcript also records small interactions and gestures performed by the actors and offers short stage directions. There were a few instances in which the audio was inaudible. A question marked was used on such occasions to symbolise small gaps in the script.



Screenshot from Bolsonaro's live-stream as the singer plays his first song (Bolsonaro, 2021a).

SCENARIO

Bolsonaro was in Brasília, sitting in an office. In front of him was a meeting desk, behind him a large bookshelf that served as background. The desk had a wooden structure and a marble top. On the desk lay some papers, mostly printed online newspapers, but also a few documents, a book and cups filled with water. At the table, the camera captured Bolsonaro accompanied by a sign language interpreter (Elisangela), who sat to his left. The camera also captured the president of the *Caixa Econômica Federal*, Pedro Guimarães. Bolsonaro was dressed in a black suit, he wore a light blue shirt and a black and white tie with diamond shapes. He had reading glasses with him. To his left Elisangela, also wore glasses. She also dressed formally with a dark grey suit and a beige woollen shirt underneath it. To Bolsonaro's right, Guimarães was also dressed in a suit, his was dark blue. He also had a light blue shirt and a blue tie. Like Bolsonaro, Guimarães used a wristwatch and a wedding band. In a second row just behind these three actors a fourth person was captured by the footage. The place where he sat and the way in which the man was dressed contrasted starkly with the formality of the other actors portrayed: a shirt with black and white diamonds and a cowboy shaped hat with a Brazilian flag. He also carried a guitar with a Brazilian flag attached. When the live stream started, this man, whose name remained unspoken throughout the performance was in conversation with Bolsonaro who can initially be heard telling him, **Bolsonaro:**

Be careful with the lyrics, be careful with the lyrics because they can get censored.

Bolsonaro proceeds to interrupt some voices in the room by speaking loud and clearly,

Bolsonaro:

Good evening, Thursday, first of July, nineteen hours, Brasilia.

Bolsonaro then stops and looks at Elisangela who sits at by his left side and touches her arm asking her to say her name.

The women introduces herself, Interpreter:

Elisangela.

Bolsonaro rectifies and speaks in a authoritative tone whilst using his left thumb to point at the woman, Bolsonaro:

Elisangela!

He then point with his right thumb to Guimarães, Bolsonaro:

Pedro Guimarães!

He proceeds to identify some actors that are not captured by the camera. Bolsonaro:

I also have here in attendance, the president of the bank of Brazil - Fausto (de Andrade Ribeiro) – he will have time to come closer when we speak about the PRONAMPE.

Bolsonaro takes his glasses off in a theatrical style, he speaks at gesticulates at the same time, looking either at the camera or at Guimarães to direct his conversation, when he speaks to Guimarães, Guimarães usually shakes his head in agreement regardless of what he says.

Bolsonaro:

This is the second PRONAMPE right (using slang)? This PRONAMPE is definitive now. And has everything it needs to, besides continuing the previous one, to be more comprehensive. It is a project that was born, again with Senator Jorginho Melo of Santa Catarina, whom we thank a lot.

Using his thumb, Bolsonaro points to the man sitting behind him, Bolsonaro:

We have a singer here, we met him outside by the fence, I don't know who this guy is, he wants to sing.

He asks the man, Bolsonaro:

Two minutes is enough for one (song)?

Bolsonaro smiles and gives the singer permission to start but looks at the camera instead of the person he addresses. The gentlemen who Bolsonaro barely looks in the eye for the whole of the performance does not understand the indication and ask:

Can I sing now?

Bolsonaro:

Go, go, go!

The singer plays his guitar and sings:

1st Brazil above everything

2nd God above all of us

3rd Ribeirinhos are no longer forgotten

4th Truck drivers can now be heard

5th Farmers can now produce more

6th Thanks to our president

7th and his ministers

8th who talk and do

9th who talk and do

10th And Promises

11th And delivers

12th Our flag

13th Will never be red

14th Our flag is green, yellow, white and blue

15th It has the green of the woods

16th The blue of the sky

17th The yellow of gold

18th Our largest treasure

19th The white of peace, of peace, of peace

When the singer starts performing, the actors smile but Bolsonaro's body language is particularly interesting. After the first verse Bolsonaro almost interrupts the song in laughter. He then remains quite until he is mentioned in the song in 6th verse and bursts into laughter again for a few seconds. Once the song is over Guimarães applauds, and congratulates the singer, Guimarães:

Very good!

Guimarães even gives the man a little hug, the interpreter applauds in sign language and the singer himself briefly joins the applause. Bolsonaro, however, does not applaud. He begins speaking immediately after the noise level comes down:

This fellow was out there in the *cercadinho* (*small fence*), he was there with his guitar, the sound was good, I invited him in and he will play two more songs before our live is over today. But a curiosity here.

Bolsonaro picks up his glasses and the book from the table, then he puts down the glasses and grabs only the book and he speaks gesticulating heavily as he does throughout the performance:

I don't have time to read books. All my time is for deliberating and to develop legislation. But I have the book here: Ungratefulness should be a crime.

Bolsonaro shows the book to the camera, it's a soft cover book and the pages are filled with colourful page marker stickers, Bolsonaro:

So, the assistant, my friend, Sid had a reading here through the book, the book is light and easy to read.

Bolsonaro grabs his glasses, and seems like he is prepared to read but continues:

and he marked some passages, i will only speak one, it has a lot to do with politics. I am seeing here Coronel Armande, Santa Catarina, federal MP. Major Vitor Hugo de Goias, federal MP for PSL also. Is anyone else here elected, no?

Bolsonaro puts on his glasses and speaks:

Let's go then: The character of the ingrate, there are three classes of ingrates, three classes: Those who silence themselves when someone offers them a favour, they take what they want and stay quiet innit? Those who charge you, you make someone a favour and they still want to charge you. And those that revenge, in politics you find the three classes of ingrates and sometimes in the same person, you find the three...

Bolsonaro struggles to find the word and stutters, he points to the book in some discomfort, until someone, not visible to the camera's lenses aids the president, Gilson:

The three characteristics.

Bolsonaro:

The three characteristics, thank you there Gilson.

Bolsonaro continues to look at the book, using his finger to guide him through the lines but not actually reading from the book. He proceeds to relate the book to politics, Bolsonaro:

“Most of the PSL representatives are aware and conscient, a minority in my understanding ruined the party but that’s fine, I won’t criticise them here the party gave me an agenda, thank you for the agenda.”

I can speak here but I won’t give out names innit, from PSL, elected people, the great majority is aware and conscientious. A minority in my understanding ruined the party but that’s fine, I won’t criticise them here the party gave me an agenda, thank you for the agenda. They get 8 million a month in partisan funds, they have television time as big as PT and they will have for next year’s election putting together how much?

Unidentified voice across the room, Unknown:

five hundred million.

Bolsonaro:

five hundred million reais, five hundred million reais! I will not use any of that because I ain’t there anymore, it all good. Now those who silence themselves, there are a lot of them, they stay quiet, get elected, using the picture and the support of someone. Those who charge, there were people yes, MP’s who came to charge me strategic roles, otherwise these smart guys would become the enemy and they became the enemy. And those who revenge, you had those who signed

Bolsonaro removes his glasses and picks up a pen, Bolsonaro:

they spent ink from their pens innit? The signed the impeachment.

Bolsonaro smiles, Bolsonaro:

The super-impeachment, i am laughing here with these to twats! Super-impeachment, the only thing left wad to bring the accusations here innit... Genocide... Doesn't wear a mask, serious stuff innit? Doesn't wear a mask.

Bolsonaro lifts his thumb and he gesticulates actively:

Doesn't wear a mask, he was on a motorcycle rally and now they are accusing a super-impeachment. These people don't have anything to do? Instead of helping Brazil they are coming up with lies to make life hard for those who produce.

Bolsonaro throws the book across the table, Bolsonaro:

I'll make it clear that the majority in parliament is perfectly syntonised innit, they support me, i support them, we have that double interest innit.

Bolsonaro clears out some papers, Bolsonaro:

There are MP's that (sound problem) which is very important. I was in Santa Catarina now, meeting with the with state MP's who have above others, the question of the highways of Santa Catarina.

Miracles are happening, we're turning things around.

Bolsonaro takes off his glasses, Bolsonaro.

Now we made a tough decision, the budget is tight and we took from other ministries and we are sending the project to congress so that those resources go to the ministry of infrastructure to be invested in the highways of Brazil

Bolsonaro puts on his glasses again and talks whilst he looks for a piece of paper, Bolsonaro:

But it's all good, a lot of ungratefulness for you, a lot of ungratefulness *Pedrao* (Big Pete) ?

Guimarães:

Ah I resolve it quickly, get it out with no negative energy.

Guimarães touches Bolsonaro's arm, Bolsonaro uses the same arm to touch his face getting his arm away from Guimarães. Bolsonaro:

The total of today was of one hundred.. two hundred thousand?

Guimarães:

Two hundred and eighty thousand.

Bolsonaro speaks gesticulating energetically, Bolsonaro:

Two hundred and eighty thousand. Now let's compare the periods from January to May in the last six years. From January to May! 2015 it was Dilma, the January to May was minus two hundred

and forty-three thousand! The sixteen, it was also Dilma, minus four hundred and forty-eight thousand, without a pandemic. Afterwards we had Temer eighteen nineteen, Temer already started positive: forty-eight thousand in seventeen, in eighteen three hundred and eighty-one thousand. Then we arrive, in 2019 we practically repeated the same period before of Temer e we went to three hundred and fifty-one thousand. Then a tough period innit? And from 2020, in my government! Minus one million and one hundred thousand. It is in reality an insuperable number, negatively speaking, but it's not a big part, the totality was with governors and mayors who shut down all commerce.

Bolsonaro removes his glasses, Bolsonaro.

I was speaking with some mayors, some I asked: why did you close up shop? Even though your municipality does not have a single COVID-19 case innit? And they said: I had to close because otherwise they would as that I did nothing, I was being omissive, I had to close. Okay, there were people closing in the trend. I did not close a single corner shop; I did not destroy anyone's job! On the contrary. I am even allowing Pedro from the Caixa (Caixa Economica Federal) to speak. Between us we were able to save many jobs isn't it? If you calculate it is over ten million jobs in a PRONAMPE, an old PRONANMPE also from *Jorginho* (Little John) of Santa Catarina. We took care of that matter with an aid to small and?

Pedro Guimarães:

Micro and small companies.

Bolsonaro:

Micro and small companies. But make it very clear here that that negative number of 2021, of my government, one million and one hundred thousand. We finished the year of 2020 with more jobs than 2019!

Guimarães agrees:

hmm mm.

Bolsonaro:

an effort given the crisis that we are living it was a success, despite many governors and mayors shutting down everything! Including mandatory curfew, lock-downs that did not serve for nothing, look at Argentina, the country that closed for the longest and it is as we have it: a very high level of death per million inhabitants.

Bolsonaro quickly changes the topic, he directs his speech to Guimarães, Bolsonaro:

PRONAMPE! That's also a proposal by Jorginho Melo of Santa Catarina, the senator. Pedro you will speak about the PRONAMPE the?

Guimarães:

Yes, starting tomorrow we will have a volume for the fourth PRONAMPE.

Whilst Guimarães speaks his initial words, Bolsonaro is already holding a piece of paper and looking at it whilst paying little attention to his colleague.

Guimarães:

In fact, president we had three different versions of the PRONAMPE, this fourth version is a new PRONAMPE in a total value of twenty five billion reais. The Caixa has to start with: six point three billion reais, but our objective is to borrow another ten billion.

Guimarães touches Bolsonaro's arm again, Bolsonaro looks uncomfortable with the contact.

Guimarães:

What is important, president? Before your government this number went to two companies and one did not pay. Now it goes to over three hundred thousand companies, we generate jobs throughout all of Brazil. I wanted to say, from that one million and though hundred thousand, that we won jobs that year. If there we're no cities closing we would reach close to two million jobs, this means: with the help of the PRONAMPE and with the improvement in terms of Covid, we should have a very large job volume.

Bolsonaro who did not appear to be paying much attention to what was being said by his colleague and who was looking either at the cameras or at the papers on top of the table, quickly changes the topic referring to one of the papers he was analysing whilst his colleague spoke, Bolsonaro:

Just look at what the press, I comment here to show what great part of the Brazilian press is, look, look:

Bolsonaro reads the title of what is visibly a printed online news article, Bolsonaro:

“Investors appear not to react to the bad news against the government”. But what bad news? Its fake news, their lying the whole time and what happens is that the market does not roll the ball with that. You think the market will look at *Veja*, at *Globo*, at the *Folha* at the *Estado de Sao Paulo* to be aware of anything to get prepared? No, they are ignoring you, those papers here are useless it’s a disgrace, the great Brazilian press is a disgrace. I want to see how the reaction will be tomorrow because I don’t read innit. I don’t have time to read, and I am not wasting time reading crap to start the day bad. I want to know how they will react to today’s thingy, it was pretty, that thing today was something pretty, when the corporal directed himself at the Senator and spoke about that dodgy business. What corruption is that? We did not pay a single real for anything, we did not get a single, very much on the contrary, we did everything. And I will make it very clear, in that invoice, I don’t want to get in any details, there were three hundred thousand doses innit? In truth, three hundred thousand flasks, each flask had five ml. A dose for a vaccine is half ml, therefore each flask has ten.

Guimarães agrees, Guimarães:

Ten.

Bolsonaro reiterates, Bolsonaro:

Ten.

From three thousand, three million, nothing wrong. And the company itself said that the price Brazil was paying was the same in thirteen other countries. Let’s see what the press is saying tomorrow,

what they are saying today. They should be squirming, they should ne biting themselves innit, biting themselves innit? Let's go.

Bolsonaro puts on his glasses and drops the news article he has in one hand and grabs a different one, Guimarães once again touches the presidents' arm, Guimarães:

President

Bolsonaro points to the camara asking Guimarães to address the camara, Bolsonaro:

Speak up

Guimarães:

President I just wanted to highlight, in the *Caixa Economica Federal*, when we got there, there were a series of dodgy questions, balance they did not even have, and it was not auditable. The president gave me total freedom, so I can speak with tranquillity, the president gave me total freedom so there is no chance of political mismanagement of any kind. Completely free to do the mathematical questions.

Bolsonaro who was once again looking at papers and paying little attention to what was being said, starts speaking immediately after Guimarães is finished, Bolsonaro:

The press, innit a curiosity here oh. Decision from the Supreme STF they have ordered an investigation over a criminal organisation of fake news with minister Alexandre Morais a process that concerns me.

Bolsonaro says ironically, Bolsonaro:

Thank you Alexandre I owe you a lot, I do not know how to thank you Alexandre Morais I am moved here, and you opened new procedures against two MP's is that it? Two MP's?

Someone across the table confirms and adds, Anonymous voice across the room, Unknown:

Aline Sleutjes and Paula Belmonte

Bolsonaro:

and Paula Belmonte. Cowardness what you are doing Alexandre Morais, cowardness! Is it because I spoke about the auditable vote this morning? There are three in the Supreme who do not want the auditable vote and they are looking for parliamentary leaderships so that they determine that they orient the people they lead to vote against the auditable vote.

Bolsonaro drops his glasses and looks at the camera with great determination, Bolsonaro:

I want to make something very clear: I learned from early on and everyone in the world knows that democracy is priceless. I spoke to the economy. We have two billion, it would cost that maybe a little less to buy some printers for next year. So, three judges of the supreme already declared that they do not want the printed votes, they said what we have is trustworthy and that I do not have

proof of fraud. You don't have proof that there is no fraud, you do not have evidence that this is trustworthy, at best it's a tie and I want transparency, transparency and nothing more. I am warning in advance, gentlemen, three supreme judges of the federal court of a way that we can make an open counting of the votes and present practically to the Brazilian people that there will be no fraud. Otherwise: WE WILL HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. I will hand on the presidential sash to anyone that wins it from me CLEANLY NOT FRAUDULENTLY.

So, for Brazil now: removing Lula from jail, man his crimes are unbelievable, the rewarded denunciations were more than three billion that the government offered for rewarded denunciations, so the money was stolen. Because of Petrobras we are paying today more than 20 billion a year for the crimes of the past, the Caixa Economica was just a robbery.

Guimarães looks at Bolsonaro and agrees with his statement, Bolsonaro:

Even some apartments next to Bahia for all it appears came from the Caixa Economica Federal. We had a robbery in the post offices isn't it? They bought papers from Venezuela. Imagine your pension fund invested in Venezuelan papers. It is clear that it was a robbery. So, they removed the thief from jail. They made him electable. In my understanding to be president yes, but through fraud because through votes he won't win, he won't get votes from anyone. So i won't admit a defraud able electoral system. I don't want problems and neither do the dozens of millions of Brazilians going to the polls next year. I am presenting via the national congress and our and our ally hein, a way that we cannot question the final results of the elections. So, we cannot face next years election with the polls that we have, no country accepts this business, can you understand? The Japanese doesn't accept it the South Korean no, no one accepts this business. They want to shove it down our throats to get this gang back that commanded us innit, that was in the presidency up to 2016, c

It's all good, as retaliation certainly, the gentlemen Alexandre Morais ordered an investigation of a criminal organization, two MP's and Flavio the son of the Senator and Carlos as well. First I want you to present, Dr Alexandre Morais, your excellency a portfolio.

What these people are doing here is an undemocratic act this is an attempt against democracy, shit they call misogynist, help me here, racist, fascist...

Somebody across the room, Unidentified:

Homophobic

Bolsonaro:

Homophobic, genocide it's all good. ?? of everything even more than what i have spoken here, a bunch of stuff. They day everything of the MP's. I think that. Here has been called names around. Armando there I don't know he has probably been attacked too. No problem at all. But when someone criticises the supreme the world crashes down, it crashes down. Because we want democracy. It does not exist, up until today, you won't find in my two and a half years in government a statement of mine, an action, a declaration, a legislation that was outside the four lines of the constitution, it does not exist. I want democracy, I want freedom and I know that if these people are back in government in that fashion we will never stop dreaming with freedom in our country. So that's all I want.

Now, retaliating, that reminds me of communist countries. You go to somebody's house to get them, if he is not home you take his wife away, you take his children. Here it is the same thing, what is the next step now? What action against my children will they want to attempt? They will play outside

the four lines of the constitutions. Is that it? And everything goes? All power has limits! There are MP's here they know there are limits, I have limits! Is it that only in the supreme we have some people who have no limits? Everything goes?

Bolsonaro puts on his glasses and grabs another piece of paper, Bolsonaro:

For example, I don't know what this stuff is: O Globo:

Bolsonaro reads headline, Bolsonaro:

Justice offers forty-eight hours to explain why the CBF (Brazilian football federation) does not use the number 24.

Bolsonaro removes his glasses, Bolsonaro:

Look I do not use the number 13, I am awaiting a legal action. Everything that I can interfere with here in my house, in my service does not have the number 13. Are they going to investigate me now? I am awaiting an action against me.

Bolsonaro removes glasses, puts down the piece of paper he was grabbing, picks up another piece of paper, puts on his glasses, Bolsonaro:

the supreme, another thing here. They ordered the investigation of a criminal organisation. The press already labels it a criminal investigation.

Bolsonaro drops the piece of paper he has and look for another one, Bolsonaro:

and another thing I wanted to say, I was there in Jucurutu.

Guimarães says something?

Bolsonaro:

Rio Grande do Norte

Bolsonaro:

Rio Grande do Norte, a dam. It started to be built in 1952, and Rogerio Marinho now that Rio Grande do Norte, as a coincidence invested in that company. We are missing 5%, not even 5% until the site is finished. It will be ready in the current year. So, I took a photo with the workers there and they made this gesture.

Bolsonaro makes his famous pistol gesture, Bolsonaro:

And you know what the press did? They said they took a photo with me and they did the L for Lula. Afterwards, congratulations to UOL that went back and said that the L did not stand for Lula but was a little gun.

Bolsonaro throws a piece of paper to the table, Bolsonaro:

But what a petty press is this? My god, don't they have any news. They do they have the PRONAMPE, but I don't know if the press will speak about tomorrow.

Bolsonaro picks up another piece of paper, Bolsonaro:

Now when we speak about the PRONAMPE, guys. This information is from the Argentinian press. It seems like the press is better than ours in Argentina. It shows here, since 1983 the quantity of people in welfare benefits. And now in 2021 there are 31 million people, if I am not wrong here Argentina has 40 million inhabitants, so a country with three quarters of its population on welfare benefits has everything not to recover, to collapse for good. In Venezuela it darted like this. A very rich country they had gold and petrol in abundance, they created social project – a lot of them – to win over the sympathy of the people. The people liked it until the petrol that was a little over one hundred dollars fell to thirty and Venezuela collapsed for good. Chaves was already there, prone to impose a dictatorship. I will say more, Chavez when he got elected in 99, a lot of people praised Chavez, even myself. He criticised Fide Castro, spoke positively about the US economy but rapidly showed what he came to do. So, our sweet Argentina here, three quarters of its population living through social projects.

Guimarães:

The Caixa had an agency, a representation in Venezuela. Do you believe that? In Venezuela. The truth was.

Bolsonaro smiles, Bolsonaro:

Really? With all due respect, for what? It Is not understandable.

Guimarães:

We did not have one in England; we did not have it countries were you would have a.

Bolsonaro interrupts, Bolsonaro:

It was so that they could send their friends there, for that or for some corruption scheme innit?

Bolsonaro removes his glasses, Bolsonaro:

At the end of the day, people that criticises me that I am concluding constructions, the truth is. The majority of my inaugurations are constructions being concluded. Now PT did not leave any unfinished site in Angola, in Venezuela, in Bolivia, in Cuba. They concluded them all and first-class stuff.

Bolsonaro lifts his thumbs, Bolsonaro:

Hum, it is estimated that everything went there but the BDN? Put their hands in half a trillion reais. Part of these resources went there. So, the people who like that nine fingered guys.

Bolsonaro points nine fingers at the camera, Bolsonaro:

Look at what he did in other countries and look at what he did not do in our country.

Bolsonaro looks behind to the singer:

Play another one then!

Original version: Portuguese

Cenário:

Bolsonaro está em Brasília, num escritório com uma mesa de reunião com uma tábua feita de mármore e apoiada numa estrutura de madeira sólida. Em cima da mesa são visíveis papéis, documentos, um livro e copos com água. No centro da mesa, sentam-se Jair Bolsonaro sempre acompanhado por uma tradutora gestual (Elisângela), que se senta à sua esquerda. Na imagem, é visível também o presidente da caixa econômica federal, Pedro Guimarães. Bolsonaro veste-se com um fato preto, uma camisa azul clara e uma gravata preta com losangos traçados a branco. Ele usa também um relógio preto no pulso esquerdo e uma aliança no dedo. O seu cabelo está penteado e ele usa uns óculos graduados. A sua esquerda Elisângela também usa óculos graduados. Veste-se também formalmente com um fato cinzento escuro e uma camisola creme por baixo. À sua direita, Guimarães usa um fato azul escuro com uma camisa azul clara e uma gravata de um tom azul intermédio entre a cor da camisa e a cor do seu fato. Também ele usa um relógio preto no pulso esquerdo e uma aliança no dedo da mesma mão. Ele usa também uma fita ao pescoço esta é também de um tom de azul claro que aparenta carregar um cartão. Numa cadeira, por detrás daquelas que

cercam a mesa de imediato, encontra-se um homem que contrasta claramente com a formalidade apresentada pelos restantes performers. Para além de não estar sentado à mesa, o homem carrega uma viola vermelha e preta que tem numa das suas margens uma bandeira do Brasil. O homem também se veste diferenciadamente dos restantes intervenientes. Ele usa um chapéu com estilo de cowboy também carregando uma bandeira Brasileira. Veste também uma camisa com aos quadrinhos branca e preta com uma t-shirt branca por baixo que é apenas visível ao detalhe. Talvez o mais significativo contraste, entre aqueles que se sentam à mesa e aquele senhor que se senta numa segunda fila, seja étnico. Ao contrário de Bolsonaro, Guimarães e Elisângela que todos apresentam uma estrutura facial e uma pigmentação Europeia, este interveniente aparenta descender de um dos diversos povos indígenas onde é hoje o Brasil. Atrás dos performers é visível uma estante preenchida por livros que ocupa todo o background. O live começa:

Bolsonaro:

Cuidado com a letra, cuidado com a letra que pode ser censurada aqui

Bolsonaro interrompe todos, Bolsonaro:

Boa noite, quinta feira, primeiro de julho, dezanove horas, Brasília

Bolsonaro olha para o lado e não sabe o nome da tradutora gestual, ele toca-lhe com um braço pedindo que ela se identifique, Intérprete:

Elisangela

Bolsonaro reafirma convictamente, Bolsonaro:

Elisangela

Bolsonaro aponta para ela usando o dedo pulgar. Depois olha para o seu lado direito e faz um gesto semelhante apontando para Guimarães, Bolsonaro:

Pedro Guimarães:

Bolsonaro aponta com a mão na direção de uma das câmaras e anuncia a presença de mais uma pessoa, Bolsonaro:

Tenho também aqui o presidente do banco do Brasil, o Fausto (De Andrade Ribeiro) vai haver tempo dele dar uma chegada aqui vamos falar sobre o PRONAMPE

Bolsonaro tira os óculos de forma teatral e gesticula enquanto fala, orientando a sua conversa para Guimarães que vai abanando a cabeça em concordância, Bolsonaro:

E o segundo tempo do PRONAMPE né? Esse PRONAMPE agora é definitivo e tem tudo para, para além de continuar o anterior, ser mais abrangente e um projeto que nasceu, de novo, com o senador Jorginho Mello de Santa Catarina, a quem nós agradecemos muito.

Usando o polegar Bolsonaro aponta para atrás e mira o senhor que se senta atrás dele pelo canto do olho, Bolsonaro:

Tem aqui um cantor aqui que foi pego aqui no cercadinho nem sei quem é esse cara e ele quer cantar, dois minutos! Da da um?

Bolsonaro sorri e dá permissão ao senhor para começar, o senhor pergunta, Cantor:

Já pode cantar?

Bolsonaro:

Vai, Vai, Vai!

Cantor começa a tocar viola e canta, Cantor:

Brasil acima de tudo

Bolsonaro ri alto, Guimarães esboça um sorriso e a interprete traduz, Cantor:

Deus acima de todos

Ribeirinhos, não são mais esquecidos

camioneiros agora serão ouvidos

agricultores já podem produzir mais

graças ao nosso presidente

com os seus ministros

que falam e faz

que falam e faz

e promete

e cumpre

a nossa bandeira

jamais será b/vermelha?

a nossa bandeira é verde e amarela

branca e azul

tem o verde das matas

o azul dos céus

o amarelo do ouro

o nosso maior tesouro

o branco de paz de paz de paz

Bolsonaro volta a sorrir quando a música atinge os seus versos mais políticos e depois parece apreciar a música. Quando o senhor termina a canção Bolsonaro prepara-se para falar, o que é visível pela sua linguagem corporal, mas é interrompido por Guimarães e pelos restantes na sala que aplaudem a prestação, Guimarães:

Muito bom!

Bolsonaro que não bate palmas retoma imediatamente o centro do palco. olha para a frente onde se encontram as câmaras e fala apontando para trás com o seu polegar para o cantor que se senta atrás dele, Bolsonaro:

O colega tava ali fora no cercadinho, tava lá com a sua viola, o som é bom convidei, entrou vai tocar mais duas até terminar aqui a nossa live de hoje. Mas curiosidade aí.

Bolsonaro pega nos óculos que se encontravam agora na mesa e também no livro a sua frente, depois larga os óculos e agarra apenas no livro e diz gesticulando muito, Bolsonaro:

Eu não tenho tempo mais para ler livros, tempo todo e papiro e para projeto de lei etecetera. Mas tenho aqui o livro aí: ingratidão deveria ser crime

Bolsonaro mostra o livro as câmaras, o livro encontra-se marcado por pequenos autocolantes, Bolsonaro:

Então o ajudante amigo meu , Sid deu uma leitura aqui no livro, o livro é leve e fácil de ler

Bolsonaro agarra nos óculos e prepara-se para ler, Bolsonaro:

E marcou algumas passagens, eu vou apenas falar uma, tem haver muito com a política, eu to vendo aqui o Coronel Armandes, Santa Catarina, deputado federal. Major Vitor Hugo de Goiás, deputado federal pelo PSL também, mais alguém é eleito aqui não?

Bolsonaro coloca os óculos e diz, Bolsonaro:

Vamo lá: A índole do ingrato, existem três classes de ingrato, três classes:

Bolsonaro mostra três dedos, focado na câmara, Bolsonaro:

Os que silenciam diante do favor, Quebra o galho dele e ele fica quieto, não é? Os que cobram se faz um favor, o cara te cobra ainda. E os que se vingam, na política você encontra as três classes de ingrato e às vezes na mesma pessoa as três...

Bolsonaro não consegue encontrar a palavra e aponta para o livro em algum desconforto, alguém que está do outro lado da mesa, Bolsonaro:

Gilson ajuda o presidente, Gilson:

As três características

Bolsonaro:

As três características obrigado aí, obrigado Gilson

Bolsonaro olha para o livro apontando para as palavras para se guiar, Bolsonaro:

Posso falar aqui, não vou falar nome ne, do PSL, pessoal eleito, a grande maioria e ciente e consciente, uma minoria no meu entender estragou o partido ne, estragou em parte o partido mas tudo bem, não vamos aqui criticar, o partido me deu a agenda, obrigado pela agenda. Fatura hoje 8 milhões por mês em fundo partidário, tem tempo de televisão, tão grande como o do PT e vai ter para a ocasião das eleições do ano que vem, somando os dois fundos, quanto?

alguém responde do outro lado da mesa, Desconhecido:

Quinhentos milhões.

Bolsonaro:

Meio bilhão de reais, quinhentos milhões de reais! Eu não vou usufruir de nada disso na minha campanha porque eu não tou mai la, ta tudo bem. Agora os que silenciam tem bastantes, fica quietinho e se elege de, usando ali a fotografia o apoio de alguém. Os que cobram, teve gente sim parlamentar, que veio me cobrar cargos estratégicos senão, caras inteligentes deixa botar para o ministério ai, não quero ficar senão viro inimigo, e virou inimigo. E os que se vingam, tinha esses dois que assinaram.

Bolsonaro tira os óculos e agarra numa caneta, Bolsonaro:

Ehh, gastaram tinta aí da caneta deles, não é? Assinaram o impeachment

Bolsonaro sorri, Bolsonaro:

O super-impeachment, eu tô dando risada ai com esses dois otários! Super-impeachment, faltou você trazer aqui as acusações né... genocida... não usa máscara... e coisa grave né? não usa máscara

Bolsonaro faz um gesto com o pulgar e fala em diálogo gesticulando muito, Bolsonaro:

Não usa máscara, fez motociata e agora ta acusar super-impeachment.. são pessoas que não tem o que fazer não e? Em vez de ajudar o Brasil não tem o que fazer e fica inventando outras coisas para atrapalhar a vida de quem produz.

Bolsonaro atira o livro para o outro lado da mesa, Bolsonaro:

Deixo claro que a maioria no parlamento ta perfeitamente sintonizada ne, me apoiam e eu os apoio também, tem um interesse duplo ne.

Bolsonaro livra-se de uns pequenos papéis, atirando-os para o lado, Bolsonaro:

Há muitos parlamentares que (?) as pessoas das suas áreas, o que é muito importante. Tive em Santa Catarina agora reunindo com a bancada estadual o (?) entre outros, a questão das rodovias de Santa Catarina, tá-se fazendo milagres, dando cambalhotas,

Bolsonaro põe os óculos e procura um documento enquanto fala, Bolsonaro:

Pegamos agora a decisão dura o orçamento é apertado tiramos de outros ministérios e vamos mandar o projeto para o congresso para que esses recursos do ministério vá para o ministério da infraestrutura com destino a investir em rodovias no Brasil.

Mas tudo bem, muita ingratidão também para si, muita ingratidão, Pedrão?

Guimarães:

Ai resolve rápido, tira logo sem energia negativa

Guimarães toca no braço de Bolsonaro, este toca na cara com a mão desse braço, Bolsonaro:

o total de hoje, o de hoje foi cento e duzentos pouco mil?

Guimarães:

duzentos e oitenta mil

Bolsonaro fala gesticulando como de habitual, Bolsonaro:

Duzentos e oitenta mil. Agora vamos comparar os períodos de Janeiro a Maio nos últimos seis anos, de Janeiro a Maio! 2015 era a Dilma, o Janeiro a Maio foi menos duzentos e quarenta e três mil!

Depois dezasseis, Dilma também menos quatrocentos e quarenta e oito mil, sem pandemia. Depois tem o Temer, dezassete dezoito, o Temer já começou positivo: quarenta e oito mil em dezassete, e dezoito trezentos e oitenta e um mil. Aí chega nos aqui. Dois mil e dezanove, nós praticamente repetimos o mesmo, o período anterior do Temer e fomos para trezentos e cinquenta e um mil. Depois de um período duro, né? E de dois mil e vinte, no meu governo! Menos um milhão e cem mil. E um número aqui realmente, insuperável negativamente falando, mas não e grande parte, a totalidade foi com governadores e prefeitos que fecharam todo o comércio

Bolsonaro tira os olhos, Bolsonaro:

Eu tive conversando com perfeitos, alguns eu perguntei: fechou o comércio porque? Apesar do município não ter nem um caso de covid ne? E falaram eu tive que fechar porque senão iam dizer que eu não fiz nada, tava sendo omissos, eu fui obrigado a fechar, ta teve gente que fechou na onda. Eu não fechei um boteco de esquina sequer, eu não destruí o emprego de ninguém! Muito pelo contrário, até vou dar a deixa aqui para o Pedro da caixa falar. Entre nós, conseguimos manter muitos empregos, não é? Se calcula é mais de dez milhões de empregos num PRONAMPE um PRONAMPE antigo, também do Jorginho de Santa Catarina que tratamos desse assunto, um socorro a pequenas e?

Pedro Guimarães:

Micro e pequenas empresas.

Bolsonaro:

Micro e pequenas empresas. Mas deixar bem claro aqui. Que esse número sal.. esse numero negativo de dois mil e vinte, do meu governo, um milhão e cem mil.. Nós terminamos o ano de dois mil e vinte com mais empregos que dois mil e dezanove!

Pedro Guimarães confere, Guimarães:

hm mm

Bolsonaro:

(?) um esforço, dada a crise que tamo vivendo foi um sucesso, apesar de muitos governadores e prefeitos fecharem tudo! Inclusive né: toque de recolher, lockdown que não serviu para nada, olha a Argentina o país que mais fechou e é o que temos, um número altíssimo de mortes por um milhão de habitantes.

Bolsonaro muda rapidamente o tema, Bolsonaro:

PRONAMPE! Essa também é proposta por Jorginho Mello de Santa Catarina, o senador. Pedro cê vai falar sobre o PRONAMPE então:

Pedro Guimarães fala também gesticulando avidamente, Guimarães:

Eim e, nós a partir de amanhã nós teremos um volume ao quarto PRONAMPE.

Enquanto Guimarães diz as suas primeiras palavras, Bolsonaro já tem na sua mão uma folha que não está relacionada com o PRONAMP, Bolsonaro parece examinar esta folha e não prestar muita atenção a Guimarães, Guimarães:

De fato, presidente. Nós tivemos três tranches até ao final do ano passado, essa quarta tranche, um novo PRONAMPE num total de vinte e cinco bilhões de reais.

A caixa tem pra começar seis vírgula três bilhões de reais, mas o nosso objetivo é emprestar mais dez bilhões ?

Guimarães volta a tocar com firmeza no braço de Bolsonaro, Bolsonaro parece pouco confortável toca na cara de forma a mexer esse braço, Guimarães:

O que que é importante, presidente? Antes do seu governo este valor ia para duas empresas e uma não pagou. Agora são para mais de trezentas mil empresas, se gera mais emprego pelo Brasil inteiro, o que que eu queria falar: desses um milhão e duzentos, que se ganharam emprego nesse ano, se não houvessem cidades fechando, nós poderíamos chegar próximo de dois milhões de empregos. Então apesar de você ter vários fechamentos, chegamos a um milhão e duzentos, ou seja, com a ajuda do PRONAMPE e com a melhora no caso do covid a gente deve ter um volume de empregos muito grande.

Bolsonaro muda rapidamente de tema, referindo-se agora a folha que segura, Bolsonaro:

Olha só o que que e a imprensa han, eu comento aqui porque, para mostrar o que e, grande parte da imprensa brasileira, veja, veja

Bolsonaro lê o título daquilo que é visivelmente a impressão de uma notícia, Bolsonaro:

“investidores parecem não reagir as más notícias contra o governo”. Que más notícias? E fake news, é mentira o tempo todo e que acontece com o mercado? não dá bola pra isso. Vocês acham que o mercado vai olhar para a Veja, para o globo, para a folha, para o estado de São Paulo para se precaver de alguma coisa para se preparar? não eles tão ignorando vocês, esse papel aqui não serve pra nada, é uma vergonha, a grande imprensa Brasileira, e uma vergonha. Eu quero ver como é que vai ser a reação de amanhã por que eu não leio né, eu não tenho tempo de ler, também não vou perder tempo lendo porcaria, começar mal o dia né. Eu quero saber como e que vai reagir a coisa da de hoje, aquilo foi bonito aí hoje foi bonito, quando o cabo la se dirigiu ao senador e falou do negócio la meio esquisito e, ta certo. Que corrupção é essa? Não pagamos um real por nada, não recebemos uma ? muito pelo contrário, fizemos tudo. E deixar bem claro, naquele invoice, não quero entrar em detalhes, tava lá trezentas mil doses né, na verdade, trezentos mil frascos cada frasco tinha cinco ml. A dose para cada vacina, meio ml, então cada frasco, dez.

Guimarães:

dez

Bolsonaro:

Dez. De três mil a três milhões, nada de errado, e a própria empresa disse que o preço do Brasil, que era o mesmo em treze outros países. Vamos ver o que que a imprensa está dizendo amanhã o que está dizendo hoje aí, deve tar se contorcendo se mordendo ne se mordendo ne? Vamo lá

Bolsonaro põe os óculos e larga a notícia que tem na mão e agarra noutra notícia, Guimarães volta a tocar Bolsonaro no braço, Guimarães:

Presidente

Bolsonaro estava a apontar para a sua frente e aparenta dizer a Guimarães que se dirija para a câmara, Bolsonaro:

fala aí fala

Guimarães:

Presidente, só isso eu queria reforçar, eh na caixa econômica federal, quando nós entramos tinha uma série de questões esquisitas: o balanço nem tinha, nem era auditado. O presidente deu liberdade total, então eu posso falar com tranquilidade, o presidente da total liberdade, não há nenhuma chance de ingerência política ou qualquer que seja. Totalmente libertado de fazer questão matemática

Bolsonaro, que estava novamente a olhar para uma notícia sem prestar atenção aquilo que Guimarães dizia, começa a falar imediatamente após Guimarães terminar, Bolsonaro:

Imprensa, ne curiosidade, tá aqui oh. Decisão do Supremo STF manda investigar organização criminosa de fake news com ministro Alexandre Moraes, processo que tem haver comigo.

Bolsonaro ironicamente, Bolsonaro:

Obrigado Alexandre te devo muito, eu não sei como te agradecer Alexandre Moraes tou comovido aqui e abriu novos procedimentos contra duas deputadas, e isso? Duas deputadas?

Alguém do outro lado da mesa confirma e acrescenta, Desconhecido:

Aline Sleutjes e Paula Belmonte

Bolsonaro:

e Paula Belmonte. Uma covardia que vocês estão fazendo, Alexandre Moraes, uma covardia! Será que é o troco porque eu falei sobre o voto auditável hoje de manhã? São três no supremo que não quer o voto auditável tão procurando parlamentares, lideranças para que eles determinem, orientem os seus, os seus liderados a votar contra o voto impresso.

Bolsonaro larga os óculos e olha para a câmara com grande determinação, Bolsonaro:

Eu quero deixar uma coisa bem clara: eu aprendi desde cedo e todo o mundo aqui, que democracia não tem preço, já falei com a economia. Temos dois bilhões seria isso acho que um pouco menos para comprar umas impressoras para o ano que vem. Então três juízes do supremo já declararam que não querem o voto impresso, disse que isso é confiável e disse que eu não tenho provas de fraude, vocês também não tem provas que não tem fraude, você não tem prova que que e confiável, no mínimo empatou e eu tou querendo transparência, transparência nada mais além disso. E eu estou avisando com antecedência aos senhores, senhores três juízes supremos do tribunal federal de uma maneira de nos fazermos uma contagem aberta dos votos e apresentar na prática para o povo Brasileiro que não e não vai ter na fraude. Caso contrário: TEREMOS PROBLEMAS NAS ELEIÇÕES PARA O ANO QUE VEM eu entrego a faixa presidencial para qualquer um que ganhar de mim na urna de forma LIMPA NA FRAUDE NÃO!

Então para o Brasil agora, tirar o Lula da cadeia, pah os crimes dele são inacreditáveis, os delatores foram mais de 3 bilhões que deu governo a delação premiada, então o dinheiro foi roubado. A Petrobras pagamos hoje em dia mais de 20 bilhões por ano de, de roubos do passado. A caixa econômica era uma roubalheira só,

Bolsonaro olha para Guimarães que concorda com ele, Bolsonaro:

Até uns apartamentos ao lado da Bahia pelo que tudo indica vem da caixa econômica federal.

Tivemos roubalheira nos correios, não é? Compraram papéis da Venezuela. Imagina o teu fundo de pensão investir em papéis da Venezuela. Tá lá claro que e pa roubalheira. Então tiraram o ladrão da cadeia. Tornaram o ladrão elegível. No meu entender para ser presidente sim, mas na FRAUDE.

Porque no voto ele não ganha, não ganha de ninguém. Então não vou admitir um sistema fraudável de eleições. E eu não quero problemas e nem dezenas de milhões de Brasileiros que vão às urnas no ano que vem. Eu tou apresentando, via aí o congresso nacional, e o nosso, e o nosso aliado, hein, uma maneira de nos, não termos como desconfiar do resultado final das eleições, então não podemos enfrentar umas eleições do ano que vem com essa urna que tem, que não aceita em país nenhum do mundo. dá para entender? O Japonês não aceita, o Sul Coreano não, ninguém aceita esse negócio. Quer lhe pôr pela goela abaixo para fazer voltar aquela quadrilha toda que nos, nos nos comandou né, que teve na frente da presidência até dois mil e dezasseis, não tem problema isso não é ameaça e constatação: o povo não vai admitir isso aí.

Tudo bem, tao como retaliação com toda certeza o senhor Alexandre Morais manda investigar organização criminosa, duas deputadas e o Flávio filho do senador e o Carlos também. Primeiro queria que apresentassem, Dr Alexandre Morais, vossa excelência apresentem um portfolio Isso aqui e... destas pessoas, isso aqui e um ato antidemocrático, isso atenta contra a democracia, porra me chamam de de... ajuda ai, misógino, racista, fascista,

Alguém no outro lado da mesa, Desconhecido:

homofóbico

Bolsonaro:

Homofóbico, genocida, tudo bem. Chamam o (?) de tudo, até mais do que eu falei aqui, um montão de coisas. Chamam os parlamentares de tudo. Eu acho aqui que o (?) já foi xingado de alguma coisa por aí o Armando não sei, já deve ter sido xingado também. Tem problema nenhum. Quando alguém faz alguma crítica ao supremo cai o mundo, cai o mundo. Porque nós queremos democracia. Não existe até hoje, você não acha nos meus dois anos e meio de governo, uma frase minha, uma ação, uma declaração, um decreto que estivesse fora das quatro linhas da constituição, não existe. Eu quero democracia, eu quero liberdade e sei que se esse pessoal voltar ao governo, dessa forma, nunca mais deixaremos de sonhar com liberdade no nosso país.

Então eu quero apenas isso. Agora, retaliar, isso lembra os países comunistas. Cê vai buscar os casa em casa nao ta ce leva a esposa dele embora, cê leva o filho e aqui é a mesma coisa qual e o próximo passo agora? Qual ação contra os meus filhos vão querer fazer? Vão jogar fora das quatro linhas da constituição? E isso? E o vale tudo? Todo o poder tem limites! Tem parlamentares aqui que sabem que tem limites, eu tenho limites! Será que só no supremo temos alguns que não tem limites? Vale tudo?

Bolsonaro lê uma notícia, Bolsonaro:

Por exemplo, eu não sei qual é que notícia é essa. O Globo: Justiça dá 48 horas para explicar porque que CBF não usa o Número 24.

Tira os olhos, Bolsonaro:

Olha eu nao uso o número 13, tou aguardando uma acao da justica. Tudo o que eu posso interferir por aqui na minha casa aqui, no meu serviço, nao tem o número 13. vão me investigar agora vão querer mover uma ação contra mim? Tou aguardando uma ação contra mim.

Tira os óculos e pousa a folha, agarra noutra folha e volta a pôr os óculos, le a folha,

Bolsonaro:

Supremo, e outra aqui, manda investigar organização criminosa. A imprensa já rotula de organização criminosa

Larga folha procura outra folha, Bolsonaro:

Outra coisa, eu queria falar mas, eu tive lá em Jucurutu,

Guimarães:

Rio Grande do Norte

Bolsonaro:

Rio grande do Norte, uma represa. Começou a ser construída em 1952, e o Rogério Marinho agora que é do Rio Grande do Norte, por coincidência, investiu nessa empresa. Ta faltando ai 5%, nem 5% para a obra ser concluída. Vai ser concluída no corrente ano. Então eu tirei foto com os trabalhadores e daí eles fizeram esse gesto aqui, né?

Bolsonaro faz o gesto da pistola, Bolsonaro:

Daqui o que que a imprensa fez? Disse que eles tiraram foto comigo e fizeram o L de Lula. Depois, até parabens pelo UOL que voltou atrás disse que o L não era de Lula era de arminha.

Bolsonaro atira a folha, Bolsonaro:

Mas que imprensa mesquinha é essa? Não tem noticias nao, meu deus do céu. Tem, tem o PRONAMPE, que não sei se vai sair alguma coisa na imprensa amanhã.

Bolsonaro agarra noutra folha, Bolsonaro:

Agora quando se fala em PRONAMPE, pessoal. Essa matéria aqui é da imprensa Argentina. Parece que tá melhor do que a nossa imprensa argentina. Mostrando aqui desde 1983 a quantidade de pessoas em benefícios sociais. E agora, em 2021 tem 31 milhões de pessoas, se eu não me engano aqui a argentina tem 40 milhões de habitantes, então um país que tem três quartos da sua população ganhando benefícios sociais, tem tudo para não recuperar, para quebrar de vez. Na Venezuela começou assim. Um país riquíssimo, tinha ouro e petróleo em abundância, criou-se projectos sociais, bastantes, para ganhar a simpatia do povo. O povo gostou. Até que o petróleo tava um pouco acima dos cem dólares e caiu para trinta, ai quebrou a venezuela de vez. Já tinha lá o Chávez né, propenso a impor uma ditadura. Que digo mais, o Chávez, quando ele se elegeu em 99 muita gente elogiou o chaves, até eu. Ele criticava o Fidel Castro, falava bem da economia Americana, mas rapidamente ele mostrou ao que veio. Tão a nossa Argentina querida aqui, três quartos da população vivendo em projetos sociais.

Guimarães:

A caixa tinha uma agência, uma representação na Venezuela. O senhor acredita? Na Venezuela. Na verdade era..

Bolsonaro sorri, Bolsonaro:

Verdade? Para que? Com todo o respeito, para que? Nao da para entender

Guimarães:

a gente não tinha na Inglaterra, não tinha em países onde você tivesse um..

Bolsonaro interrompe, Bolsonaro:

E para mandar algum companheiro para lá só pode ser isso aí, ou para fazer alguma negociata né.

(tiras os óculos) Afinal de contas, o pessoal que me critica que eu tou concluindo obras, é verdade. A maioria das inaugurações minhas sao obras sendo concluídas, agora o PT não deixou nenhuma obra inconclusa, lá em Angola, na Venezuela, na Bolívia, em Cuba concluiu tudo e de primeira.

Bolsonaro levanta pulgares, Bolsonaro:

Han, estima-se que não foi tudo para lá mas o BDN? meteu a mão em meio trilhão de reais. Parte desses recursos foi para lá. Então aí o pessoal que gosta ai de do cara lá de nove dedos.

Bolsonaro faz sinal de 9 dedos, Bolsonaro:

Olhe o que que ele fez noutros países e veja o que que ele deixou de fazer aqui no nosso país.

Bolsonaro olha para trás para o músico, Bolsonaro: Toca mais uma ai

Appendix 2: Trump’s speech at the Save America March 06/01/2021 - sample of transcriptions of narrative data.

The source used for this performance was *PBS NewsHour’s* YouTube account and a full version of Trump’s speech can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa9sT4efsqY&t=2402s> (PBS, 2021). My sample extends from minute 38:50 to minute 1:12:47. For the case of this performance, reliable scripts were available online and therefore this script was extracted from *NPR*, available from: <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/10/966396848/read-trumps-jan-6-speech-a-key-part-of-impeachment-trial> (Naylor, 2021).



Picture from Trump’s Save America March (Marovich, 2021).

SCENARIO

The outdoor stage in which Trump performed had the White House serving as background, covered only by some trees and about a dozen of US flags that were planted in the stage. A large stage was set up with a fully professional sound system. The stage had a bullet proof glass that protected the speaker. On the sides of the stage, two big publicity signs were mounted and they read: “Save

America March”. Another large banner lay on top of the stage also said: “Save America March”. For each side of the stage there was a large projector that was also decorated with multiple US flags and when it was not being used by production to project the performers it also portrayed the words “Save America March”. The stand from which Trump delivered his speech had the seal of the president of the US. Trump entered the stage to the song “I am proud to be an American”. He was dressed in a black suit with a white shirt and a red tie. He also wore a black overcoat and black leather gloves. Before he started speaking he applauded the crowd and interacted with people as he walked across the floor a couple times, **Trump:**

Well, thank you very much. This is incredible. Media will not show the magnitude of this crowd. Even I, when I turned on today, I looked, and I saw thousands of people here. But you don't see hundreds of thousands of people behind you because they don't want to show that. We have hundreds of thousands of people here and I just want them to be recognized by the fake news media. Turn your cameras please and show what's really happening out here because these people are not going to take it any longer. They're not going to take it any longer. Go ahead. Turn your cameras, please. Would you show? They came from all over the world, actually, but they came from all over our country. I just really want to see what they do. I just want to see how they covered. I've never seen anything like it. But it would be really great if we could be covered fairly by the media. The media is the biggest problem we have as far as I'm concerned, single biggest problem. The fake news and the Big tech. Big tech is now coming into their own. We beat them four years ago. We surprised them. We took them by surprise and this year they rigged an election. They rigged it like they've never rigged an election before. And by the way, last night they didn't do a bad job either if you notice. I'm honest. And I just, again, I want to thank you. It's just a great honor to have this kind of crowd and to be before you and hundreds of thousands of American patriots who are committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious republic. All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they're

doing. And stolen by the fake news media. That's what they've done and what they're doing. We will never give up, we will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved. Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore and that's what this is all about. And to use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with: We will stop the steal. Today I will lay out just some of the evidence proving that we won this election and we won it by a landslide. This was not a close election. You know, I say, sometimes jokingly, but there's no joke about it: I've been in two elections. I won them both and the second one, I won much bigger than the first. OK. Almost 75 million people voted for our campaign, the most of any incumbent president by far in the history of our country, 12 million more people than four years ago.

And I was told by the real pollsters — we do have real pollsters — they know that we were going to do well and we were going to win. What I was told, if I went from 63 million, which we had four years ago, to 66 million, there was no chance of losing. Well, we didn't go to 66, we went to 75 million, and they say we lost. We didn't lose. And by the way, does anybody believe that Joe had 80 million votes? Does anybody believe that? He had 80 million computer votes. It's a disgrace.

There's never been anything like that. You could take third-world countries. Just take a look. Take third-world countries. Their elections are more honest than what we've been going through in this country. It's a disgrace. It's a disgrace.

Even when you look at last night. They're all running around like chickens with their heads cut off with boxes. Nobody knows what the hell is going on. There's never been anything like this. We will not let them silence your voices. We're not going to let it happen, I'm not going to let it happen.

(Audience chants: "Fight for Trump.")

Thank you. And I'd love to have if those tens of thousands of people would be allowed. The military, the secret service. And we want to thank you and the police law enforcement. Great. You're doing a great job. But I'd love it if they could be allowed to come up here with us. Is that possible?

Can you just let him come up, please? And Rudy, you did a great job. He's got guts. You know what? He's got guts, unlike a lot of people in the Republican Party. He's got guts. He fights, he fights. And I'll tell you. Thank you very much, John. Fantastic job. I watched. That's a tough act to follow, those two. John is one of the most brilliant lawyers in the country, and he looked at this and he said, "What an absolute disgrace that this can be happening to our Constitution." And he looked at Mike Pence, and I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so. Because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election. All he has to do, all this is, this is from the number one, or certainly one of the top, Constitutional lawyers in our country. He has the absolute right to do it. We're supposed to protect our country, support our country, support our Constitution, and protect our constitution. States want to revote. The states got defrauded. They were given false information. They voted on it. Now they want to recertify. They want it back. All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify and we become president and you are the happiest people. And I actually, I just spoke to Mike. I said: "Mike, that doesn't take courage. What takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage." And then we're stuck with a president who lost the election by a lot and we have to live with that for four more years. We're just not going to let that happen. Many of you have traveled from all across the nation to be here, and I want to thank you for the extraordinary love. That's what it is. There's never been a movement like this, ever, ever. For the extraordinary love for this amazing country, and this amazing movement, thank you.

(Audience chants: "We love Trump.") By the way, this goes all the way back past the Washington Monument. You believe this? Look at this. That is. Unfortunately gave, they gave the press the prime seats. I can't stand that. No. But you look at that behind. I wish they'd flip those cameras and look behind you. That is the most amazing sight. When they make a mistake, you get to see it on television. Amazing. Amazing. All the way back. And don't worry, we will not take the name off the Washington Monument. We will not cancel culture. You know they wanted to get rid of the Jefferson Memorial. Either take it down or just put somebody else in there. I don't think that's going to happen. It damn well better not. Although, with this administration, if this happens, it could

happen. You'll see some really bad things happen. They'll knock out Lincoln too, by the way. They've been taking his statue down. But then we signed a little law. You hurt our monuments, you hurt our heroes, you go to jail for 10 years, and everything stopped. You notice that? It stopped. It all stopped. And they could use Rudy back in New York City. Rudy. They could use you. Your city's going to hell. They want Rudy Giuliani back in New York. We'll get a little younger version of Rudy. Is that OK, Rudy? We're gathered together in the heart of our nation's capital for one very, very basic and simple reason: To save our democracy. You know most candidates on election evening and, of course, this thing goes on so long. They still don't have any idea what the votes are. We still have congressional seats under review. They have no idea. They've totally lost control. They've used the pandemic as a way of defrauding the people in a proper election. But you know, you know, when you see this and when you see what's happening. Number one, they all say, "Sir, we'll never let it happen again." I said, "That's good. But what about eight weeks ago?" You know they try and get you to go. They said, "Sir, in four years, you're guaranteed." I said: "I'm not interested right now. Do me a favor, go back eight weeks. I want to go back eight weeks. Let's go back eight weeks." We want to go back and we want to get this right because we're going to have somebody in there that should not be in there and our country will be destroyed and we're not going to stand for that.

For years, Democrats have gotten away with election fraud and weak Republicans. And that's what they are. There's so many weak Republicans. And we have great ones. Jim Jordan and some of these guys, they're out there fighting. The House guys are fighting. But it's, it's incredible. Many of the Republicans, I helped them get in, I helped them get elected. I helped Mitch get elected. I helped. I could name 24 of them, let's say, I won't bore you with it. And then all of a sudden you have something like this. It's like, "Oh gee, maybe I'll talk to the president sometime later." No, it's amazing. They're weak Republicans, they're pathetic Republicans and that's what happens. If this happened to the Democrats, there'd be hell all over the country going on. There'd be hell all over the

country. But just remember this: You're stronger, you're smarter, you've got more going than anybody. And they try and demean everybody having to do with us. And you're the real people, you're the people that built this nation. You're not the people that tore down our nation. The weak Republicans, and that's it. I really believe it. I think I'm going to use the term, the weak Republicans. You've got a lot of them. And you got a lot of great ones. But you got a lot of weak ones. They've turned a blind eye, even as Democrats enacted policies that chipped away our jobs, weakened our military, threw open our borders and put America last. Did you see the other day where Joe Biden said, I want to get rid of the America First policy? What's that all about? Get rid of. How do you say I want to get rid of America First? Even if you're going to do it, don't talk about it, right? Unbelievable what we have to go through. What we have to go through. And you have to get your people to fight. And if they don't fight, we have to primary the hell out of the ones that don't fight. You primary them. We're going to. We're going to let you know who they are. I can already tell you, frankly. But this year, using the pretext of the China virus and the scam of mail-in ballots, Democrats attempted the most brazen and outrageous election theft and there's never been anything like this. So pure theft in American history. Everybody knows it. That election, our election was over at 10 o'clock in the evening. We're leading Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, by hundreds of thousands of votes. And then late in the evening, or early in the morning, boom, these explosions of bull****. And all of a sudden. All of a sudden it started to happen.

*(Audience chants: "Bull****.")*

Don't forget when Romney got beat. Romney, hey. Did you see his? I wonder if he enjoyed his flight in last night. But when Romney got beaten, you know, he stands up like you're more typical, "Well, I'd like to congratulate the victor." The victor? Who is the victor, Mitt? "I'd like to congratulate." They don't go and look at the facts. No, I don't know. He got, he got slaughtered. Probably, maybe it was OK, maybe it was. But that's what happened. But we look at the facts and our election was so corrupt that in the history of this country we've never seen anything like it. You

can go all the way back. You know, America is blessed with elections. All over the world they talk about our elections. You know what the world says about us now? They said, we don't have free and fair elections. And you know what else? We don't have a free and fair press. Our media is not free, it's not fair. It suppresses thought, it suppresses speech and it's become the enemy of the people. It's become the enemy of the people. It's the biggest problem we have in this country. No third-world countries would even attempt to do what we caught them doing. And you'll hear about that in just a few minutes. Republicans are, Republicans are constantly fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back. It's like a boxer. And we want to be so nice. We want to be so respectful of everybody, including bad people. And we're going to have to fight much harder. And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a, a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution. Now, it is up to Congress to confront this egregious assault on our democracy. And after this, we're going to walk down, and I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down, we're going to walk down. Anyone you want, but I think right here, we're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them. Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong. We have come to demand that Congress do the right thing and only count the electors who have been lawfully slated, lawfully slated. I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard. Today we will see whether Republicans stand strong for integrity of our elections. But whether or not they stand strong for our country, our country. Our country has been under siege for a long time. Far longer than this four-year period. We've set it on a much greater course. So much, and we, I thought, you know, four more years. I thought it would be easy. We've created the greatest economy in history. We rebuilt our military. We get you the biggest tax cuts in history. Right? We got you the biggest regulation cuts. There's no president, whether it's four years, eight years or in one case more, got anywhere near the regulation cuts. Used to take 20 years to get a highway approved, now we're

down to two. I want to get it down to one, but we're down to two. And it may get rejected for environmental or safety reasons, but we got it down to safety. We created Space Force, We, we, we. Look at what we did. Our military has been totally rebuilt. So we create Space Force which, by and of itself, is a major achievement for an administration. And with us it's one of so many different things. Right to Try. Everybody know about Right to Try. We did things that nobody ever thought possible. We took care of our vets, our vets. The VA now has the highest rating, 91%. The highest rating that it's had from the beginning, 91% approval rating. Always, you watch the VA, it was on television every night, people living in a horrible, horrible manner. We got that done. We got accountability done. We got it so that now in the VA, you don't have to wait for four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks, four months to see a doctor. If you can't get a doctor, you go outside, you get the doctor. You have it taken care of and we pay the doctor. And we've not only made life wonderful for so many people, we've saved tremendous amounts of money, far secondarily, but we've saved a lot of money. And now we have the right to fire bad people in the VA. We had 9,000 people that treated our veterans horribly. In primetime, they would not have treated our veterans badly. But they treated our veterans horribly. And we have what's called the account, VA Accountability Act. And the accountability says if we see somebody in there that doesn't treat our vets well or they steal, they rob, they do things badly, we say: "Joe you're fired. Get out of here." Before you couldn't do that. You couldn't do that before. So we've taken care of things, we've done things like nobody's ever thought possible. And that's part of the reason that many people don't like us, because we've done too much. But we've done it quickly and we were going to sit home and watch a big victory and everybody had us down for a victory. It was going to be great and now we're out here fighting. I said to somebody, I was going to take a few days and relax after our big electoral victory. 10 o'clock it was over. But I was going to take a few days. And I can say this. Since our election, I believe, which was such a catastrophe, when I watch. And even these guys knew what happened. They know what happened. They're saying: "Wow, Pennsylvania's insurmountable. Wow, Wisconsin." Look at the big leads we had, right. Even though the press said we would lose Wisconsin by 17

points. Even though the press said, Ohio's going to be close, we set a record; Florida's going to be close, we set a record; Texas is going to be close, Texas is going to be close, we set a record. And we set a record with Hispanic, with the Black community, we set a record with everybody. Today we see a very important event though. Because right over there, right there, we see the event going to take place. And I'm going to be watching. Because history is going to be made. We're going to see whether or not we have great and courageous leaders, or whether or not we have leaders that should be ashamed of themselves throughout history, throughout eternity they'll be ashamed. And you know what? If they do the wrong thing, we should never, ever forget that they did. Never forget. We should never ever forget. With only three of the seven states in question, we win the presidency of the United States. And by the way, it's much more important today than it was 24 hours ago, because I don't. I spoke to David Perdue, what a great person, and Kelly Loeffler, two great people, but it was a setup. And you know, I said, "We have no backline anymore." The only backline, the only line of demarcation, the only line that we have is the veto of the president of the United States. So this is now, what we're doing, a far more important election than it was two days ago. I want to thank the more than 140 members of the House. Those are warriors. They're over there working like you've never seen before. Studying, talking, actually going all the way back, studying the roots of the Constitution, because they know we have the right to send a bad vote that was illegally gotten. They gave these people bad things to vote for and they voted because what did they know? And then when they found out a few weeks later, again, it took them four years to devise this screen. And the only unhappy person in the United States, single most unhappy, is Hillary Clinton. Because she said: "Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Change the votes, 10,000 in Michigan. You could have changed the whole thing." But she's not too happy. You know, you don't see her anymore. What happened? Where's Hillary? Where is she? But I want to thank all of those congressmen and women. I also want to thank our 13, most courageous members of the U.S. Senate. Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Josh Hawley, Kelly Loeffler. And Kelly Loeffler, I'll tell you, she has been, she's

been so great. She worked so hard. So let's give her and David a little special hand because it was rigged against them. Let's give her and David. Kelly Loeffler, David Purdue. They fought a good race. They never had a shot. That equipment should never have been allowed to be used, and I was telling these people don't let him use this stuff. Marsha Blackburn, terrific person. Mike Braun, Indiana. Steve Daines, great guy. Bill Hagerty, John Kennedy, James Lankford, Cynthia Lummis, Tommy Tuberville, the coach, and Roger Marshall. We want to thank them. Senators that stepped up, we want to thank them. I actually think though, it takes, again, more courage not to step up, and I think a lot of those people are going to find that out and you better start looking at your leadership, because your leadership has led you down the tubes. You know, we don't want to give \$2,000 to people. We want to give them \$600. Oh, great. How does that play politically? Pretty good? And this has nothing to do with politics, but how does it play politically? China destroyed these people. We didn't destroy. China destroy them, totally destroyed them. We want to give them \$600 and they just wouldn't change. I said give them \$2,000, we'll pay it back. We'll pay it back fast. You already owe 26 trillion, give them a couple of bucks. Let them live. Give them a couple of bucks. And some of the people here disagree with me on that, but I just say, "Look, you've got to let people live." And how does that play though? OK. Number one, it's the right thing to do. But how does that play politically? I think it's the primary reason, one of the primary reasons, the other was just pure cheating. That was the primary, super primary reason. But you can't do that, you got to use your head. As you know, the media has constantly asserted the outrageous lie that there was no evidence of widespread fraud. Have you ever seen these people? While there is no evidence of fraud. Oh, really? Well, I'm going to read you pages. I hope you don't get bored listening to it. Promise? Don't get bored listening to it, all those hundreds of thousands of people back there. Move them up, please, yeah. All they, all these people, don't get bored, don't get angry at me because you're going to get bored because it's so much. The American people do not believe the corrupt, fake news anymore. They have ruined their reputation. But you know, it used to be that they'd argue with me. I'd fight. So I'd fight, they'd fight, I'd fight, they'd fight. Pop pop. You'd believe me, you'd believe

them. Somebody comes out. You know, they had their point of view, I had my point of view, but you'd have an argument. Now what they do is they go silent. It's called suppression and that's what happens in a communist country. That's what they do, they suppress. You don't fight with them anymore. Unless it's a bad story. They have a little bad story about me, they make it 10 times worse and it's a major headline. But Hunter Biden, they don't talk about him. What happened to Hunter? Where's Hunter? Where's Hunter? They don't talk about him. They'll watch, all the sets will go off. Well, they can't do that because they get good ratings. Their ratings are too good. Now, where's Hunter? You know. And how come Joe is allowed to give a billion dollars of money to get rid of the prosecutor in Ukraine? How does that happen? I'd ask you that question. How does that happen? Can you imagine if I said that? If I said that it would be a whole different ballgame. And how come Hunter gets three and a half million dollars from the mayor of Moscow's wife, and gets hundreds of thousands of dollars to sit on an energy board, even though he admits he has no knowledge of energy? And millions of dollars up front. And how come they go into China and they leave with billions of dollars to manage. "Have you managed money before?" "No, I haven't." "Oh, that's good. Here's about 3 billion." No, they don't talk about that.

No, we have a corrupt media. They've gone silent. They've gone dead. I now realize how good it was if you go back 10 years, I realized how good, even though I didn't necessarily love them, I realized how good. It was like a cleansing motion, right? But we don't have that anymore. We don't have a fair media anymore. It's suppression. And you have to be very careful with that and they've lost all credibility in this country. We will not be intimidated into accepting the hoaxes and the lies that we've been forced to believe. Over the past several weeks, we've amassed overwhelming evidence about a fake election. This is the presidential election. Last night was a little bit better because of the fact that we had a lot of eyes watching one specific state, but they cheated like hell anyway. You have one of the dumbest governors in the United States. And you know when I endorsed him, and I didn't know this guy, at the request of David Perdue, he said, "Friend of mine's

running for governor." "What's his name?" And you know the rest. He was in fourth place, fifth place. I don't know, he was, he was doing poorly. I endorse him, he went like a rocket ship and he won. And then I had to beat Stacey Abrams with this guy, Brian Kemp. I had to beat Stacey Abrams. And I had to beat Oprah, used to be a friend of mine. You know, I was on her last show, her last week, she picked the five outstanding people. I don't think she thinks that any more. Once I ran for president, I didn't notice there were too many calls coming in from Oprah. Believe it or not, she used to like me. But I was one of the five outstanding people. And I had a campaign against Michelle Obama and Barack Hussein Obama, against Stacey. And I had Brian Kemp, who weighs 130 pounds. He said he played offensive line in football. I'm trying to figure that out. I'm still trying to figure that out. He said that the other night, "I was an offensive lineman." I'm saying: "Really? That must have been a very small team." But I look at that and I look at what's happened and he turned out to be a disaster. This stuff happens. You know, look, I'm not happy with the Supreme Court. They love to rule against me. I picked three people. I fought like hell for them. One in particular, I fought. They all said, "Sir, cut him loose." He's killing the senators. You know, very loyal senators, they're very loyal people, "Sir, cut him loose, he's killing us, sir, cut him loose." I must have gotten half of the senators. I said: "No, I can't do that, it's unfair to him and it's unfair to the family. He didn't do anything wrong." They made up stories, they're all made-up stories. He didn't do anything wrong. "Cut him loose, sir." I said, "No, I won't do that. We got him through." And you know what, they couldn't give a damn. They couldn't give a damn. Let him rule the right way. But it almost seems that they're all going out of their way to hurt all of us and to hurt our country. To hurt our country. You know, I read a story in one of the newspapers recently how I control the three Supreme Court justices. I control them. They're puppets. I read it about Bill Barr, that he's my personal attorney. That he'll do anything for me. And I said, "You know, it really is genius." Because what they do is that, and it makes it really impossible for them to ever give you a victory, because all of a sudden Bill Barr changed. If you hadn't noticed. I like Bill Barr, but he changed, because he didn't want to be considered my personal attorney. And the Supreme Court,

they rule against me so much. You know why? Because the story is — I haven't spoken to any of them, any of them, since virtually they got in — but the story is that they're my puppets. Right? That they're puppets. And now the only way they can get out of that because they hate that it's not good in the social circuit. And the only way they get out is to rule against Trump. So let's rule against Trump. And they do that. So I want to congratulate them (Naylor, 2021).

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