Narrative Disputes on Wikipedia and Brazilian Elections
# Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Acronyms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian Elections and the Information Dispute</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Wikipedia Pages</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. André Janones</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bia Kicis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Damares Alves</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Carla Zambelli</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Padre Kelmon</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Simone Tebet</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sergio Moro</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gladson Cameli</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative narrative</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on Media and Information Education</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final considerations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex I - Raw Data collected per analyzed page</td>
<td>ACCESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex II - Fact Checking</td>
<td>ACCESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Acronyms

- **ACM Neto** - Antônio Carlos Magalhães Neto
- **API** - Application Programming Interface
- **CCJ** - Constitution and Justice Commission
- **COVID-19** - Coronavirus Disease 2019
- **IFCN** - International Fact-Checking Network
- **MDB** - Brazilian Democratic Movement
- **MIL** - Media and Information Literacies
- **MS** - Mato Grosso do Sul
- **MT** - Mato Grosso
- **WHO** - World Health Organization
- **NGO** - Non-Governmental Organization
- **PL** - Liberal Party
- **PSDB** - Brazilian Social Democracy Party
- **PT** - Workers’ Party
- **PTB** - Brazilian Labor Party
- **SERP** - Search Engine Results Page
- **STF** - Federal Court of Justice
- **TSE** - Superior Electoral Court
- **UOL** - Online Universe
**Introduction**

In 2022, Brazil hosted the 31st general election for the Presidency of the Republic, Senate, Legislative Chamber, and State Government, with more than 28,000 registered candidates competing according to the Electoral Justice. With one of the largest electoral colleges in the world, election years in Brazil become a territory of narrative disputes in which candidates can pronounce their government plans and campaigns in an attempt to acquire votes from millions of Brazilians. Traditionally, Brazilian radio and television stations transmit mandatory electoral advertisements, in which candidates record videos and audio with crucial information to be transferred to the population (in general, they communicate the name of the candidate, the name of the party, the voting number and – if you have enough time – a brief explanation of their governing plan).

As election advertisements are regulated by the Electoral Justice and the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), the television or radio time in mandatory advertisements is defined according to the percentage of presence of the corresponding party in government instances. For this reason, some parties, such as the Workers’ Party (PT), the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), and the Liberal Party (PL), among others, may have abundant radio and television time due to the numerical representation of candidates elected in past elections.

With the technologies and digital platforms of social networks, electoral propaganda emerges in which candidates can have websites, videos on YouTube, pages on Wikipedia, and profiles on social networks where they communicate their governing proposals, their political positions, and curiosities about their personal lives, among other secondary information. However, an environment that appeared to be somewhat regulated by the Electoral Justice and the TSE loses supposed control over the type of content published and over the volume dimension of the information circulating during election periods, a phenomenon that worsens with disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation that start to spread in a less tracked way. This imposes a burden that exceeds the Electoral Justice’s and the TSE’s capacity, as this traditionally complex process gains exponential layers of complexity and confusion.

Among the significant challenges of these scenarios is the presence of the candidates’ Wikipedia pages, where — theoretically — voters could access them to consume relevant information on the supposed candidates. Wikipedia is one of the most accessed portals for verifying information, despite criticisms regarding the scientific credibility of these contents (Kern, 2018). In this sense, this research investigates how the biographical pages of candidates for legislative and executive positions during the 2022 Brazilian elections are used to manipulate and offer information in the public debate.

The goal of this report is to identify and describe the use of Wikipedia as a possible instrument of political propaganda and disinformation through the biographical pages of candidates of the 2022 Brazilian elections, offering a qualitative and quantitative descrip-

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tion of the data and information found, and crossing this information with the Brazilian informational, electoral and cultural context. The expected result is to find possible inconsistencies in the selected pages and understand the existing mechanisms of Wikipedia and Media and Information Literacy initiatives that can be used and adapted for the next Brazilian elections.

Brazilian Elections and the Information Dispute

Wikipedia is a collaborative online encyclopedia that allows people worldwide to create, edit and review content, making it one of the largest sources of information available on the internet written by volunteers. Wikipedia is powered through crowdsourcing of information, which is getting input, ideas, or resources from many people, usually over the internet. It is based on the principle of the “wiki,” a form of collaboration where anyone can add, modify or remove information. Wikipedia’s operating model involves the participation of a community of volunteer editors whose main objective is to create and maintain a comprehensive repository of knowledge. Articles and entries undergo a peer review process, where other editors verify and improve the content, seeking to ensure the accuracy and quality of the information.

The portal follows a hypertext structure, where links connect articles, allowing readers to navigate and explore related subjects. It is important to note that while Wikipedia is a valuable source of information, it has potential challenges. Like any platform open for public editing, it is subject to vandalism, inaccurate or biased information. However, the community of editors and moderation mechanisms are continually working to mitigate these issues and improve the reliability of the available content (Forte, Bruckman, 2008).

As a practice that directly disturbs the functioning of Wikipedia, it is worth bringing here the definition of informational vandalism, which refers to deliberate actions to edit or modify content in a harmful, misleading, defamatory, biased, or destructive way on information-sharing platforms (Geiger & Ribes, 2010). These actions are carried out to spread false information, distort facts, organizations, or ideas, or simply cause damage to the reputation or credibility of a particular content. For example, information vandalism on Wikipedia may involve inserting false information into articles, removing valid content, replacing accurate information with unsubstantiated claims, using offensive language, and other undue manipulation (Geiger, Ribes, 2010).

Information vandalism is a challenge faced by collaborative information-sharing platforms since they depend on users’ open and decentralized participation to create and maintain their content (Zhou et al., 2018). However, Wikipedia and other similar platforms have a community of dedicated editors who monitor and revert these harmful edits and implement security measures and usage policies to combat information vandalism.
Given the informational context we find ourselves in, the 2022 Brazilian elections were marked by the spread of political and electoral disinformation, mainly by the former President of the Republic, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, and his supporters at the national, state, and municipal levels. In June 2023, Bolsonaro was convicted by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) for statements that attacked democracy without an evidence base and was convicted and considered ineligible until 2030. This event demonstrates that the country and its judicial bodies are implementing a low-tolerance policy towards disinformation. This action directly affects websites with content and information available online. Still based on the example of former President Bolsonaro, the spread of misinformation has been catalyzed since his 2018 presidential campaign, when networks supporting the Bolsonarist movement used messaging applications – such as WhatsApp and Telegram – to share false, out-of-context or distorted information to influence the outcome of elections and the national public debate.

Analogously to influential representatives of the international Extreme Right – such as former President Donald Trump in the United States (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018) – Bolsonaro questioned the fairness of the electoral process through a robust discursive repertoire of disinformation. On several occasions, he claimed that there was fraud in the electronic voting machines and signaled that he would not accept the results of the elections if he lost. Allied with these speeches, several candidates from his support base collaborated to amplify the misinformation scenario, such as Carla Zambelli, Padre Kelmon, and Damares Alves.

Disinformation can encourage authoritarian adventures and undermine democratic values (Durigan et al., 2023; Bernardino et al., 2022; Bernardi, 2020). Therefore, the government and society must create mechanisms to identify and deal with misinformation content. Over recent years, we identified initiatives by fact checking and TSE that are essential to tackle this problem, collaborating to develop a healthier information context on the internet, social networks, and messaging applications. An example of this effort is the workshop promoted by Instituto Vero with Prof. Dr. Philip Howard (University of Oxford) for the STF and TSE, in which the author delivered the lecture “Social media and the right to the truth: impact of algorithmic bias, manipulation and disinformation on public deliberation.” Prof. Dr. Howard talks about “lie machines,” which can be both social and technical mechanisms made by parties, lobbyists, and groups of people; and by algorithms on social media. To combat misinformation, he advocates creating “truth instruments” systems to strengthen democracy and increase civic engagement. However, the construction of truth instruments must be collective, and research like this can be a small step towards creating tools that fight the infodemic and information warfare.

However, the “information war” is not only present in these channels but also in the biographies of politicians on the Wikipedia website. These changes were aimed at disputing...
the framing of certain politicians, either to praise or to criticize them – even if they used disinformation to achieve their goals. It is in this context that this research is inserted. Our goal is to understand the editions in the pages of politicians who gained visibility in the national public debate and in their respective regions, such as Carla Zambelli (São Paulo), Padre Kelmon (Bahia), Sérgio Moro (Paraná), Simone Tebet (Mato Grosso do Sul), Bia Kicis (Rio de Janeiro and the Federal District), Damares Alves (Paraná), André Janones (Minas Gerais) and Gladson Cameli (Acre).

The following justifications support the choice of these candidates: (i) we prioritize analyzing candidates who made up the base of support for Bolsonaro for using an uninformative discursive repertoire in their political trajectories, allying themselves with the extremist discourses of the “extreme right-wing” in Brazil, such as Damares Alves, Padre Kelmon, Carla Zambelli; (ii) we chose candidates from different regions who ran for different positions at national and state levels, as we would like to have a panoramic understanding of how edits on politicians’ pages are operated in the recent electoral context; and (iii) we prioritized analyzing politicians who had repercussions around some controversies in the traditional national and state media and social networks, such as Sérgio Moro, Simone Tebet, and Carla Zambelli.

We are aware of the limitations these choices may cause. For example, the results presented here cannot generate statistically generalizable conclusions but provide important elements to understand the phenomenon. Considering that this is initial and exploratory research on a subject that has not yet been addressed, we hope the results presented here can collaborate so that others’ research can be encouraged.

Thus, our sample has politicians who achieved notoriety representing the five Brazilian regions7 to understand whether narrative disputes change depending on geographic location. The research identified the content of the editions, the symbolic frameworks they sought to provoke, and the moments when the pages of these politicians received more editions and views. Thus, we expect to understand such changes and systematically contribute to the scientific literature.

It is worth mentioning here that we name as “narratives” the report about something real or fictional by oral, visual, and written means – considered here as a practice intrinsic to the purpose of Wikipedia. According to Gancho (2004), narratives generally have characteristics that, directly or indirectly, seek answers to the following questions: “What happened? Who lived the facts? Where? Why?” Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the narratives are structured according to five characteristics: narrator, time, space, plot, characters, and narrative elements (Gancho, 2004). Still, according to Gancho, narrating is an act practiced by human beings since their origins, manifesting itself in different ways, such as prehistoric records in caves, myths shared by populations from different contexts, television soap operas, journalistic news, comics, literary narratives (Hook, 2004). According to the Oxford Languages8 dictionary, the narrative is an “exposure of an event or a series of

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7. Brazil is divided into five geographic regions, including South, Southeast, Midwest, Northeast and North, and the Federal District. Source: [link]. Accessed on July 12, 2023.
more or less linked events, real or imaginary, employing words or images.” Thus, narratives should not be conceived as mere distortions of reality nor an objective mirror of everyday life or truth (Brockmeier & Harré, 2003, p. 36).

This premise overlaps with the practice of collective authorship on Wikipedia, which, like social media, has increased the speed and reach of information, allowing mobilization around civic issues, but also the dissemination of misinformation (Diamond, 2019). However, it should be noted that disinformation has different configurations according to the context and intentions of authors and disseminators. Researcher Claire Wardle (2020) proposes the use of the terms “disinformation,” “misinformation,” and “malinformation” to describe the phenomenon and not “fake news.” In this report, we have chosen to follow this proposition and, therefore, we have detailed key definitions below

“Disinformation” refers to intentionally false information, used to cause harm or obtain some advantage.

“Misinformation” refers to false information disseminated by people who do not realize it is inaccurate or misleading.

“Malinformation” refers to reliable information shared with the intent to cause harm, such as information that is leaked to harm someone’s reputation.

Though lie and cynicism⁹ are inherent to human communication itself (Sloterdijk, 1983), the internet and the constant technological evolution have changed the speed and reach of the dissemination of information, in addition to having sophisticated the creation of false content, thus expanding the capacity to polarize and manipulate opinions in favor of political or economic advantages (Bernardi, 2020; Rais, 2020; Bernardino et al., 2022).

The challenges of the new communication logic have an effect, in particular, on the structural pillars of democracies. Financial crises, social inequality, and distrust in institutions have created space for the rise of leaders who reject the established political order, promoting alternatives to the liberal democratic system in the form of autocratic regimes (Castells, 2018). In this sense, Howard (Howard and Bradshaw, 2018) argues in favor of building truth tools and a culture of questioning and critical positioning of the population. In the following sections, we will punctuate these principles across our findings to understand the complexity of Wikipedia pages.

Methodology

The first step in the research was selecting candidates to be investigated and observed. For this, a sweep was made in news vehicles and scientific literature to find out if some of the candidates faced scandals in the Brazilian elections of 2022 or were denounced for

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misuse of their Wikipedia pages. We accessed 200 journalistic materials and academic articles on the subject, which resulted in 22 pre-selected political candidates representing the five Brazilian macro-regions. After scrutiny of these pre-selected candidates’ pages, eight candidates were chosen to compose this research. This process of selecting the eight candidates involves accessing Wikipedia’s edit history, which shows all the changes made to the page since it was created. As the research focuses on analyzing changes during the electoral period, we looked for changes made in 2022, which are referenced throughout the page’s history. Modifications are displayed on the page according to time criteria, indicating time and date, author and modification made. Politicians were chosen according to the quantity and quality of changes made in the predefined period.

Despite being personalities who coordinated and guided the speeches and narratives in recent years, the pages of Lula and Bolsonaro were not selected for this research. The reason for this decision is that their pages on Wikipedia are so sought after that for years, they were “closed” only to verified editors by Wikipedia itself. As a result, the pages of the respective candidates, however much sought after, have become Black Boxes\(^{10}\) (Latour, 1999), in the sense that it is not possible to observe the movement of actants or the dispute of narratives as was possible in the other pages of politicians of lesser relevance. After selecting the pages to be analyzed, we did a detailed investigation of the editing histories, we qualitatively described the narrative disputes, and all the facts brought in the respective pages were crossed with databases of fact-checking agencies.

For a better understanding, all modifications were opened through the buttons “atu” and “ant,” which show the comparison between the change made and the current content of the Wikipedia page and the comparison with the content prior to the change. These parts were important to be analyzed since more than the comments made by the authors were needed to understand the changes. To do so, when opening the comparisons, we followed the standard of Wikipedia itself. Contents with yellow are those withdrawn by the editors, while the blue are the ones that were added. Thus, it is possible to comprehend the dynamics of the pages as well as the frequency of addition and removal of information. All documented changes are presented as raw data materials in the Annexes, organized temporally and according to the order of candidates. We decided to keep the original names of the users who modified the analyzed pages, as they are theoretically fictitious names. Wikipedia protects the privacy of its authors and editors, reinforcing the absence of connections between the fictitious names of users and real people. Although users need to have an account with valid and working emails, these emails are not disclosed. Thus, regarding the ethical parameters of scientific research (Bryman, 2010), this research maintains and preserves the privacy of all findings.

\(^{10}\) Latour defines as black boxes the controversies that are still cold or already cold after a period of heat and makes an analogy with the Black Box of aircraft, in the sense that it is difficult to know what happens inside because the actants are not in such movement. However, he also associates it with Pandora’s Box, to say that once controversies heat up, they come out of the box, making it extremely complex to follow all the actors involved in controversies. However, he claims that opening the Black Boxes is the only way to follow actants, which though complex, is the work and curse of contemporary scientists.
Relevant selection criteria were politicians elected during the 2022 elections and had some controversy\textsuperscript{11} during the election period. The dispute can also help observe actant mapping (Venturini, 2010; Latour, 2005), defined as agents or entities that act in a network, which can also be called “actors.” However, Latour (1999) argues that, when observing a network, it is necessary to detach from the idea of the actor as human. Therefore he introduces the word actant as a term that does not necessarily denote a human action. Although Latour made this analysis before the phenomenon of social networks, it is interesting to observe how close it is to the phenomenon of digital platforms. As much as we have the hypothesis that all changes documented in Wikipedia pages are made by people (and our observation confirms this idea), according to Latour, we should not get too attached to the nature of these observed and documented agents, but rather to their actions — since, according to the Latour, the focus on the heart of the action is less important than the focus on the action taken.

This point of view complements the perception of Venturini (2010), who states that to observe actants, it is necessary to be controversial and to explain his idea. Venturini introduces an analogy to a volcano erupting: magma, when cold, is similar to a rock, immobile and lifeless. When hot, magma is like a river, with its movement and aspects that can assimilate to a living entity, moving and acting and being able to cause damage. For him, controversies or polemics are similar, as they bring the point of movement in which actants perform, act, and leave traces to be followed. For this reason, we chose pages of politicians who faced scandal, incongruity, or controversy to have what to follow in our investigation. Venturini (2010) and Latour (2005) created the Cartography of Controversies, an analytical and descriptive method of tracking actants and reporting their actions. In this report, we implemented Controversy Mapping to better understand movement and credibility tools within the Wikipedia portal.

Before implementing the analytical method, two politicians from each region of Brazil were chosen to bring a character of diversity. However, analyzing the Wikipedia page of some of them, the page of Emerson Jarude (North Region) was discarded, as it did not present any relevant content for the research or possible controversy. The ACM Neto (Northeast Region) page was also discarded, as it did not address any dispute or relevant issue for the study. Finally, the following eight politicians were analyzed: André Janones (Southeast), Bia Kicis (Midwest), Damares Alves (South), Carla Zambelli (Southeast), Padre Kelmon (Northeast), Simone Tebet (Midwest), Sérgio Moro (South) and Gladson Camelli (North). We chose candidates for different positions and regions, as we intend to analyze, in a panoramic way, the narrative disputes of the editors in the Wikipedia pages of these politicians. Since this is exploratory research, we intended to identify how the pages of politicians involved in controversies were the object of discursive disputes around their frameworks.

Once selected, these pages underwent a Netnography (Kozinets 1998, 2010), a qualitative research method that explores and analyzes online interactions and behaviors in

\textsuperscript{11} Controversy is defined here as a controversy or debate situation that may have driven the alteration of Wikipedia pages or other activities related to information vandalism.
virtual communities. Kozinets coined ethnography to understand these digital environments’ culture, social practices, and relationships. As evident from its name, it is based on the principles of ethnography, a research technique used to study cultures and social groups but adapted for the online environment. Although netnography is primarily a participant observation method, it can also configure the analysis and construction of narratives based on data collected in digital spaces, such as discussion forums, social networks, blogs, and online groups. The method also explores group dynamics, power relations, and mutual influences between participants. This analysis is a crucial point for this research because, by observing dynamics in Wikipedia pages, we were able to formulate a structured narrative on how these profiles behaved and the main discursive disputes between the pages of the minded politicians.

From the quantitative point of view, an initial effort was to systematize the quantitative data that subsidized the contextualization of analyzed pages. In addition, the quantitative data presented will also support intersections with relevant political facts, identifying the association between the number of views and essential events in the national political scenario. We adopted a methodological path with different strategies to analyze the changes in the pages that contain the biography of politicians on Wikipedia. Initially, manually, we accessed the page with the biography and read its content. Next, we clicked on “view history.” Afterward, we clicked on “editing statistics” to have a panoramic understanding of the prominent editors on the page.

The quantitative analysis sought to understand mainly the editions made in the 2022 election year. However, for contextual purposes, we chose to graphically demonstrate the statistics since the foundation of the page of a particular politician since, in this way, it is possible to observe the visualization peaks depending on the context. Finally, we analyzed the edits made on the page and described the findings that most caught our attention. Based on these extracted data, we created graphs to understand the timeline in which these changes were made and how they impacted or not the narratives described through Cartography of Controversies and Netnography.

With this set of methods, we build the following sections that will detail the number of modifications, the number of identified actants, and the grouping of thematic categories. For fact-checking, all information collected was first placed on fact-checking sites such as Lupa, Aos Fatos, and the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), among others. We also consulted official and journalistic sources, and the complete fact-checking is presented in Annex B.
Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Wikipedia Pages

The Brazilian electoral scenario is complex, not due to its electoral system *per se*, but due to the variety of localities, regions, states, and municipalities. Brazil, with 270 million inhabitants, has representatives who run for elections every two years, which brings out the panorama of the country’s diversity. With that, the most challenging task during this research was choosing which politicians’ pages to analyze. As our research goal was to explore the consistency and integrity of Wikipedia pages, the first step in selecting politicians’ pages was to conduct an extensive, exploratory, and comprehensive search on possible inconsistencies in Wikipedia pages presented by communication vehicles and media or scientific literature.

After a preliminary analysis, we selected 22 personalities spread across the five Brazilian regions (South, Southeast, Midwest, Northeast, and North) and the Federal District. Using a netnographic methodology, we understood which of these politicians had the most inconsistencies in their Wikipedia pages, including abrupt changes on election eve. With that, we arrived at a final list of eight candidates for state or federal elections, considering positions for the Senate, Chamber of Deputies, State Government, and Federal Government.

1. André Janones
2. Bia Kicis
3. Damares Alves
4. Carla Zambeli
5. Padre Kelmon
6. Simone Tebet
7. Sergio Moro
8. Gladson Cameli

Next, we present a qualitative and exploratory narrative based on textual and image data found on Wikipedia pages; and a quantitative analysis based on data extraction from selected pages. As much as our research has prioritized the observation of edits on Wikipedia pages, it is worth mentioning here that we also collected the number of views per page to contextualize the modifications with the popularity of the candidates and the electoral context in which these personalities are involved. The visualization chart brings a vital finding to orient us temporally on the importance of certain information in the pages and on the relevance of these characters in the Brazilian electoral process. Furthermore, it is essential to point out that the changes in the Wikipedia pages were grouped by thematic categories, which follow:
1. “Sexual abuse”
2. “Changes at the request of the biographical subject”
3. “Science versus religion”
4. “Crimes committed”
5. “Disinformation”
6. “Misrepresentation of the purpose of Wikipedia”
7. “Personal history and identity characterization”
8. “Professional history”
9. “Administrative dishonesty”
10. “Political positioning”
11. “Religious positioning”
12. “Position on indigenous rights”
13. “Judicial Questions”
14. “Withdrawal of information with confirmed sources or inappropriate changes”
15. “Revocation of Prestige”
16. “Child Trafficking”
17. “Credential Validity”
18. “Informational vandalism”

In the following topics, we present the names of the candidates along with the qualitative analysis based on data from the biographical pages on Wikipedia of the selected politicians. Next, we carry out a quantitative analysis of the history of editions and views, emphasizing on the study of the recent electoral period (2022).

1. André Janones

Qualitative narrative

André Luis Gaspar Janones is a Brazilian lawyer and politician affiliated with the Avante Party. He is currently a Federal Deputy for Minas Gerais since 2019. André Janones’ page, at the beginning of the election period, underwent a series of changes headed by the user Fracosilva and which were promptly removed and considered “vandalism.” Therefore, a few hours later, the page was placed in “only auto-confirmed users” mode to preserve and protect the content. Unfortunately, the content added by the supposed Fracosilva has been completely deleted and cannot be accessed.

After him came the user Gabriel Felipe da Silva, who also made changes to “vandalize.” He added terms such as “extreme left and lulista,” “ex-convict,” and “head of the biggest Brazilian gang” (referring to then-candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and “lulista” to characterize Lula’s supporters). Changes were promptly (within hours) reworked by the user Khaledsharifx.
There was also a discussion about how André Janones disseminated political information. Some users considered that he used elements of fake news, resembling “Bolsonarism.” The discussion was headed by the user pachequis, who tried to add the term “but theoretically without the use of fake news” when talking about the techniques used by the politician. However, on several occasions, the user Bruno G. vehemently removed this term as pachequis did not add any relevant source. For Bruno G., there had to be at least 5 “fake news” in a row.

Another instance of vandalism was done by the user Wesley Almeida Correa who added two alterations to Janones’ biography. The first stated that Janones “has always had a hobby of invading private property” (sic) and then changed it to “but he has always had a hobby of lying. The true creator of the well-known FakeNews. Expert on the subject.” (sic). A few minutes later, the user JoaquinCebuano removed this information. In all, six actants changed the texts on André Janones’ page more incisively. The categories with the most remarkable change were “informational vandalism,” “disinformation,” and “misrepresentation of the purpose of Wikipedia.”

Quantitative analysis

As much as the research focused on the year 2022, it was identified that the first edition on the page was made by the user Svartner on November 6, 2018, and last edited by Sailoratlantis on May 19, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics. Since July 2015, the page has been viewed 344,086 times, and the chart below shows page views disaggregated by month.

The peak views were in the months of February 2019 (18,765), August 2022 (47,537), and October 2022 (46,570). These peaks are probably related to Janones having announced in February 2019 his intention to run for the 2022 elections and also for having assu-
med the leadership of the Avante party in the Chamber of Deputies in 2021\textsuperscript{13}. Also, according to Wikipedia data, the page in question was edited \textbf{86} times during the period and had the participation of 52 editors in total.

2. Bia Kicis

**Qualitative narrative**

Beatriz Kicis Torrents de Sordi, better known as Bia Kicis, is a Brazilian lawyer and politician affiliated with the Liberal Party and currently a federal deputy, and a retired Federal District prosecutor. During the election period, the user \textit{EddyCMartins} informed that it was making changes at the request of Deputy Bia Kicis, where it removed a massive amount of information. First, he declared that the Deputy did not belong to the “extreme right” wing, only to the right wing, in addition to having withdrawn information about how she disseminated misinformation about COVID-19, about her support for anti-democratic attacks on the STF and military intervention and adding that Bia Kicis did not censure anyone, as had been previously informed at the Constitution and Justice Commission (CCJ).

These allegations, however, were not accepted by the other editors, who informed that they do not work with requests by the biographic subject, but with sources that prove such information. An editor also brought up a discussion that Bia Kicis was not conservative but reactionary. However, no one else followed these discussions. Bia Kicis’ page had two main actants that tried to change the content in two thematic categories: “changes at the request of the biographical subject,” and “political positioning.”

**Quantitative analysis**

The first edit was made by the user \textit{Svartner} on November 6, 2018, and last edited by \textit{Kascyo} on May 12, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics\textsuperscript{14}. Since July 2015, the page has been viewed 211,912 times, as presented in the chart below.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} More information at: \url{[Link]}. Accessed on July 13, 2023.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Bia Kicis stats
\end{itemize}
It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred in the months of May 2020 (13,217), February 2021 (26,132), and October 2022 (8,138). The peak observed in 2021 may refer to Bia Kicis nomination to CCJ’s chair by Arthur Lira (Progressistas-AL)\(^\text{15}\).

It is worth noting that the user Svartner who edited Bia Kicis’ page, is the same person who edited André Janones’ page. Nevertheless, these modifications made by this user were temporally close to each other, separated by approximately two hours, as seen in the images of the Print Screen below. According to Wikipedia data, Bia Kicis’ page was edited 205 times during the period and had the participation of 102 editors in total.

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\(^{15}\) The CCJ is the commission in charge of evaluating the constitutionality of the presented bills. The commission also assesses the viability of PECs (Proposals for Amendment to the Constitution) and impeachment requests. Source: [Link](#). Accessed on July 13, 2023.
3. Damares Alves

Qualitative narrative

Damares Regina Alves is a lawyer, evangelical pastor, and Brazilian politician affiliated with the Republicans. She currently serves as Senator of the Republic for the Federal District. She was Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights from 2019 to 2022 during the government of former President Jair Bolsonaro. Before the election period, Damares’ page was already undergoing a series of debates among Wikipedia users.

The first occurred at the end of 2021 when there was a debate about the term “religious fundamentalist.” The discussion revolved around the argument that it was considered pejorative and/or encouraged religious intolerance. According to the user Jesseluzcarvalho, “the term religious fundamentalist tends to have a pejorative connotation these days, it does not apply to this person, and it is not considered appropriate to pre-judge someone who aims to defend human rights” and, therefore, in the end, has been removed from the page. Damares was also removed from the “conservatives of Brazil” category.

Another theme discussed was “Evolutionary Theory vs. Science.” According to the user Flaviogusmao1980, there is no evidence that Damares is contrary to evolutionary theory, but she only regretted that there was no room for discussion on the creationist view. However, his changes were undone, as it was considered that “creationism” was antagonistic to science. One issue that involved discussions on Damares’ Wikipedia was about the indigenous girl Kamayurá from the Xingu whom she adopted. A named user DamaresAlves removed all the parts that questioned the adopted daughter, stating that the child was separated from her family at six years old without parental permission and that there was never a formal adoption. Other users then undid that edit. The content was also removed by the user Flaviogusmao1980, which said the matter was under “judicial questioning.” Another user stated that “judicial questioning does not give the right to remove the article’s content, even more so with sources.”

Other users also showed up to vandalize Damares’ page. Some changed various contents, such as stating that she was born in North Korea, her mother was Inês Brasil, and her father, Lula. In addition, it was claimed that she was from Candomblé and was a Satanist. They even added that “she had an affair with Jair Bolsonaro’s wife” and “fights for lesbian rights.” Another user also brought up that she was a kidnapper and that she was mentally ill. Finally, a user completely changed Damares’ biography, stating that she was “proudly northeastern,” among other things.

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16. Some of the users have an activity page but not a page about the author or editor. This is a Wikipedia guideline that allows people to remain anonymous.
17. Inês Tânia Lima da Silva (born October 25, 1969), known professionally as Inês Brasil, is a German-Brazilian singer, dancer and internet celebrity. She became famous in Brazil in late 2012 after publishing an audition video for the 2013 edition of Big Brother Brasil on YouTube, which became popular. Source: <Link>
18. We disagree with the association of any religion of African origin with Satanism. We are just bringing in the data that has been entered on the page for analysis purposes.
The issue of child trafficking in Marajó\textsuperscript{19} was also the subject of discussion. Users added information on the inquiry the Public Prosecutor’s Office opened regarding trafficked children. They also brought Damares’ speech about how the trafficking was carried out, in addition to which she stated that she had evidence of the facts about her innocence. In all, the page had the exercise of four main actants on the following thematic categories: “religious positioning,” “validity of credentials,” “judicial inquiries,” “science versus religion,” “removal of information with confirmed sources or inappropriate changes,” “personal history and identity characterization,” “child trafficking,” and “sexual abuse.”

**Quantitative analysis**

The first edit was made by the user *Neistron* on December 9, 2018, and the last modification was made by *Sailoratlantis* on May 24, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics\textsuperscript{20}. Since July 2015, the page has been viewed 689,303 times, as we can see in the chart below, which shows page views disaggregated by month.

Graph 3: Statistics of views (Damares Alves). Source: [page](#).

It is observed that the highest number of views of the page occurred in the months of January 2019 (133,430), May 2019 (31,965), and October 2022 (45,463), referring respectively to the beginning of her term as Minister of the Bolsonaro Government and after during the run-up to elections. During the birth of her term as minister, two controversies involved her name: the first in which Damares claims to have been the victim of sexual violence in childhood by evangelical pastors\textsuperscript{21}, and the second in which her NGO *Atini* was being investigated for spreading hate speech against indigenous people\textsuperscript{22} and child trafficking\textsuperscript{23}. Also, according to Wikipedia data, the page in question was edited 355 times during the period and had the participation of 157 editors in total.

\textsuperscript{19} Damares Alves gave the statement during a service at the Assembly of God Ministry Fama church in Goiânia, when the former minister of the government of Jair Bolsonaro (PL) stated that children from Marajó are trafficked abroad and subjected to bodily mutilations and regimes foods that facilitate sexual abuse. Damares also said that “the number of rapes of newborns has exploded”, that the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MMFDH) would have images of eight-day-old children being raped, and that a video with this type of content is sold for prices between R$ 50 and R$ 100 thousand. Source: [Link](#). Accessed on July 13, 2023.

\textsuperscript{20} Damares Alves Statistics


\textsuperscript{22} More information at: [Link](#). Accessed on July 13, 2023.

\textsuperscript{23} More information at: [Link](#). Accessed on July 13, 2023.
4. Carla Zambelli

Qualitative narrative

Carla Zambelli Salgado de Oliveira is a Brazilian politician, re-elected Federal Deputy for São Paulo, and associated with the Liberal Party (PL). She was one of the founders of the movement “In the Streets”, having gained notoriety for joining the feminist group Femen in the early 2010s and later joining Brazil's ultra-conservative and far-right movement. Carla Zambelli's profile underwent a series of changes and vandalism throughout 2022. Initially, the introduction to Zambelli's page stated that she was “notoriously known for spreading false news and misrepresenting facts about vaccination.” From there, the editor Anderson Barbosa da Cunha, attempted to retract the claim stating it was a grammatical error correction in the takedown comment. After that, other users also tried to remove the statement.

The user Rafael Corretivo, in turn, made changes to the introduction of her page, stating that “someone in bad faith altered it with misleading information.” He, in addition to removing the phrase “notoriously known for spreading fake news and misrepresenting facts about vaccination,” also added that Zambelli was known for “fighting corruption and revealing the truths that are distorted by the left in collusion with the STF, the uninformative press, and other politicians involved in corruption up to their necks” and that she “gained more notoriety for working for the impeachment of one of the worst presidents Brazil has ever had.” After that, several editors began to reverse these changes, but Rafael Corretivo continued undoing and adding comments like “there are some leftist militants on duty inserting misleading information about this brilliant woman. She fights tooth and nail against corruption” and “Misleading information is being inserted by leftist militants from inside the Brazilian prisons,” always trying to repost the same sentence.

The text continued to be redone and undone until Marcos Vinicius Rossi de Oliveira removed the sentence and added that Zambelli was known for “speaking the truth and going against policies that take away freedoms of expression.” Another user, Tereza Lucia Alves Penna, also added that Zambelli “is one of the fiercest defenders of freedom of expression, human rights, and freedom of printed voting.” After several attempts to remove and insert the sentence, highlighting the editor’s comment Érico questioning “what disgraceful introduction is this?” Zambelli’s profile was protected, given the insistence on maintaining an absolutely inappropriate introduction, in the words of Érico.

There was also a little discussion as to whether or not Zambelli was a monarchist, and in the end, it was accepted that she was since there was a source reporting this. Along the same lines, it was also discussed whether she was a far-right fascist, but the information about her being a fascist was removed by the user Rkieferbaum who stated that “not that it’s wrong, but you can write these things better and with references.” As for what happened in São Paulo, where Zambelli pointed a firearm at a left-wing voter24, the editions were very

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24. An event in which the then Bolsonarist federal deputy Carla Zambelli (PL) pulled out a gun and pointed it at a man in the middle of the street in Jardins, a prime area of São Paulo, on Saturday afternoon (29), the eve of the elections. Wielding a pistol, she crossed...
coherent with the fact, only having the editor Gabriel Felipe da Silva try to remove the information from the text, but it was promptly reversed. Finally, the last discussion was about Zambelli having fled the country. Some users put the news that she was “a fugitive and future Brazilian prisoner.” After many changes, Zambelli’s profile was once again protected on the grounds of excessive vandalism. In all, the page had changes of six main actants on the following thematic categories: “characterization of identity and personal history,” “political positioning,” “crimes committed,” and “withdrawal of information with confirmed sources or inappropriate changes.”

Quantitative analysis

The first edit was made by the user Rsrdias07set1822 on March 25, 2018 and Ertrinken made the last edit on May 11, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics. Since May 2018, the page has been viewed 680,405 times, as presented in the chart below, which shows pageviews broken down by month.

It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred in the months of April 2020, May 2020, and October 2022. During the months of 2020, we believe that the reason for this peak is because the Deputy is associated with the figure former judge Sérgio Moro, who was then Minister of Justice in the Bolsonaro government, but Moro resigned from the position due to disagreements with then-president Jair Bolsonaro. We believe that the event of his exoneration influenced the editors of Carla Zambelli’s page to change the content linked to the figure of Sérgio Moro since the Deputy declared herself a Bolsonarist.

Alameda Lorena, near the intersection with Rua Joaquim Eugênio de Lima, and headed towards the bar where the man had entered. However, another video recorded by people who witnessed the episode shows that moments before pointing the gun, the deputy had tripped and fallen to the ground when trying to chase the man. Then, a parliamentary security guard helped her and, holding a gun, began to pursue the man. In the record, it is still possible to see the security guard kicking the man and hearing a gunshot noise. Source: <Link>. Accessed on July 13, 2023.

25. A rumor reverberated after the event of drawing a gun on a voter from the left.
26. Statistics Carla Zambelli
And for 2022, the prominent peaks occurred during the Deputy’s competition for the federal elections. Also, according to Wikipedia data, the page in question was edited 376 times during the period and was attended by 164 editors.

5. Padre Kelmon

**Qualitative narrative**

Kelmon Luís da Silva Souza, better known as Padre Kelmon, is a Brazilian politician and candidate for the republic’s presidency affiliated with the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB). He celebrated masses and baptisms in Bahia and gained notoriety in conservative groups thanks to military supporting discourse and against the left wing. Padre Kelmon’s page underwent a series of changes during the presidential elections, focusing on discussions around his priesthood.

Firstly, it was stated on the page that he called himself Orthodox, but no records were found of his link as a priest of the Orthodox communion churches, irregularly holding masses and services. In addition, he was a reference within conservative groups thanks to his military and anti-left speech. Based on this scenario, some amendments stated that he was affiliated with the Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church of Peru and, therefore, was a priest since the church is legally valid and protected by the values of the secularity of the State. These changes were undone shortly after that, and during the fact-checking, we could not find any evidence that supported this information.

Another user also removed all information stating that Kelmon was not a priest, adding only that he is a priest and that he celebrates masses, an idea also reinforced by another actant. This made the user **Skyshifter**, the most present in Kelmon’s page edits, restrict who could change the page. After that, user **Coaching01** tried again to claim that Kelmon is a priest, stating that the Orthodox Catholic Church of the Republic of Peru is valid and recognizes him as a priest. After reverted changes, **Coaching01** placed them again and said “whoever takes these editions is a communist and therefore impartial” (sic). This caused another user to revert the changes, stating that he is supposedly a priest and commenting, “said whom? where? when?” (sic).

A frequent discussion point was about the presidential race in 2022 and the debates, mainly the one from Rede Globo de Televisão (TV Globo). The changes initially showed Kelmon’s inconsistency in the debate, interrupting the lines and being warned several times by the mediator at the time William Bonner. User **Sasa9090** removed the name “Padre Kelmon” and put “Padre de festa junina” across the Wikipedia page. The user did this several times until the page was promptly restricted and protected under the allegation of excessive vandalism.

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27. Festa Junina is a country-side celebration in Brazil that takes place in the month of June and celebrates St. Johns, the saint of the harvests. This cultural inheritance is catholic, appropriated by the Portuguese and Italian heritage. Commonly, Festas Juninas have a symbolic party called “quadrilha” in which they can portray a fake wedding between people, and for that, someone most commonly dresses as a priest to fakely celebrate the marriage. That is why Kelmon was called a Festa Junina’s Father since he goes around dressed as a priest, apparently with no valid affiliation to any churches.
Finally, there was a discussion about the image used on the page since it was considered a Copyright Violation and promptly removed. The image was changed to another without any debate on the matter. In all, three main actants were identified on its page that made changes regarding the following thematic categories: “informational vandalism,” and “religious positioning.”

Quantitative analysis

The first edit was made by the user Skyshifter on September 24, 2022, and the last edit was made by user Igor G. Monteiro on April 29, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics. Since its founding on the eve of the elections, until April 2023, Padre Kelmon’s page has been viewed 310,883 times, as we can see in the chart below, which shows page views disaggregated by month.

It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred between September (165,145) and October (125,710) of 2022, precisely on the occasion of the electoral run. Before the launch of his page, Padre Kelmon was involved in two related controversies: one involving former president Jair Bolsonaro and the other involving current president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The controversy involving Bolsonaro occurred because, in 2020, more than 100 requests for impeachment for the then-president were filed. On occasion, Kelmon joined the legion supporting Bolsonaro and received over 100 thousand reais for the PTB. In addition, Padre Kelmon helped spread misinformation by former President Bolsonaro regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, favoring chloroquine to treat the disease (a treatment for which there is a lack of scientific evidence).

The second controversy occurred as President Lula was arrested between April 2018 and November 2019. Upon being released, several politicians and Bolsonarist aspirants

28. Padre Kelmon Stats
began to confront his release, claiming it was a mistake, and Father Kelmon joined this
movement. The peak of views on his page would also be a reaction to his participation in
the TV Globo presidential debate in October 2022. Also, according to Wikipedia data, the
page in question was edited 127 times during the period and had the participation of 45
editors in total.

6. Simone Tebet

Qualitative narrative

Simone Nassar Tebet is a Brazilian lawyer, professor, and politician, affiliated with the
Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), for which she ran in the 2022 presidential elec-
tions. She gained national visibility for her moderate positions and in defense of democracy
as a candidate for the presidency of the Republic by the Brazilian Democratic Movement
(MDB), a fact that placed her as a possible name for the so-called “third way.” She is cur-
cently Minister of Planning and Budget in the Lula (PT) government.

Among the controversies found, we highlight the editors' disputes regarding Tebet's po-
sition on the rights of indigenous populations. On January 21, 2023, the user Biatorres1
deleted a paragraph stating that Tebet was a representative of the ruralist caucus in the
Federal Senate and, according to the section, she was against the demarcation of indige-
nous lands in conflict areas. That same passage stated that, according to a report by the
Indigenous Missionary Council, Tebet was among the 50 most active parliamentarians
who took a stand against indigenous rights in the National Congress. This topic has been
controversial among editors on more than one occasion. For example, on December 30,
2022, Solon26125 undone edits of Jsv11 and alleged repeated undue content removals
relating to controversies involving Tebet’s position regarding indigenous lands.

There was another clash between editors regarding a supposed conflict of interest be-
tween Tebet and her position against the demarcation of indigenous lands. On March 19,
2022, the user David Xpo included that Simone Tebet defended in the Senate the suspen-
sion of the boundary of indigenous lands combined with compensation to landowners. Ac-
cording to this editor, this proposal has been criticized by human rights organizations since
they argue that there is an alleged conflict of interest between the project presented and
the fact that Tebet owns a farm in the region of Caarapó (MS), whose territory is marked
by violence against indigenous people. However, the editor Raquel de Carvalho Madeira
deleted on April 1st, 2022, excerpts that allege a conflict of interest between the Senator
and her position against the demarcation of indigenous lands since, according to her, the
articles that alleged this were “excessively biased, distorting the reality of the facts.”

Finally, it was also discussed whether a mention of administrative impropriety when
Tebet was mayor of Três Lagoas (MT) should be included in her biography. Given this, the
user Érico undid the edit of Alberto Harari on July 15, 2021, as he judged that his edition
had an accusatory tone, not stating whether Tebet had been acquitted. Therefore, it is noted that the controversies involving Tebet have turned, above all, to her position concerning the demarcation of indigenous lands and her relationship with Brazilian agricultural businesses. The discussion around her involvement with acts of administrative impropriety also appeared in our investigation without occupying a prominent place. In all, six actants worked on reformulating and revising texts on Simone Tebet’s Wikipedia page, with the main thematic categories: “position on indigenous rights” and “administrative impropriety.”

Quantitative analysis

The first edit was made by the user Visconde on November 17, 2013, and Isabelle Bello made the last edit on April 28, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics. Since July 2015, the page has been viewed 1,240,936 times (assuming leadership in the ranking of views per page compared to the others selected for this research), as we can see in the chart below, which presents disaggregated page views per month.

It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred in the months of August 2022 (203,128), September 2022 (170,776), and October 2022 (212,121), dates related to Tebet’s competition for the Presidency of the Republic. Also, according to Wikipedia data, the page in question was edited 407 times during the period and attended by 159 editors.

7. Sergio Moro

Qualitative narrative

Sergio Fernando Moro is a jurist, former magistrate, university professor, and Brazilian
politician affiliated with União Brasil and Senator of the Republic for the state of Paraná since 2023. Sérgio Moro gained national visibility from his performance in Operation Lava Jato, which condemned and arrested President Lula in 2018. Moro was also Minister of Justice in the Bolsonaro government, which raised doubts about his partiality in the judgment of former President Lula while he was a Federal Judge. Regarding the most relevant modifications found on Wikipedia, we initially highlight the comparison between Sérgio Moro’s performance with a Nazi politician named Roland Freisiler. Thus, on October 18, 2022, the user Bruno G undid the edit of Grrla Editor, according to which he associated the image of Moro with that of a Nazi.

Another piece of information contested by one of the editors of Sérgio Moro’s Wikipedia page concerned his “legal notoriety.” On October 18, 2022, the user Solon26125 questioned the edits of Grrla Editor, who associated Moro with the idea of him being an illustrious jurist, a fact that made Solon26125 claim that the current Senator would not fit that adjective. On August 25, 2022, the user Edna Lampert questioned Sérgio Moro’s impartiality while he was a Federal Judge, stating that he was a Partial Judge. However, on June 8, 2023, the user Cosmo Skerry deleted this statement.

Finally, on May 3, 2020, the user Luizpuodzius stated that Moro had been the best man at Carla Zambelli’s wedding. However, on the same day, the user Érico suppressed such information, considering it irrelevant. Therefore, we identified that there were disputes around some meanings attributed to Sérgio Moro, especially about his supposed legal notoriety or his partiality. There were also attempts to associate him with the image of Nazi jurists. However, this information was suppressed by Wikipedia editors.

In all, eight actants acted on his page, focusing on the following thematic categories: “political positioning,” “revocation of prestige,” “professional history,” and “characterization of identity and personal history.”

**Quantitative analysis**

The first edit was made by the user Érico on January 30, 2015, and Sailoratlantis made the last edit on May 9, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the editing statistics. Since July 2015, the page has been viewed 436,339 times, as can be seen in the chart below, which shows page views disaggregated by month.
It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred in March 2021 (33,863), November 2021 (32,173), and October 2022 (40,350). We believe that the peaks related to 2021 are due to the crisis of Operation Lava-Jato, an operation headed by Moro as a judge who tried, convicted, and arrested President Lula, since in 2021, the process lost 20 cases, including the case involving President Lula. In Lava Jato, it was the operation that brought Moro fame, and for his action on this occasion, he was considered a brilliant jurist. After the fall of the operation, several actors also lost their credentials, and the processes lost importance in the Brazilian scenario. According to Wikipedia data, the page in question has been edited 1,623 times during the period and had the participation of 371 editors in total.

8. Gladson Cameli

Qualitative narrative

Gladson de Lima Cameli is a Brazilian engineer, businessman, and politician affiliated with Progressistas. He is governor of the state of Acre, elected in the 2018 general elections, in the first round, with 223,993 votes, and re-elected in 2022. Its Wikipedia page underwent a few changes throughout the electoral period. The changes pointed out the scandal of an alleged corruption scheme at the highest level of his management, called Operation Ptolemy, an operation that also featured his father. The action of two main actors was observed in the thematic category “professional history.”

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Quantitative analysis

The first edit was made by the user Jadolfo on May 29, 2010, and Random made the last edit on May 25, 2023, as we can see on the page that contains the edition statistics\(^3\). Since July, the page has been viewed 108,162 times, as we can see in the chart below, which shows page views disaggregated by month.

![Graph 8: Statistics of views (Gladson Cameli). Source: page.](image)

It is observed that the highest number of page views occurred in October 2018 (4,072), December 2021 (4,726), and March 2023 (6,274). The reason for the peak between 2018 and 2021 probably is Cameli’s transition from Senator to Governor of the State of Acre\(^3\). And in 2023, the Justice authorized Cameli to have contact with his father, whom Operation Ptolomeu is investigating in the north of Brazil\(^3\). Also, according to Wikipedia data, the page in question was edited 140 times during the period and had the participation of 74 editors in total.

Fact-checking

Given the research goals and the findings, it is interesting to discuss fact-checking on national and international platforms. Because Wikipedia is a *crowdsourced environment* where actants act to include, curate or edit content, it is a portal where fact-checking becomes necessary. This happens because the actants that perform the changes need to be more impartial to manage content based on evidence and facts, not the personal opinions of those who control the information.

In the case of our research, we identified a robust narrative dispute within the pages, in which writers and editors established discursive domains depending on their ideological positions. This became clearer in pages such as Damares Alves, Carla Zambelli, and Sérgio Moro. However, the very movement of Wikipedia makes it clear that, at the end of disputes, edits are curated by verified editors, that is, who already have a history of action on the platform and who can sometimes choose to “close pages” so that content is not removed or added.

The facts observed on the analyzed pages were crossed with fact-checking portals: Agência Lupa (national), Portal Metropoles (national), Deutsche Welle (international), Twitter (international), Aos Fatos (national), International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN - international) among others, with additional help from Google’s SERP tool. It is interesting to note that, for a survey of a national nature and scope like this, it was challenging to check facts internationally since we deal with national actors that are not fashionable internationally. Lupa, on the other hand, has a joint tool with UOL for fact-checking, with a broad approach and collection of checks that have been carried out over the last few years. There, it was possible to check facts, events, and narratives found on Wikipedia, proving to be a great ally in the fight against misinformation. Even during the elections, Lupa established a task force to analyze all information contained in debates and public hearings, classifying the information conveyed as “True,” “Exaggeration,” or “False.” In the international domain, we find checks in the IFCN referring to more relevant personalities, such as Bolsonaro or Lula. However, in the case of characters with less relevance, even if it is identified that they have been involved in controversies, a possible check loses traction at an international level.

When crossing the graph of views per analyzed page, it is possible to observe that all selected points merge to a peak of views during October 2022 - which was already predicted since the elections took place in this period. Also, it is notable that Simone Tebet, Damares Alves, and Carla Zambelli lead the visualization ranking, with Damares Alves having a considerable peak in 2019 and Carla Zambelli another in April 2020.

Graph 9: General views. Source: page.

As previously explored, we checked the Brazilian context by speculating why these viewing peaks occurred. All checks will be placed in the Annex, but it is worth summarizing this crossing by comparing it with other candidates:

1. The surprising fact that Simone Tebet’s page leads the views is due, according to our intersections, to the fact that she was a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic (naturally, the electoral race with the most spotlight in Brazil) and for having called herself the “Terceira Via” (Third Way). Amidst the polarization brought between Lula and Bolsonaro, Tebet struggled in her race to demonstrate her skills for a government plan that was quantitatively and qualitatively different from Lula and Bolsonaro – betting on her political experience and knowledge of public management. Initially, Sérgio Moro intended to run for the Presidency of the Republic, announcing himself as “Third Way.” However, Moro decided not to run because of his supposed popularity crisis since he left the Bolsonaro government, and the Lava Jato operation began to lose essential cases, including the one that judged and sentenced President Lula to prison. Tebet, as a representative of the “Third Way,” participated in debates and public hearings, where Lupa checked some information. It is worth noting the false information brought by Tebet in one of the interviews with TV Cultura that it would be unprecedented for a female candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in Brazilian history38 (since Brazil already had President Dilma Rousseff, among other women who ran for office but were not elected). Lupa also verified as false the information that Tebet would be against the investigation of corrupt mayors and governors39. That last one won a lot in visibility, as Tebet has already gone through a process of administrative impropriety in past public administrations.

2. Damares Alves has a prominent peak of views before the 2022 elections, between January and April 2019. As previously mentioned, we believe that this amount is due to her performance as a minister in the Bolsonaro government and to her rela-

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tionship with two relevant controversies: the first in which the current senator claims to have suffered violence and sexual abuse as a child by an evangelical pastor; and the second in which her NGO Atini was denounced for propagating hate speech against indigenous people. Damares was also involved in adopting an indigenous child that did not follow the Brazilian legal adoption process, and several sources allege that this adoption was and is considered illegal. These accusations were crossed with the Lupa portal but without conclusions about the veracity of the facts. However, Lupa checked the false claim made on the internet by Damares Alves that there would be a pedophilia case involving the Federal Supreme Court.\(^{40}\) (which has been proven untrue). Lupa also verified that Damares did not join the Whatsapp audio in which evangelicals asked for an alleged military coup\(^{41}\).

3. Carla Zambelli presents a peak of views between April and July 2020, which we speculate is related to her association with the dismissal of Senator Sérgio Moro, then Minister of Justice in the Bolsonaro government. As aforementioned, Zambelli declares herself a Bolsonarist and associates herself with the figure of Moro to support his “fight for democracy” profile, despite being a citizen with a conservative political stance and apparently favoring the monarchist regime. Another peak involving Carla Zambelli occurred during the 2022 elections, since on the eve of the second round, the deputy pointed a firearm at a citizen justifying that she had been assaulted for the same. Lupa, however, made a dossier on this event, proving that Zambelli lies when saying she was attacked, as there is a video in which it shows her falling alone to the ground, and after her fall, she starts chasing the citizen at whom she points the firearm\(^{42}\). Another disinformation analyzed by Lupa during the electoral race is an Instagram post by Zambelli in which she announces that the Ministry of Science and Technology is developing a 100% Brazilian Niobium battery\(^{43}\). Lupa concludes that, despite an ongoing Niobium battery development, it is not entirely Brazilian and would not involve the Ministry of Science and Technology.

4. Finally, the peak presented by Father Kelmon during the 2022 elections is worth mentioning. However, in his case, it is clear that this attention is due to his presence in the presidential debate on TV Globo, in which he was dressed in a priest’s outfit (despite Brazil being a secular state) and in which he also broke several rules of debate\(^{44}\) (such as speaking time and interruption during the speech of other candidates).

Although the selected candidates present controversies, Wikipedia depends largely on reliable and verifiable reference sources to support the information in its articles. Editors are encouraged to quote credible sources such as academic books, scientific articles, journals, international reports, and other reputable publications. However, due to the open and collaborative nature of the platform, inaccurate or outdated information can be introduced into articles. Another observed peculiarity is that some personalities try to edit Wikipedia

NARRATIVE DISPUTES ON WIKIPEDIA AND BRAZILIAN ELECTIONS

pages as profiles on a personal website, which is not the portal’s purpose. Wikipedia’s mission, as set out by the Wikimedia Foundation, is to empower and engage people worldwide to collect and develop educational content under a free or public domain license and to disseminate it effectively and globally. When analyzing several systems of distributed and collective intelligence, Pierre Levy explores crowdsourcing as an environment where no one knows everything, but everyone knows something (Levy, 1999).

In this observation by Levy also lies the platform’s power that provides free access to a vast repository of collaboratively created and maintained knowledge. With that, pages about people or public personalities should follow the logic of curating an encyclopedia and not curating an individual biography: that is why websites and profiles on social networks exist to meet this demand. The community of editors, authors, and Wikipedia readers thus plays a key role in identifying and correcting this untrue information through reviews, discussions, and correction requests. It is important to emphasize that the final responsibility for verifying the facts rests with the user who wants to consume the content and information found. Therefore media and information education initiatives can be better worked with citizens, especially in times of elections.

Reflections on Media and Information Education

As previously mentioned, Wikipedia can sometimes suffer from the reliability of the information presented. However, the portal inserts different tools and mechanisms to ensure that it has at least reliable sources despite the content not having an identified author. As part of the research, we did a content creation test to understand better how the platform’s mechanisms work. After registration, in which you can choose between producing entries or editing existing articles, we selected that we would like to create entries, and when opening the main page, we are faced with the following message:

“When you created your account, you said you wanted to create a new article. This is an important but challenging type of editing, so we recommend that you try making minor edits to existing articles first. If you prefer to create a new article now, you can learn how to do it here.”

This demonstrates that the platform tries to guide new authors and editors to have a healthy informational practice, adapting to the responsibility that rests with us users when creating content. Although this does not guarantee informative quality, initiatives like this play an essential role in training and informing future generations to have healthy and responsible consumption and production of information. When continuing to edit the Wikipedia page, it was also identified that when creating content, it is necessary to indicate the sources on which certain information is based. This means that for each block of information added, references are required to support what is being said. When these links go to the
editors, these are the sources they can rely on to understand whether the changes have been vandalized or are legitimate, based on facts and evidence.

Naturally, this system relies on the credibility of this process – also relying on the fact that editors and authors do not have an unscientific correlation or who may rig the approval or rejection of information. A priori, this process is an anonymous review, and depending on the relevance of the information, it also passes through peer review. However, despite having a system in which it tries to ensure informational legitimacy, Wikipedia still faces challenges and, often, is disregarded as a reliable source. Some measures could be incorporated by the platform itself to solve this problem, such as associating with fact-checking media (such as Agência Lupa established a partnership with UOL), investing in the participation of specialists who can bring a higher level of specialized knowledge and accuracy of information (even identifying experts and their affiliations), and strengthening verifiability policies, requiring the use of reliable and verifiable sources.

In terms of transparency, as the platform’s API is open, it is possible to have visibility of how content is inserted, removed, and edited between pages. However, this transparency is of a high technical level, demanding from users specific skills such as API extraction and data analysis. With this, the platform could work on a visualization model that is more accessible to users, especially during times like national elections.

Another point to invest in is a media and information literacy program together with the Wikipedia platform, which could target young people and adults, at school and at home. Media education becomes essential to enable individuals to critically understand and participate in the media environment in which they are inserted, empowering people to develop skills such as critical analysis, verification of sources, and understanding of how information is produced, distributed, and consumed in different media (Bonami, 2016). In the context of digital platforms, media education becomes even more crucial since, through it, users can learn to assess the reliability of the information they find in this environment, and identify and deal with misinformation or harmful content and hate speech.

With the global platform regulation movement, Wikipedia could also invest its efforts in focusing on the educational area as a sustainable measure to ensure that solutions programmed at government and private levels are fulfilled and have penetration at the level of civil society. With this, media education, regulation of digital platforms, and informational sustainability are complementary and work together to ensure that information is presented responsibly and reliably, in addition to promoting the critical engagement of the population. At the specific level of Wikipedia, investments can be made in offering users tools and resources to develop their skills in Digital and Information Literacy and Media Education.

For example, a page could provide users with training on identifying manipulated content evaluating information sources, and identifying and reporting harmful information. The platform can also adopt standardized transparency measures on how they collect and use

45. In an interview for the Lockdown TV podcast, by journalist Freddie Sayers, Sanger defended the original vision of Wikipedia as an open-source project with the power to democratize access to information. However, for the co-founder, Wikipedia as it exists today, cannot be considered a reliable source of research. Sources: <Link>, <Link>. Accessed on July 14, 2023.
user data, in addition to allowing users to control the treatment of sensitive information and visualizing the dynamics of content between entries. A support material in this process is the UNESCO Curriculum on Media and Information Literacy (MIL)\(^\text{47}\) which offers a manual on how to incorporate MIL into formal and non-formal learning settings. Through UNESCO’s methodology, Wikipedia could develop tools to train users, authors, and editors to exercise critical logic and become informationally aware and responsible with content created, curated, or reviewed.

Despite being a challenging scenario, platforms carry responsibilities, and with them, citizens must also fulfill their duty to build a collective, healthy, and sustainable information environment. Election years worsen the situation, but long-term solutions and programs can offer a framework for construction that can positively impact future generations. Building a healthy internet is everyone’s task, and platforms are fundamental allies in this journey as the complexity of this phenomenon grows daily. With united forces, we can be better prepared for the upcoming challenges that will affect us with future democratic events so that future generations can enjoy our legacy.

\(^{47}\) More information at: <link>. Accessed on July 19, 2023
Final considerations

Among the various findings that this research brought, it is worth mentioning the pleasant surprise of the quality of content and information within Wikipedia, as well as the editing controversies that such content contained. In an era of informational vertigo, when it is challenging to differentiate what is true or false and manage the content volume, reaffirming informational trustworthiness is a relevant task.

With this search, we identified and described the use of Wikipedia as an instrument of political propaganda and disinformation through the biographical pages of candidates in the 2022 Brazilian elections. We offered a qualitative and quantitative description of the data and information found and crossed this information with the Brazilian informational, electoral, and cultural context. It was possible to verify that the narrative disputes intensified in the electoral period, both in terms of editions and visualizations. It was even possible to prove that certain pages are created on the eve of the elections, as observed in the case of the candidate Padre Kelmon, which suggests that election periods demand informational resources from Wikipedia as users resort to the portal in the decision-making process.

Another question we could answer with the research was about which informational or disinformation narratives have more alterations and provoke a more intense movement of actants in writing and editing. As noted in the Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis section, 18 thematic categories were identified over which author and editor changes prevailed. Of the 18 categories, the ones that suffered the most changes were:

- **Category 7: Personal history and identity characterization** (changed in 2 profiles);
- **Category 8: Professional history** (changed in 4 profiles);
- **Category 10: Political positioning** (changed in 3 profiles);
- **Category 11: Religious positioning** (changed in 2 profiles);
- **Category 14: Withdrawal of information with confirmed sources or inappropriate changes** (changed in 4 profiles); It is
- **Category 18: Information vandalism** (changed in 2 profiles).

This suggests that the changes prevail in an attempt to guide users to obtain information that can influence decision-making. An interesting point, however, was the observation of category 11, “Religious Positioning,” which draws attention to the fact that Brazil is a secular State with complete independence between religion and Government. However, as also occurs in other countries, public opinion on Brazilian politics intersects with the religious conceptions of the population, which may have creed as a moral formation. Although we have not delved into the analysis of this phenomenon, it is worth mentioning that this social and cultural field is marked by fundamentals systematized by religions and by the public debate

Another point to be observed in the most changed categories on the analyzed pages is category 14: “Withdrawal of information with confirmed sources or inappropriate changes” (adjusted in 4 profiles). Here, the relevance lies with Wikipedia editors, who, when reviewing pages, require bibliographic sources when not listed or point out inconsistencies between the text presented and the sources indicated. In all profiles observed in this research, editors perform the vital task of controlling and checking information to prevent information vandalism. Furthermore, it was identified that in the context of narrative disputes, editors decided on texts based on verified information and facts – re-aggregating confidence in the crowdsourcing process from Wikipedia.

Our fact-checking efforts on platforms corroborated this editorial action, and at the end of the editing rounds of each page, we could observe that the editors favored facts and information corroborated by evidence rather than disinformation or sensationalist content. Although Wikipedia is not an instrument of electoral propaganda, the portal is an ally of public debate, trying to offer users a range based on facts, thus creating a healthy informational atmosphere.

Furthermore, we have not observed a difference in page editions between Brazilian geographical regions, as those changes are more related if a candidate was a Lula or a Bolsonaro supporter. Nevertheless, female candidates’ pages suffered the majority of alterations and the highest visualization peaks. For future research, it would be interesting to analyze why female candidates face more attention on their pages when compared to male candidates. Also, it is relevant to understand the semantic relationships and intersections between the observed thematic categories, taking into account that specific themes are correlated, and interdependent when contrasted with the Brazilian political, social and cultural scenario (such, for example, the categories of political positioning and religious positioning). It would also be fruitful to understand if Wikipedia offers additional tools and instruments for informational trust during elections or if they are the same existing ones in other non-electoral periods. Finally, it would be interesting to contrast these findings with other countries, especially in South America, to understand whether the data found in Brazil are similar or contrasting with other countries, as well as contrasting our findings with the upcoming 2024 and 2026 Brazilian elections.

References


