

# THE TEMPLE IS ALSO A PLACE FOR POLITICS: A STUDY BASED ON THE “JUVENTUDE PELO BRASIL” RALLIES DURING THE 2022 ELECTIONS

**Joilson Barros**

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Centro de Ciências de Imperatriz,  
Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, Brazil  
Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation,  
methodology, visualisation, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing

**Camilla Quesada Tavares**

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Centro de Ciências de Imperatriz,  
Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, Brazil  
Conceptualisation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration,  
resources, supervision, visualisation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

---

## ABSTRACT

This paper is a multiple case study aimed at understanding how Jair Bolsonaro (Liberal Party), the incumbent candidate for re-election, was presented in electoral events held within evangelical churches during the second round of the 2022 presidential elections. To this end, the research analysed three events from the “Juventude Pelo Brasil” rallies, organised by influencer and federal deputy Nikolas Ferreira. The goal was to secure additional votes from northeastern voters in the second round for Bolsonaro, who was trailing his main opponent, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Worker’s Party), in all states of the region during the first round of voting. Through an analysis of the rallies held in various northeastern cities, this study also explores whether disinformation-based rhetoric was present in the speeches delivered during these events and for what purposes. The analysis focuses on the speeches made by Nikolas Ferreira at the events in Imperatriz (Maranhão), Fortaleza (Ceará), and Salvador (Bahia) in October 2022. These rallies were broadcast in their entirety on YouTube, providing us with access to the content. Each of Ferreira’s speeches lasts between 21 and 31 minutes. For the study, we employed the descriptive qualitative method of content analysis based on the videos made available on the platform above. The results indicate that the primary strategy for shaping Bolsonaro’s image in evangelical churches involved deconstructing the image of political opponents. The election was framed as an ideological confrontation, with Bolsonaro positioned as the central figure in the battle against what was portrayed as a greater evil. Additionally, Ferreira, in an effort to mobilise his supporters, exploited the Bible, turning the act of voting into a moral crusade. He suggested that voting for another candidate would be contrary to religious principles, further contributing to the spread of disinformation on these issues.

## KEYWORDS

religion, election, disinformation, Nikolas Ferreira, Jair Bolsonaro

---

# O TEMPLO TAMBÉM É LUGAR DE FAZER POLÍTICA: UM ESTUDO A PARTIR DAS CARAVANAS “JUVENTUDE PELO BRASIL” DURANTE AS ELEIÇÕES DE 2022

## RESUMO

O presente trabalho trata de um estudo de casos múltiplos cujo objetivo é compreender como o então candidato à reeleição, Jair Bolsonaro (Partido Liberal), é apresentado em atos eleitorais realizados dentro de igrejas evangélicas durante o segundo turno das eleições presidenciais de 2022. Para tanto, esta pesquisa analisou três eventos da turnê do influenciador e deputado federal Nikolas Ferreira, chamados de caravanas “Juventude Pelo Brasil”. O objetivo era conquistar mais votos dos nordestinos no segundo turno em favor de Bolsonaro, que ficou atrás de seu principal adversário, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Partido dos Trabalhadores), em todos os estados da região na primeira parte da disputa. A partir da análise das caravanas realizadas em diferentes cidades nordestinas, questionamos também se houve discursos desinformativos durante as caravanas e com que propósitos. Para este trabalho, foram analisadas as falas proferidas por Nikolas Ferreira durante os eventos que aconteceram em Imperatriz (Maranhão), Fortaleza (Ceará) e Salvador (Bahia) em outubro de 2022. Essas caravanas foram integralmente transmitidas pelo YouTube, por meio do qual tivemos acesso ao conteúdo. Cada fala de Ferreira contém entre 21 e 31 minutos. Para a análise, utilizamos o método qualitativo descritivo de análise de conteúdo, a partir dos vídeos disponibilizados na plataforma supracitada. Os resultados indicam que a principal estratégia na construção da imagem de Bolsonaro em igrejas evangélicas se deu a partir da desconstrução da imagem de adversários políticos, na qual a eleição foi tratada como um confronto ideológico, onde Bolsonaro foi apresentado como a figura central da luta contra o que era percebido como um mal maior. Além disso, Ferreira, em busca de mobilizar seus eleitores, instrumentaliza a Bíblia, transformando o ato de votar em uma cruzada moral, sugerindo que votar em outro candidato seria ir contra os princípios religiosos, o que contribui para disseminar desinformação em relação a esses temas.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

religião, eleição, desinformação, Nikolas Ferreira, Jair Bolsonaro

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyse the relationship between religion, politics, and communication in the context of the 2022 presidential elections. Specifically, it seeks to understand how Jair Bolsonaro, the incumbent candidate for re-election from the Liberal Party, was presented in electoral events held in religious settings<sup>1</sup>, particularly within evangelical churches. While studies exploring the intersection of religion and politics in Brazil are not new (Cowan, 2014; Mariano, 2011; Novaes, 2001; Prandi & Santos, 2017), the recent political climate has drawn the attention of numerous researchers, who have now incorporated the element of disinformation into their analysis (Ladeira, 2022; Massuchin & Santos, 2021).

Firstly, it is important to highlight the significant influence of religion on the lives of a large portion of the Brazilian population. According to the “A Cara da Democracia” (The Face of Democracy; Instituto da Democracia, 2024) survey by the Institute for Democracy

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the term “temple” is used as a general synonym for a place of religious worship, while “church” specifically refers to the evangelical Christian community.

and Democratisation of Communication, published by *O Globo* in 2022, churches are the most trusted institutions in Brazil, surpassing the Armed Forces, political parties, Congress, and the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the *Wellcome Global Monitor* survey (Wellcome, 2019) reveals that 75% of Brazilians place more trust in their religion than in science. In this context, studies exploring whether religious affiliation influences the electoral behaviour of evangelicals suggest that the majority of this group tends to reject differing political and moral views (Kniess & Santos, 2020; Pierucci & Prandi, 1995).

This study aims to contribute to the limited body of research focused on understanding political discourse within evangelical churches. As noted by Cunha (2015), the case of pastor and federal deputy Marco Feliciano, who was elected president of the Human Rights Commission in 2013, exemplifies the intersection of media, religion, and politics. Cunha highlights this as “a phenomenon that marks the recent moment in Brazilian politics, in which evangelicals are positioning themselves in the political arena as an organically articulated bloc” (p. 14). In this context, analysing the discourses circulating within the evangelical community during pivotal moments, such as elections, is crucial. It sheds light on how the so-called “evangelical vote”<sup>2</sup> is cultivated and drawn toward right-wing political narratives.

In light of this, the research question guiding this study is: what discursive strategies are employed to construct Jair Bolsonaro’s public image among the conservative evangelical electorate in northeastern Brazil? In order to address this question, the study analyses the discourses of federal deputy-elect Nikolas Ferreira during the “Juventude Pelo Brasil” (Youth for Brazil) rallies, held in the second round of the 2022 elections to mobilise young evangelical voters in the region in favour of Bolsonaro (Bimbati & Pereira, 2022). Between 21 and 27 October of that year, Ferreira was tasked by Bolsonaro’s campaign team with rallying the youth vote in the northeast, where Bolsonaro was trailing his main opponent, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers’ Party). Notably, the events took place in evangelical churches, and Bolsonaro himself was absent from all of them, further highlighting their symbolic significance.

Building on these issues, the primary objective of this study is to analyse how Bolsonaro’s image is constructed within evangelical churches. The specific objectives include (a) examining how Ferreira portrays Bolsonaro in evangelical temples; (b) identifying how Ferreira addresses political opponents, particularly Lula and the left; and (c) investigating the elements — such as moral or disinformation-based — activated by these religious discourses and their implications.

The proposed objectives were achieved through a descriptive qualitative analysis (Zanatta & Costa, 2012) of the event videos available online. It focused on three rallies held in northeastern cities: Imperatriz (Maranhão), at the Central Temple of the Assembly of God; Fortaleza (Ceará), at the Church of the Newness of Life; and Salvador (Bahia), where the event took place at the Moriah Hall, headquarters of the First Baptist Church

---

<sup>2</sup> The concept of an “evangelical vote” is misleading, as the evangelical Christian segment is not a unified bloc with homogeneous positions (Cowan, 2014). Within this diverse community of Protestants and Evangelicals, numerous denominations hold differing doctrines.

of Brazil. Ferreira's discourses, which ranged from 21 to 31 minutes, were hosted on religious YouTube channels: AD CHURC TV, NDV FORTALEZA, and O Retiro, respectively. We believe that the empirical materials are adequate to support the discussion on how Bolsonaro is presented in electoral acts by conservative evangelical leaders, to the extent that they regard him as "God's chosen one" (Alencar, 2020).

This research is justified by the lack of empirical studies on conservative political leaders who leverage their influence to endorse a third-party candidate, in this case, Jair Bolsonaro. To our knowledge, no studies have examined how political and religious figures use evangelical temples to bring former President Bolsonaro closer to the evangelical community. Overall, studies analysing political endorsements through the messages of influential leaders within this religious sphere are still in the early stages. Additionally, the few existing studies tend to approach the data from a mathematical perspective (Prandi et al., 2019). As a result, many of the studies analysing the political phenomenon of Bolsonarism since 2018 focus on its relationship with online social networks and instant messaging apps (Dourado, 2020; Maranhão et al., 2018; Massuchin et al., 2021; Mont'Alverne & Mitozo, 2019; Santos et al., 2022), highlighting the lack of qualitative research offering alternative insights into the phenomenon. For this reason, this study addresses the political-religious discourse aligned with Bolsonaro in the 2022 electoral context within evangelical churches. Furthermore, it is important to note that the events were overtly partisan, meaning the audience was aware that they were attending a campaign event in support of Bolsonaro, with Ferreira's presence serving as an endorsement of this presidential candidate.

The paper is structured as follows: first, we introduce Nikolas Ferreira, the political influencer, examining his influence, the concept of political celebrities, and the characteristics of populist leaders. Our main focus is on analysing his statements regarding a third party, namely Jair Bolsonaro. We argue that Ferreira has cultivated an audience that legitimises him as both a leader and a celebrity. Next, we explore the post-truth scenario, which helps explain the current information environment where emotional appeals increasingly overshadow facts. That is particularly relevant to the context in which the events were held. Additionally, we discuss concepts such as fake news, which is often invoked to discredit individuals or groups, constructing the image of enemies and fuelling political polarisation (Maranhão et al., 2018). We then present the findings, discussing how Bolsonaro is portrayed within the religious setting and identifying the misinformation present in Ferreira's speeches. Finally, we offer the final considerations of the study.

## **2. NIKOLAS FERREIRA: OPINION SHAPER, POLITICAL CELEBRITY AND POPULIST STYLE**

Nikolas Ferreira de Oliveira, more commonly known as Nikolas Ferreira, was elected as a federal deputy for Minas Gerais in 2022 for the 57th Legislature (2023–2027). Basic details about his life can be found on the Chamber of Deputies website. Born in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais) on May 30, 1996, Ferreira graduated in Law from the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais. He became the most-voted federal deputy

in the country in the 2022 elections, receiving nearly 1,500,000 votes. In the 2020 municipal elections, he ran for public office for the first time, securing the position of the second most-voted councillor in the capital.

Ferreira has a notably large following on social media. For instance, on Instagram (@nikolasferreiradm), he has more than 10,500,000 followers (see Figure 1). Before entering politics, he had already established himself as a digital influencer, primarily targeting conservative audiences. His first video on YouTube was titled “O que É Ser um Conservador?” (What Does It Mean to Be a Conservative?) and uploaded on August 17 2018 (Ferreira, 2018). As of the time of writing, Ferreira had just over 1,800,000 subscribers to his YouTube channel.



**Figure 1.** Screenshot of Nikolas Ferreira's official Instagram profile

Source. Retrieved from Nikolas Ferreira [@nikolasferreiradm], Instagram. (<https://www.instagram.com/nikolasferreiradm/>)

The link in the bio leads to the launch of a paid online course, “O Cristão e a Política” (The Christian and Politics), developed by Nikolas Ferreira himself. According to the advertisement, the course is not only for politicians but also for any Christian. The course’s mission, as stated by Ferreira, is to prepare Christians to defend their values and transform young people into an Army of Christ that will take a stand against left-wing ideologies<sup>3</sup>. He also offers additional tips, such as how to make friends, engage in debates, and use social networks.

In the article “Nikolas Ferreira: De Apagado a Fenômeno na Direita e Deputado Mais Votado” (Nikolas Ferreira: From Obscurity to Becoming a Right-Wing Phenomenon and the Most Voted Deputy) by Natália Andrade (2022), the journalist describes how the politician attracts support from the Brazilian right through his conservative and liberal positions on his social networks. Some examples of his views can be seen in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where he opposed measures to combat the virus. As a councillor, his most prominent bill was one aimed at banning neutral language in schools. Additionally, he became a defendant in a lawsuit filed by the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Minas Gerais for broadcasting a video in July 2022 showing a trans teenager using the women’s toilet.

<sup>3</sup> The course “O Cristão e a Política” by Nikolas Ferreira can be accessed at: <https://www.nikolasferreira.com/patrono/>.

To conceptualise Nikolas Ferreira's profile as an individual who influences his audience, the two-step flow model of communication developed by sociologists Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1948) in their book *The People's Choice* proves useful. This model helps us understand that many individuals act as primary sources of information within their groups, often referred to as "opinion leaders". In the model's context, an opinion leader is someone who, after picking up information from the media (the first stage), passes it on to others in their social circle (the second stage). Therefore, the central idea of this model is that people value interpersonal communication, meaning that media messages find their true significance through discussions within an individual's social network.

In this sense, it should also be highlighted that the messages conveyed by opinion leaders may be passed on differently, as they "are not neutral channels for conveying the media's message to others" (Martino, 2009, p. 3). From this paradigm, we can observe that individuals have social connections, and it is within these relationships — among friends, family, church, or work — that information acquires meaning. In the case of Nikolas Ferreira, it is expected that the content of his discourses will have already been disseminated through mass media or social networks. However, it is in the churches, with the crowd watching, that the final interpretation of these messages will take place.

In addition to the concept of "opinion leader", other notions of personal influence have been developed, particularly to address the digital realm. Some authors have coined a different term to describe the new opinion leaders, referring to them as "digital influencers" to capture the unique characteristics they have developed. Karhawi (2017) argues that, regardless of the subject matter, becoming an opinion leader requires gaining the trust of an audience or followers, as they are the ones who validate you as an influencer. In this way, influencers can act as a "filter" in shaping the decisions of their group members. To illustrate this, Karhawi (2017) offers the following example: when a reader is deciding on a new book to read, a literary influencer will play a crucial role in the reader's choice because, at some point, based on their taste, they have critiqued which books are worth reading. This happens in a context where numerous literary works are released daily.

From this perspective, Motta et al. (2014) further reiterate that a significant part of the audience tends to endorse the opinions of their leader. In this sense, the statements made by the influencer can persuade their audience to adopt the same viewpoint. To support this claim, the authors analysed comments on a YouTube video by the youtuber Pirulla, discussing the importance of bone marrow donation. The results revealed that some viewers had been motivated to register as donors after watching the video. This illustrates how an influencer's request can prompt their followers to take concrete action.

It is, therefore, in this type of influence within the ideological segment that Nikolas Ferreira exerts his persuasion. He is the author of the book *O Cristão e a Política* (The Christian and Politics), in which he advocates for the participation of evangelicals in politics and monetises the subject through paid courses aimed at mobilising new individuals to defend right-wing, conservative, and religious ideals. Thus, we need to analyse how Ferreira discusses the world, drawing on works such as that by França and Leurquin (2022) on political celebrities. In their study, the authors observe, based on a case study of youtuber Felipe Neto, that influence can often be used irresponsibly.

In the period between the two interviews, it is possible to observe the transition from a celebrity making casual comments about politics without much deliberation to someone who distinguishes themselves and distances themselves from this realm, ultimately attaining the status of a political celebrity, speaking with greater substance and advocating for causes. (França & Leurquin, 2022, p. 38)

Furthermore, the literature on political celebrities is useful for discussing studies that deal with culture and politics, which is the case of our work, as it goes beyond the trust-based relationship between the evangelical and/or conservative public and a political figure in evangelical temples. In particular, there are various forms of political celebrity. One of the types developed by Marsh et al. (2010, as cited in Kamradt, 2019) is, for example, the politician who uses the celebrity of a third party to endorse their candidacy. On the other hand, just as Nikolas Ferreira endorsed Bolsonaro's candidacy, he also used his visibility to achieve political goals, first by winning a seat in the municipal legislature and then in the federal legislature as a deputy. This is another form of celebrity developed by Marsh et al. (2010, as cited in Kamradt, 2019): "the famous who have used their fame to achieve public office" (p. 12).

Moreover, Street (2019) uses former President Donald Trump as an example of this political celebrity culture. According to the theorist, the relationship in celebrity politics can take on various forms. The individual is no longer just a voter but becomes a fan, while the politician transforms from a representative into an artist. Regarding Trump, Street (2019) noted that "he wants to be a star as much as a politician. He wants to be adored as much, if not more, than he wants to be admired" (p. 8). Concerning these social dynamics, the author explains that the community of fans surrounding the celebrity is referred to as "political fandom". In this context, the overwhelming public support for the "Juventude Pelo Brasil" rallies, with packed temples and the euphoria surrounding Nikolas Ferreira's entrance, suggests that the audience, rather than acting as citizen-voters, behaved more like fans, especially considering the event was advertised as free but with a request for a kilo of food.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that Nikolas Ferreira's success in attracting a mass following transcends the figure of influencer, opinion leader, or political celebrity. His populist communication style plays a fundamental role in this process. As Mudde (2004) points out, "populism presents a Manichean outlook, in which there are only friends and foes. Opponents are not just people with different priorities and values; they are evil! Consequently, compromise is impossible, as it 'corrupts' the purity" (p. 544). The demonisation of opponents, therefore, is a central strategy in populist discourse. According to DeHanas and Shterin (2018), "in Western states, the opposition to 'others' tends to focus on immigrants and/or Muslims. In the non-Western or anti-Western variants of populism, 'others' can be 'secularists', 'communists', or 'Western intruders' themselves" (p. 178). This strategy of polarisation is effective in mobilising the masses and strengthening group identity.

In this context, fake news and post-truth have become powerful tools for disseminating populist discourses. In the next section, we will explore the intersection between this distorted informational environment and the religious and political spheres.

### 3. FIGHTING THE ENEMY: OPPONENT DISQUALIFICATION AND COMPELLING DISCOURSES

The conflict between religious ultraconservatives and the left is not a new phenomenon. Conservative evangelical politicians primarily focus on defending traditionalist agendas, often clashing over legislative revisions concerning sexual and reproductive rights (Machado, 2013). Moreover, they adopt strategic approaches to advancing their political objectives. As Machado (2013) observed, evangelical leaders have increasingly sought academic qualifications in fields like law or medicine to bolster their arguments within these domains. However, the author contends that “even if arguments from legal, psychological, medical and other fields of knowledge are incorporated into the parliamentary debate, these arguments serve the conviction of the Pentecostal group” (p. 56).

It is thus evident that the conservative evangelical political group is well-organised in influencing the rights of other social groups. Moreover, Cunha (2015) highlights that those who oppose the positions of religious political leaders are often demonised, being labelled as “agents of the devil”. The author illustrates this with the case of Marco Feliciano in 2013, when widespread protests arose against his appointment as president of the Federal Chamber of Deputies’ Commission on Human Rights and Minorities, given his history of discriminatory views on human rights, particularly concerning homosexuals. Anyone opposing<sup>4</sup> his leadership of the commission was subject to demonisation. In this context, Cunha (2015) notes that the rhetoric of these conservative religious actors is heavily imbued with emotional appeals, invoking “the existence of a Warrior and Bellicose God, who has avenging angels around him, who exterminate John Lennon or the Mamonas Assassinas” (p. 7).

In the public sphere, many right-wing politicians employ a similarly compelling tone to express their worldview and interpret reality. Soares and Recuero (2018), in their study on the positions taken regarding the opening of the impeachment process against former President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, identified notable discursive differences between the two sides. Many of the MPs who supported impeachment and voted “yes” articulated their arguments in a manner that resonated strongly with the masses:

the deputies positioned themselves as symbols representing their state, their family, their constituents, Brazil, and even God. This is evident in the frequent use of references at the beginning of their discourses, such as: “For my state, for my family, for my children”. (Soares & Recuero, 2018, p. 77)

<sup>4</sup> An example from this period is the sermon by Deputy Marco Feliciano, in which he associated the success of singer Caetano Veloso with the work of the devil (“Em Novo Vídeo, Feliciano Insinua que Caetano Veloso Fez Pacto com Diabo”, 2013).



The group of MPs who voted “no” adopted a different approach. Their arguments primarily focused on procedural matters, directly addressing whether they believed Dilma was innocent or guilty of the crime she was accused of committing.

Regarding this case, Quirós (2017) argues that “the dispute between those who shouted ‘it’s a coup’ and those who shouted ‘it’s constitutional’ in Brazil during the fall of Dilma Rousseff crystallises the idea of a world driven by passions and beliefs, where truth is no longer necessary” (para. 9). To complement this point, Medeiros (2017) contends that “emotional appeals that mobilise personal beliefs are more effective in winning over public opinion than objective facts” (para. 1). This is the meaning of post-truth. In this context, electoral events in evangelical churches within the post-truth era can provide a conducive environment for fake news, as “the strength of a rumour or falsehood lies in the credibility of those who propagate it. Today, that power lies in its ease of distribution, both quickly and widely, as well as in the willingness of those who receive it to believe it” (Quirós, 2017, para. 10).

In an article produced in the field of performing arts, Ladeira (2022) analysed the performance of pastor and politician Damares Alves in evangelical churches. In the study, the propagation of disinformation in the religious space since 2013 is verified — such as, for example, presenting herself as a master in education and law (Ballousier, 2019). Even at this event, Alves was already dealing with false information relating to children and sexuality<sup>5</sup>, using PowerPoint as a strategy to present data and give her presentation a scientific character. Hence, despite the fact that Ladeira’s (2022) study was artistic-scientific, she identified that in addition to the pulpit staging, Alves used this medium to create enemies of Christians, “associating feminists, Workers’ Party members, professors, and scientists with paedophilia and the degradation of Christian values in Brazilian society” (p. 15).

This perspective is echoed by Maranhão Filho et al. (2018), who argue that fake news is instrumental in constructing enemies, primarily to advance political interests. A notable example is the controversy surrounding the so-called “gay kit” in 2011, which was deliberately misinterpreted by evangelical parliamentarians to thwart the project. Their discourse framed the issue as an attack by adversaries seeking to undermine the “traditional family”. Similarly, Tandoc Jr. et al. (2018) contend that fake news functions as a political weapon, portraying the opposing side as enemies intent on destroying the group’s values.

This strategy of discrediting left-wing political figures is far from new. To illustrate, Dourado (2020) highlights several cases of fake news aimed at tarnishing the reputation of left-wing candidates. These include claims that the then-presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff supported abortion during the 2010 campaign; that Lula owned the Friboi meat industry; that deputy Jean Wyllys referred to pastors as clowns; that Manuela D’Ávila, the 2018 vice-presidential candidate, endorsed abortion; and, notably, the case of Marielle Franco’s murder in 2018, where various narratives were circulated to damage the victim’s reputation.

As we have observed, the disqualification of opponents — specifically, the left — has employed various strategies over the years. The innovation lies in the impact these

---

<sup>5</sup> One such instance of misinformation dates back to 2004, when Damares Alves claimed that the mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, had contracted a non-governmental organisation to “teach nursery school teachers about baby erections and masturbation” (Menezes & Cunha, 2018, para. 6).

strategies achieve when disseminated predominantly through social networks. The use of false information, fake news, and displaced statements is not new; what is novel is their influence on public discourse within a context characterised by the targeting of content. In this study, our focus is on analysing how disinformation is utilised by Nikolas Ferreira during a speech directed at converts (Norris, 2003) within a setting imbued with a strong ideological bias. Although this is not an analysis of the narratives circulating on social media, the fact that Ferreira is regarded as a Christian influencer with thousands of followers on these platforms bridges two distinct realms: preaching to converts in traditional settings and acting as a religious opinion leader with significant influence on social media. This dual role gives him the ability to shape the views of his followers, whether addressing them in conventional spaces or via digital platforms. Consequently, whether through his online profiles or during a sermon broadcast on the internet, Nikolas Ferreira's words hold considerable sway over his community — this is the focal point of our investigation. With this context in mind, we now outline the methodological procedures of the research.

#### 4. METHODS

This research is designed as a multiple case study (Yin, 2013) with a qualitative approach. It aims to explore the political-religious discourses<sup>6</sup> delivered by Deputy Nikolas Ferreira in support of Jair Bolsonaro's re-election campaign during the second round of the 2022 presidential elections. Specifically, it examines Ferreira's speeches during three events held in religious temples across northeastern cities as part of the "Juventude Pelo Brasil" rallies. The empirical *corpus* comprises three videos hosted on religious YouTube channels. Given the rally's regional focus, which exclusively toured northeastern cities, and the limitations in locating video records, the *corpus* is restricted to these three locations. This selection is justified by the northeast's strategic importance in the 2022 elections and the availability of accessible data.

It is important to highlight that the primary objective of our study is to describe the political-religious discourses present in the analysed videos. Attempting to explain the "why" of phenomena presents greater challenges than merely describing the "what" — the explicit content of the speeches. Regarding the "why", Yin (2013) explains: "this means: (a) documenting (and interpreting) a set of outcomes, and then (b) trying to explain how those outcomes came about. When adopting such an explanatory objective, a case study evaluation will in effect be examining causal relationships" (p. 322). Nevertheless, the main focus of our study is to provide a detailed description of the discourses without the intention of establishing causalities<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, we selected as case studies the rallies held in three cities: Imperatriz (Maranhão), with a video hosted on the AD CHURCH TV channel, lasting 3 hours and 4 minutes; Fortaleza (Ceará), with a video hosted on the NDV FORTALEZA channel, lasting

---

<sup>6</sup> In this paper, we define "discourse" as the communicative actions expressed in the speeches of religious politicians. Our analysis focuses on the explicit content of these speeches, avoiding engagement with more complex linguistic theories.

<sup>7</sup> In adopting this methodological approach, we acknowledge the inherent limitations of case studies, particularly regarding the generalisability of results, as the findings cannot be extrapolated beyond the groups included in our study.

1 hour and 57 minutes; and Salvador (Bahia), with a video lasting 2 hours and 33 minutes. The event in Salvador had a particularity: Ferreira held two sessions due to the size of the audience. However, for analysis, the videos were treated as a single piece since the speeches were essentially identical (see Table 1). Ferreira used the same material from the first session, which was presented via PowerPoint, to address the other attendees outside the temple. Despite the lengthy duration of the YouTube videos, Ferreira's speaking time was minimal. The extended duration of the broadcast can be attributed to the presence of other religious and political figures who took to the pulpit to preach, sing, pray, and deliver speeches in the format of an evangelical service. It is worth noting that in Salvador, the two sessions totalled 52 minutes, with Ferreira's speeches lasting 21 and 31 minutes, respectively.

CITY	YOUTUBE CHANNEL	DURATION	NIKOLAS FERREIRA'S SPEAKING TIME
Imperatriz	AD CHURC TV ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1N5jtOhHg4E&amp;t=8210s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1N5jtOhHg4E&amp;t=8210s</a> )	3h 04 minutes	24 minutes
Fortaleza	NDV FORTALEZA ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMPqPpYfmtE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMPqPpYfmtE</a> )	1h 57 minutes	23 minutes
Salvador	O Retiro ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n5wqqDMsbs&amp;t=6810s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n5wqqDMsbs&amp;t=6810s</a> )	2h 33 minutes	52 minutes

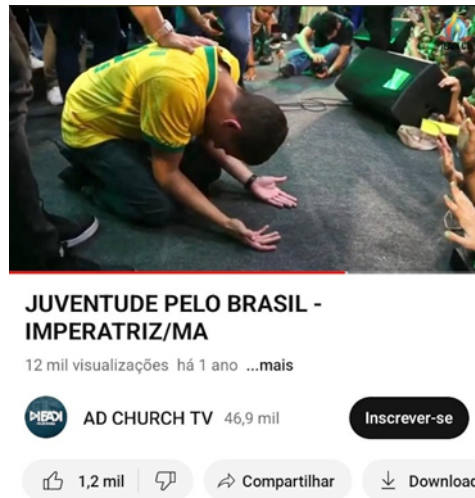
Table 1. Overview of the videos from the rallies in northeastern cities

The videos were gathered in August 2023. Qualitative techniques were employed to analyse the collected material. We transcribed the videos and identified patterns by carefully reading the texts. It is important to underline that we opted for manual descriptive analysis, as our *corpus* is not extensive (Alves et al., 2015), meaning no software was used in the process. The work involved creating our database, from which we categorised the speech into three main areas: (a) Bolsonaro's image, (b) the image of the left and Lula, and (c) topics targeted by disinformation. In short, we organised the data into categories that allowed us to address our research question, which focuses on Nikolas Ferreira's discursive strategies in constructing Bolsonaro's image within northeastern evangelical churches. In this regard, the passages most relevant to the research question and objectives were highlighted and inserted into the tables. The results will be presented in the following section.

## 5. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Firstly, it should be noted that Ferreira's discourses at the three events are largely similar. According to Ladeira (2022), these repeated narratives can be attributed to "an elaboration or prior mastery of the discourse, thanks to its constant repetition" (p. 17). In essence, the religious tone predominates throughout. For instance, in Imperatriz, before Ferreira took the microphone to deliver his speech, influencer Guilherme Batista had

him kneel so that the congregation could pray for him, a common practice in evangelical services. This gesture, where hands are held out to the preacher, symbolises the belief that it is through Nikolas that God will manifest himself (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** *Nikolas Ferreira kneels before delivering his speech*

*Source.* Retrieved from AD CHURCH TV [@assembleiadedeus.imperatriz], YouTube. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1N5jtOhHg4E>)

In order to organise our findings, three key points will be analysed across the three rallies in the northeastern cities: (a) how Ferreira speaks about Bolsonaro, addressing our research question regarding the discursive strategies used in constructing Bolsonaro's image; (b) how Ferreira discusses Lula and the left; and (c) identifying the elements — moral and/or disinformation-based, for example — that these religious discourses trigger and what they represent. The first two points are presented in the next section, while the third will be explored in the section that follows.

### 5.1. CONSTRUCTING BOLSONARO'S IMAGE IN FORTALEZA, IMPERATRIZ, AND SALVADOR

In general, to construct Bolsonaro's image in the three cities, Ferreira employs antagonistic discourses, focusing more on discrediting his opponents than directly mentioning Bolsonaro by name. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, which noted that content produced and disseminated by right-wing figures often indirectly benefited Bolsonaro (Aguiar & Sousa, 2022; Dourado, 2020), even when Bolsonaro himself was not explicitly featured in the narrative. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

RALLY	TARGETS	
	BOLSONARO	LULA
Imperatriz	Bolsonaro is presented as someone who has achieved great things for Maranhão. A PowerPoint presentation was displayed on the church screen to support this claim, directing the audience to a government website that listed the completed projects, which could be accessed through a QR code.	Lula is portrayed as someone who mocks the Christian faith. Youtuber Felipe Neto is also mentioned as a person in need of Jesus and as a bad influence on young people.
Fortaleza	Two images are created: (a) Bolsonaro is temperamental, but this is considered normal, as the biblical disciple Peter was similarly flawed and still loved Jesus, and (b) as a righteous individual who faces persecution from opponents (media and politicians). The claim that he owns 51 properties is dismissed as a lie, and the accusation of being genocidal due to his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is rejected.	Left-wing evangelicals are belittled for supporting Lula. Furthermore, the left is depicted as “evil”, while God is presented as being on the side of “good”, embodied by Bolsonaro.
Salvador	Two images are constructed: (a) an imperfect Bolsonaro, but such are the ones God chooses to fulfil His designs, and (b) a temperamental Bolsonaro, whose explosive behaviour resembles that of the disciple Peter, yet who loves Jesus.	Felipe Neto and singer Anitta are depicted as terrible influences on the youth. Feminist women are referred to as “lost”, and the left is again framed as the “evil” that must be fought.

Table 2. How Nikolas Ferreira addresses Bolsonaro and Lula

Ferreira’s discourses were infused with narratives that constructed political enemies, which raises concern, as opponents should not be seen as enemies in a democratic context. His rhetoric is characterised by hatred, employing strategies such as disinformation and the dehumanisation of his adversaries, who are frequently branded as “killers”. In this context, Coleman (2020) points out that we are living in an era where far-right politicians understand that evoking negative emotions can translate into strong, loyal support. Moreover, the angry voter, according to Coleman, may be motivated to seek retribution against those who do not share the same ideological stance as their group.

In practice, Ferreira uses biblical quotes to frame the elections as a spiritual battle, such as referencing the book of *Ephesians 5* to depict the struggle against evil forces. In fact, even left-wing evangelicals are portrayed as enemies: “I see a lot of pastors calling themselves left-wing. Either you’re left-wing, or you’re a Christian. You can’t have both” (Ferreira, 2022, Fortaleza). Concerning attacks on their peers, the literature has already identified this narrative from conservative political and religious leaders (Machado, 2013; Massuchin & Santos, 2021), who belittle anyone who disagrees with their positions — an approach that is also characteristic of populist discourse.

In this sense, by framing the election as a spiritual battle, Ferreira seeks to mobilise young people to support Bolsonaro’s campaign. The following statement from Fortaleza can illustrate this: “how dare you remain silent while evil shouts outside? At this moment, we must have the audacity of the scoundrels” (Ferreira, 2022, Fortaleza), a speech that echoes one from Imperatriz: “you face the possibility of the man who mocks

Christians, the man who laughs at our faith, perhaps taking power in our country again” (Ferreira, 2022, Imperatriz).

Therefore, the discursive strategy is clear and straightforward: to transform voters into electoral conduits for the president, achieved through the creation of a battle against the “enemy”. However, a brief discussion on the reception side is necessary here. According to Weber (2004), political discourse always involves an adversary. However, the author also explains that the construction of the public image of political figures depends on the certainties and passions of individuals, “when convinced, the spectator will spread the information and support it” (p. 290). In this way, it becomes evident that Ferreira’s strategy was to undermine the image of Lula and the Brazilian left, creating aversion towards the progressive camp among his audience. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the discourses are steeped in antagonism — what is said about the other side’s position serves to benefit Bolsonaro.

The following subtopic briefly examines Nikolas Ferreira’s two main narratives. By addressing issues such as abortion and drugs, the politician plays a significant role in constructing a scenario of moral terrorism, which polarises society and promotes an “us versus them” discourse. In addition to generating fear and insecurity, this strategy also contributes to the spread of disinformation, as the resulting polarisation hampers dialogue and the pursuit of accurate and reliable information.

## 5.2. PROJECTING FEAR INTO THE FUTURE

For this study, we define “disinformation” as false or displaced information used to benefit one candidate at the expense of their opponent, presented as if it were factual and objective. In this context, we observed that Nikolas Ferreira employs fear and threats as central tactics to persuade his audience. Our data reveals that Ferreira’s argumentative strategies rely heavily on biblical references, with the goal of appealing to the emotions of his followers. By invoking the figure of Jesus, he uses fear and guilt-inducing phrases such as “the mind of Christ” to strengthen his narrative. This approach mirrors findings by Soares and Recuero (2018), who, in their study of deputies supporting Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, noted that many arguments were grounded in fallacies, relying on symbolic elements to justify voting “in the name of God”.

Ferreira’s discourses on abortion and drugs evoke a deeply emotional response from his audience. By framing Lula’s potential election as a moral bankruptcy, influencer Nikolas Ferreira integrates the central figure of Christianity, Jesus, with moral agendas to both defend Christian values and elevate Bolsonaro’s image, as outlined in Table 3. These excerpts provide a clearer understanding of how Ferreira’s rhetoric primarily operates as a series of threats directed at the evangelical community, warning against the implications of a victory by the progressive camp represented by the Workers’ Party government. Such rhetoric, however, likely exacerbates the spread of disinformation. For instance, individuals exposed to false or misleading content about these moral issues on social media may accept these narratives as credible, influenced by the prior stance taken by a trusted leader.

RALLY	CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE TO SOCIAL ISSUES	
	NARRATIVES ON DRUGS	NARRATIVES ON ABORTION
Imperatriz	“The mind of Christ would never back someone seeking to legalise drugs”.	“The mindset of someone with the mind of Christ cannot align with voting for someone who supports legalising abortion”.
Fortaleza	“Some Christians are voting for candidates who want to legalise drugs”.	“Over 80% of the population in Brazil identifies as Christian. Clearly, something is wrong. Christians are voting for those who endorse abortion”.
Salvador	“What’s the point, Christian people, of trading cheap petrol for seeing your children consumed by drugs?”.	“So, if abortion is legalised in Brazil within a year, you’ll have the blood of innocents on your hands”.

Table 3. *The integration of biblical narratives with Christian views on politics*

Thus, when Ferreira addresses these moral issues, he aims to guide the public and establish norms concerning customs for those who share his worldview. However, as Kniess and Santos (2020) note, referencing Smith (2019), religious conservatives’ disapproval of social issues does not necessarily equate to political intolerance, meaning some conservatives can acknowledge the rights of other social groups. Nevertheless, Kniess and Santos (2020) argue that “according to the author, this is not the case in Brazilian evangelical churches, where congregations promote, to some extent, authoritarian conservatism by preaching a dualistic theology of ‘us versus them’” (p. 11).

In light of this, what can be observed is the electoral activity of various evangelical churches, such as the Assembly of God in Imperatriz (Maranhão), the Church of the Newness of Life in Fortaleza (Ceará), and the First Baptist Church of Brazil in Salvador (Bahia), in resemanticising the vote. This process is what Oro (2003) refers to as the “mimetic effect” produced by the Universal Church: “as we can see, the Universal Church mobilises beliefs, values, symbols, and worldviews from its symbolic universe within the political sphere, and resemanticises the vote based on these elements” (p. 59). Finally, just as money has been resemanticised by the Universal Church (Semán, 2001), so too has the politicisation of evangelical churches.

Before, money, the general equivalent of all commodities, had been reinterpreted by this church within the framework of offering and sacrifice. Today, voting, a relationship not always tied to citizenship, is embedded within a cosmological logic presented as a holy war. (p. 96)

This suggests that the church has effectively become a political party where the faithful are expected to align with its stance. The physical spaces hosting these events served as political platforms for right-wing leaders, who were endorsed by the congregation in that context.

In other words, it aligns with the argument proposed here: the idea that the phrases uttered about abortion and drugs aim to guide the faithful on the moral conduct they should defend. This is particularly significant, as evangelical groups, for a long time, were apolitical, viewing politics as something of the world. However, as demonstrated

in Ferreira's speeches, they have increasingly positioned themselves within the political sphere, "considering themselves a kind of 'moral reserve' of society" (Oro, 2003, p. 57). What is new in our empirical material is that Ferreira's discourses project fear of the future, incorporating disinformation-based elements, portraying a scenario where, with Bolsonaro, the country would prosper, but with Lula, it would face misfortune. He even stated at events that if Bolsonaro wins, the church will continue praying, but if Lula wins, the church will pray even more.

## 6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyse the discursive strategies employed by evangelical churches to shape Jair Bolsonaro's public image during the second round of the 2022 elections. It focused on three rallies, titled "Juventude Pelo Brasil", led by political influencer Nikolas Ferreira. In relation to the central question, our findings indicate that the construction of Bolsonaro's image hinges on the creation of enemies, specifically targeting Lula and the left. This strategy, employed by populist leader Ferreira, creates a Manichean narrative where good and evil are distinctly divided, polarises society and positions Bolsonaro as the only figure capable of defending the interests of the "sacred" Christian people. Our findings also show that Ferreira uses biblical references to appeal to the emotions of the conservative religious group, effectively projecting a dire future for the moral values upheld by Christians should the Workers' Party come to power.

One of the research's key findings is that narratives surrounding the legalisation of drugs and abortion are employed to construct a moralising and polarising rhetoric. By linking these issues to an alleged attack on the moral values of the Christian community, the political discourse in question cultivates fear and insecurity, thereby diverting attention from more pressing and complex matters. In this way, the polarisation driven by these narratives hinders efforts to combat disinformation, as individuals tend to dismiss information that contradicts their pre-existing beliefs. Moreover, individuals who subscribe to these narratives can isolate themselves with information that reinforces their beliefs, making it harder to correct false information.

Consequently, the growing influence of evangelical religious leaders in the public sphere warrants further research into the intersection of faith and politics. The manipulation of faith, as demonstrated in Ferreira's discourses, which sought to shape political decisions through religious interpretations, can polarise public debate and lead to conclusions based on personal beliefs rather than evidence-based reasoning. It is essential to investigate how this interface between faith and politics affects the formation of opinions and political participation among evangelicals, as well as its implications for democracy and religious pluralism. Future studies could explore how charismatic political-religious leaders mobilise their followers, as well as how religious audiences interpret and respond to these discourses, considering the complexity of faith dynamics and the subtleties of religious interpretations.

**Translation: Anabela Delgado**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the Fundação Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES). Finance Code: 001; Processes: 88881.691420/2022-01 e 88887.691419/2022-00.

## REFERENCES

- Aguiar, L., & Sousa, D. (2022). A figura do influencer: Uma reflexão sobre Bolsonarismo e a campanha do deputado André Fernandes. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Mídia*, 1(1), 1–23.
- Alencar, G. (2020). Jair Messias Bolsonaro: O “eleito” de Deus? *Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões*, 13(37), 161–175.
- Alves, D., Figueiredo, D., & Henrique, A. (2015). O poderoso NVivo: Uma introdução a partir da análise de conteúdo. *Revista Política Hoje*, 24(2), 119–134.
- Andrade, N. (2022, October 3). *Nikolas Ferreira: De apagado a fenômeno na direita e deputado mais votado*. UOL. <https://noticias.uol.com.br/eleicoes/2022/10/03/nikolas-ferreira-fenomeno-direita.htm>
- Ballousier, A. V. (2019, 31 de janeiro). Sem diploma, Damares já se apresentou como mestre em educação e direito. *Folha de S. Paulo*. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/01/sem-diploma-damares-ja-se-apresentou-como-mestre-em-educacao-e-direito.shtml>
- Bimbati, A. P., & Pereira, F. (2022, October 21). *Deputado mais votado repete tour de Michelle no NE para atrair voto jovem*. UOL. <https://noticias.uol.com.br/eleicoes/2022/10/21/nikolas-ferreira-repete-michelle-viagens-nordeste.htm>
- Coleman, S. (2020). Re-imagining the democratic public. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *A research agenda for digital politics* (pp. 213–222). Edward Elgar.
- Cowan, B. (2014). “Nosso Terreno” crise moral, política evangélica e a formação da “Nova Direita” brasileira. *Varia História*, 30(52), 101–125. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-87752014000100006>
- Cunha, M. (2015). O “Caso Marco Feliciano” como paradigma para os estudos em mídia, religião e política no Brasil. *Intercom*, 38, 1–15.
- DeHanas, D., & Shterin, M. (2018). Religion and the rise of populism. *Religion, State & Society*, 46(3), 177–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2018.1502911>
- Dourado, T. (2020). *Fake news na eleição presidencial de 2018 no Brasil* [Doctoral dissertation, Universidade Federal da Bahia]. Repositório Institucional da UFBA.
- “Em novo vídeo, Feliciano insinua que Caetano Veloso fez pacto com diabo”. (2013, April 10). *O Globo*. <https://oglobo.globo.com/politica/em-novo-video-feliciano-insinua-que-caetano-veloso-fez-pacto-com-diabo-8074258>
- Ferreira, N. (2018, August 17). *O que é ser um conservador?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9xYun2vis4&t=2045>
- França, V., & Leurquin, C. (2022). Felipe Neto: Uma celebridade política? *Rumores*, 16(31), 15–41. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.1982-677X.rum.2022.200387>
- Instituto da Democracia. (2024). A cara da democracia. *O Globo*.

- Kamradt, J. (2019). Celebidades políticas e políticos celebridades: Uma análise teórica do fenômeno. *BIB - Revista Brasileira de Informação Bibliográfica em Ciências Sociais*, (88), 1–22.
- Karhawi, I. (2017). Influenciadores digitais: Conceitos e práticas em discussão. *Revista Comunicare*, 17(12), 46–61.
- Kniess, A., & Santos, D. (2020). Religião e democracia em nível local: Os valores democráticos dos evangélicos paulistanos. *Teoria & Pesquisa: Revista de Ciência Política*, 29(1), 101–131. <https://doi.org/10.4322/tp.v29i2.820>
- Ladeira, J. (2022). O púlpito como cena: Performance e teatralidade em Damares Alves. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*, 12(2), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2237-2660113634>
- Machado, M. (2013). Discursos pentecostais em torno do aborto e da homossexualidade na sociedade brasileira. *Revista Cultura & Religião*, 7(2), 48–68.
- Maranhão Filho, E., Coelho, F., & Dias, T. (2018). “Fake news acima de tudo, fake news acima de todos”: Bolsonaro e o “kit gay”, “ideologia de gênero” e fim da “família tradicional”. *Correlatio*, 17(2), 65–90.
- Mariano, R. (2011). Laicidade à brasileira: Católicos, pentecostais e laicos em disputa na esfera pública. *Civitas*, 11(2), 238–258. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2011.2.9647>
- Martino, L. (2009, June 2–6). *Dois estágios da comunicação versus efeitos limitados: Uma releitura* [Conference presentation]. XVIII Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.
- Massuchin, M., & Santos, M. (2021). A intersecção entre desinformação, religião e pandemia: A atuação de canais religiosos no YouTube no contexto da Covid-19. *Tropos: Comunicação, Sociedade e Cultura*, 10(1), 1–30.
- Massuchin, M., Tavares, C., Mitozo, I., & Chagas, V. (2021). A estrutura argumentativa do descrédito na ciência: Uma análise de mensagens de grupos bolsonaristas de WhatsApp na pandemia da Covid-19. *Fronteiras: Estudos Midiáticos*, 23(2), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.4013/fem.2021.232.11>
- Medeiros, A. (2017, March). Os perigos da indiferença à verdade. *Uno Desenvolvendo Ideias*, 27, 23–25.
- Menezes, L. F., & Cunha, A. R. (2018, December 13). *Kit satânico, nazismo de esquerda, globalismo: Investigamos o que já disseram ministros de Bolsonaro*. Aos Fatos. <https://www.aosfatos.org/noticias/kit-satanico-nazismo-de-esquerda-globalismo-investigamos-o-que-ja-disseram-ministros-de-bolsonaro/>
- Mont'Alverne, C., & Mitozo, I. (2019, May 15–17). *Muito além da mamadeira erótica: As notícias compartilhadas nas redes de apoio a presidenciáveis em grupos de WhatsApp, nas eleições brasileiras de 2018* [Conference presentation]. VIII Encontro da Compólitica, Brasília, Brazil.
- Motta, B., Bittencourt, M., & Viana, P. (2014). A influência de Youtubers no processo de decisão dos espectadores: Uma análise no segmento de beleza, games e ideologia. *E-compós*, 17(3), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.30962/ec.1013>
- Mudde, C. (2004). The populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 541–563. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x>
- Norris, P. (2003). Preaching to the converted? Pluralism, participation and party websites. *Party Politics*, 9(1), 21–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135406880391003>
- Novaes, R. (2001). A divina política. Notas sobre as relações delicadas entre religião e política. *Revista USP*, (49), 60–81. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9036.voi49p60-81>

- Oro, A. (2013). A política da Igreja Universal e seus reflexos nos campos religioso e político brasileiros. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 18, 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092003000300004>
- Pierucci, A. F., & Prandi, R. (1995). Religiões e voto: A eleição presidencial de 1994. *Opinião Pública*, 3(1), 32–63.
- Prandi, R., & Santos, R. (2017). Quem tem medo da bancada evangélica? Posições sobre moralidade e política no eleitorado brasileiro, no Congresso Nacional e na Frente Parlamentar Evangélica. *Tempo Social*, 29(2), 187–214. <https://doi.org/10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2017.110052>
- Prandi, R., Santos, R., & Bonato, M. (2019). Igrejas evangélicas como máquinas eleitorais no Brasil. *Revista USP*, 120, 43–60. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9036.voi120p43-60>
- Quirós, E. (2017, March). Fake news versus jornalismo livre e independente. *Uno Desenvolvendo Ideias*, 27, 36–37. <https://www.revista-uno.com.br/numero-27/fake-news-versus-jornalismo-livre-e-independente/>
- Santos, N., Chagas, V., & Marinho, J. (2022). De onde vem a informação que circula em grupos bolsonaristas no WhatsApp. *Intexto*, 53, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.19132/1807-8583202253.123603>
- Semán, P. (2001). A Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus: Um ator e suas costuras da sociedade brasileira contemporânea. *Debates do NER*, 3, 87–96. <https://doi.org/10.22456/1982-8136.2709>
- Soares, F., & Recuero, R. (2018). A argumentação dos deputados na votação do processo de impeachment de Dilma Rousseff. *Estudos em Comunicação*, 1(27), 69–85.
- Street, J. (2019). What is Donald Trump? Forms of ‘celebrity’ in celebrity politics. *Political Studies Review*, 17(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918772995>
- Tandoc, E., Jr., Lim, Z., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “fake news”. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>
- Weber, M. (2004). Imagem pública. In A. A. C. Rubim (Ed.), *Comunicação e política: Conceitos e abordagens* (pp. 259–308). Edufba.
- Wellcome. (2019). *Wellcome global monitor – First wave findings?* Gallup.
- Yin, R. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 321–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389013497081>
- Zanatta, J., & Costa, M. (2012). Algumas reflexões sobre a pesquisa qualitativa nas ciências sociais. *Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia*, 12(2), 344–359. <https://doi.org/10.12957/epp.2012.8266>

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Joilson Barros is pursuing a Master’s degree in Communication at the Universidade Federal do Maranhão. He holds a degree in Journalism from the same institution. He is a member of the Communication, Politics and Society research group and a recipient of a CAPES scholarship.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4830-4662>

Email: [santos.joilson@discente.ufma.br](mailto:santos.joilson@discente.ufma.br)

Address: Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação. Centro de Ciências de Imperatriz. CEP: 65.900-000. Imperatriz, Brasil

Camilla Quesada Tavares holds a PhD in Communication from Universidade Federal Fluminense and a Master's in Applied Social Sciences from Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa. She is a permanent faculty member in the Graduate Programme in Communication at the Universidade Federal do Maranhão and a collaborating professor in the Graduate Programme in Communication at the Universidade Federal do Paraná. Additionally, she teaches the Journalism course at the Universidade Federal do Maranhão.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5490-6850>

Email: [camilla.tavares@ufma.br](mailto:camilla.tavares@ufma.br)

Address: Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação. Centro de Ciências de Imperatriz. CEP: 65.900-000. Imperatriz, Brasil

**Submitted: 24/05/2024 | Accepted: 15/10/2024**



*This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.*