

“MORAL TURN” AND THE ENTEXTUALIZATION OF HOMOSEXUALS AS PEDOPHILES IN BOLSONARO’S SPEECHES IN CONGRESS (2000 TO 2018)

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- **ABSTRACT:** In this article, we aim to carry out a qualitative-quantitative investigation of 922 shorthand notes of Federal Deputy Jair Bolsonaro’s speeches in the Chamber of Deputies from 2000 to 2018. As objectives, we analyze (i) the presence of religious and military lexical items in the hatred rhetoric of Bolsonaro throughout this chronological segmentation and (ii) the “moral turn” in his political discourse, when, from 2011 on, he starts to associate homosexuality with pedophilia. To do so, we anchored ourselves in a lexical analysis methodology, bringing Corpus Linguistics closer to Linguistic Anthropology. To that end, we distributed the data into two sub-corpora, from 2000 to 2010 and from 2011 to 2018, having as a parameter, firstly, to describe the diachronic contrast in the occurrences of 20 keywords, divided into 10 for the religious discourse and 10 for the military, and, secondly, to explain the recontextualization of the sign “pedophilia” in the (re)organization of the relationship between hate speech, homophobia and moral panic in the speeches of the politician. The pronouncements were processed in the AntConc program and in Excel. From 2011 on, the Bolsonaroist discourse begins to balance the use of lexicons from the ultraconservative military discourse and the Christian fundamentalist discourse.
- **KEYWORDS:** bolsonarism; quali-quantitative analysis; far right; hate speech.

Opening Remarks

According to Moita Lopes and Pinto (2020), the analysis of some of the main anti-democratic actions in consolidated contemporary democracies around the world draws attention to a globally orchestrated Far-Right movement, which, despite the singularities of national players and contexts, demonstrates synchrony and common strategies.

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In this article, considering such processes of democracy weakening, we will focus on the issue of hate speech against homosexuality and on the continuous processes of recontextualization of such speeches, taking as an empirical basis the pronouncements of federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro in Congress, from 2000 to 2018. In this research, we aim to advance the understanding of three fundamental aspects for the comprehension of the contemporary reactionary reflux, namely: the interface between military ultraconservatism and Christian fundamentalism in the political discourse of the Brazilian Far Right, the relationship between language and the performatization of violence in hate speech, and the intensification of moral themes in contemporary Brazilian politics since the 2010s.

The Conservative Ideals: Between National Security and the Defense of Morals (1985 to 2018)

According to Alonso (2018), while in the late 1980s — when the New Republic period began in Brazil after the 21-year-old dictatorship — there were social demands for political citizenship; in 2018 the streets were taken by citizens crying for divine justice, patriarchal family and warlike nationalism. Despite the weaknesses of the democratic opening — the slow, gradual and restricted opening —, the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF/88) began to guarantee rights and social justice (Alonso, 2018).

“This normative horizon has been blurring since the anti-corruption protests of 2011, when the streets gave clues that part of the country preferred another direction. The ultraconservative tree has now borne its greatest fruit, but it is not new”,¹ Alonso (2018, p. 54, our translation) points out, recalling that, already in 1989, the presidential candidate Enéas Carneiro (PRONA) represented the Brazilian Far Right and ranked 3rd in the 1994 elections. Although he lost ground in 1998, his legacy was decisive for new names to occupy this place. Anthony Garotinho (PDT), with his speech linked to God and mother country, got 17% of the vote in 2002, again ranking 3rd place. In 2006, Christian Democracy (DC) founder Eymael represented the group, although not with as much success. In 2010, along with Levy Fidelix (PRTB) and Pastor Everaldo (PSC), both also present in 2014, Eymael once again aimed to attract the conservative electorate by focusing on morals and good practices. This electoral path, albeit irregular, proved to be consistent with and fundamental for belligerent nationalism, anti-elitism and hierarchizing moralism to elect Bolsonaro in 2018 (Alonso, 2018).

The first of these aspects emerged in 2011. With the beginning of the anti-corruption protests, the use of national symbols in public spaces resurged, among them the national anthem, the flag and its colors. This symbology — full of binarisms — is present in the opposition a) between nationalists and globalists, which re-signifies the communist

¹ Original: “*Esse horizonte normativo vem esboroando desde os protestos anticorrupção de 2011, quando as ruas deram pistas de que parte do país preferia outro rumo. A árvore ultraconservadora deu seu maior fruto agora, mas não é nova*” (Alonso, 2018, p. 54).

threat of the Cold War in the contemporary multipolar context; b) between mother country love and classes, in which the former is based on national stratification and homogenization, dispensing with any internal divisions that may legitimize conflicts, in addition to reducing social differences to individual talent and effort; and c) between mother country love and political parties, that is, between the absolute truth and ideological debates (Alonso, 2018).

Bolsonarism also embodies a sort of anti-elitism by opposing the “snobbish” and “intellectualized” elite to the middle-class “common man”. “This ethos of the common man is not anchored in the charisma of the exceptional leader. On the contrary, it is rooted in representativeness. Its strength comes from the sharing of habits with the average Brazilian person” (Alonso, 2018, p. 51). Posing as an old-fashioned man, a family man and the leader of the Bolsonaro clan, the deputy is recognized as a “myth”, somebody that is “one of us” (Alonso, 2018, p. 51).

Evangelical churches hold a central role in hierarchizing moralism. In the public sphere, they mainly seek to dominate the educational agendas, with the so-called Nonpartisan School Movement², opposing the “ideological contamination” of gender equality and the fight against homophobia. In the private sphere, they focus on patriarchy, reinforcing gender hierarchies with the belief in “male innate superiority”, derived from the supposed male congenital virility — typical of command positions. Women are allegedly suited to subordinate positions: the domestic and maternal ones (Alonso, 2018). Furthermore, these churches defend compulsory heterosexuality (Butler, 1990).

According to Rocha (2021), the rhetoric of Bolsonarist hatred refers to the military reaction that began in the mid-1980s, in the wake of the political opening led by Ernesto Geisel (1974 to 1979) and the redemocratization process with João Batista Figueiredo (1979 to 1985). Between 1985 and 1988, the military wrote the Orvil (the Portuguese word for “book” — *livro* — written backwards), a key document that sought to present the point of view of some sectors in the institution of Brazilian history in the twentieth century and, this way, react to the complaints of the “Brasil: Nunca Mais” Project (“Brazil: Never Again” — BNM) in regard to the systematic practice of torture and other serious human rights violations during the Military Regime (1964 to 1985) (Rocha, 2021, p. 248).

Based on the National Security Doctrine (DSN) and written in apocalyptic and clichéd language, Orvil reported on the existence of a supposed permanent communist threat in Brazil, anchoring in the Cold War to legitimize the use of force against groups considered subversive, the “internal enemies”, including the need to seize state political

² According to Louzano and Moriconi (2018, p. 204, our translation), “this movement, founded by lawyer Miguel Nagib in 2004, had state deputy Flávio Bolsonaro (PSC-RJ) as the first parliamentarian to present it through a bill in the State Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro, in 2014, calling it the Nonpartisan School Movement. The second project with the same content was presented by his brother, councilman Carlos Bolsonaro (PSC-RJ), in the city of Rio de Janeiro. After these initiatives, several similar projects emerged across Brazil. The project was presented nationally in the Chamber of Deputies in 2015 and in the Senate in 2016. Representing a more ‘up to date’ version of the ideas proposed by the Nonpartisan School Movement, this latest bill also incorporates a ban on gender discussion in schools”.

power. Such a document contains the ultraconservative military narrative model of Bolsonaroism and serves as the source of its main arguments (Rocha, 2021).

Such rhetoric has been effective in guaranteeing Jair Bolsonaro victories in every election he has contested, expressing in Rio de Janeiro the erratic but consistent trajectory of national political representatives of the Far Right since the late 1980s. In 1990, he was elected as a federal deputy for the PDC, obtaining 67,041 votes. In 1994, affiliated to the PPR, he increased his number of voters, reaching 111,927 votes and being the 3rd best voted candidate. In 1998, affiliated to the PPB, he was the 10th most voted candidate, with 102,893 votes. With the same party, in 2002, he dropped to 88,945 votes, ranking 21st. As of 2006, in PP, he grew uninterruptedly, managing to be the 14th best voted candidate in that year, with 99,770 votes. In 2010, with 120,646 votes, he was elected in the 11th position and, in 2014, he was chosen by significant 464,572 voters, rising to the 1st position in votes for the Chamber of Deputies (Brasil, 2022).

“Started in March 2015 and expanded in April, August and December of the same year, *right-wing street demonstrations* exploded in March 2016, revealing a solid organization of conservative groups in the country”, asserts Rocha (2021, p. 34, our translation)³. To understand this process, we must consider (a) the ideological growth of the Right in the 1990s, with the production and dissemination of books with the aim of strategically polemicizing and deconstructing left-wing icons, having among its main authors Olavo de Carvalho; (b) the unforeseen occurrence of a “generational fissure” that aligns part of the young people grown up during the almost four governments of the Workers’ Party/PT (2002 to 2016) to the ideological principles of the Right, generating an unprecedented association in the country between the *establishment*, the political system and the Left; (c) the deepening of this generational conflict as a result of the diffusion of digital technologies, which have enhanced creativity, irreverence and connection among members of this right-wing youth; and (d) the dispute over the occupation of the streets by conservative and reactionary groups in 2013, becoming more visible from 2015 (Rocha, 2021).

According to Lowenkron (2013), in the field of Anthropology, the Senate’s Parliamentary Committee of Investigation that dealt with pedophilia — the CPI of Pedophilia — held in 2008, boosted the growth trend of the moral debate in Brazilian politics in the late 2000s. With the objective of “investigating and ascertaining the use of the internet for the commission of pedophilia crimes” (Lowenkron, 2013, p. 305), the legislative investigation sometimes positioned itself as the “country’s chief of police” in defense of national moral values.

Senator Magno Malta (PL), the Committee leader, constantly summoned the press to publicize the work carried out by the CPI of “society”, “children” and “family”, aimed at “the collective and unanimous good” (Lowenkron, 2013, p. 310). “Pedophilia is 5% disease and 95% nastiness” (Lowenkron, 2013, p. 315), he stated. In their speeches,

³ Original: “*Iniciadas em março de 2015, e ampliadas em abril, agosto e dezembro do mesmo ano, as manifestações de rua da direita explodiram em março de 2016, revelando ao país uma organização sólida de grupos conservadores*” (Rocha, 2021, p. 34).

representatives used terms such as “crime”, “desire”, “vice” and “wound” to describe pedophiles. The broadcast of child pornography videos on national television shocked and distressed the population. At the same time, the association between the CPI and the media contributed to the theatricalization of the struggle of good against evil (Lowenkron, 2013), a central aspect for the constitution of the Right’s conservative ideology.

During the Committee’s work, there were constant attempts to mobilize the public arena emotionally in favor of the “pedophile hunt”, the “enemy of the family”, enhancing its persuasion by commotion and promoting its engagement with collective indignation. An “anti-pedophilia crusade” was stimulated as a movement to preserve the “sacredness” of childhood. The anthropologist also observed the strategies of conservative groups to establish pedophiles as the “contemporary monsters”, “as the most extreme limit of every anomaly, combining what is forbidden and unintelligible, transgressing the limits not only of the law, but of classification” (Lowenkron, 2013, p. 305). In the words of Preciado (2020, p. 2), the monster is “the one who lives in transition. One whose face, body and practices cannot yet be considered true in a particular regime of knowledge and power.”

In addition to political players, the disputes over classification have mobilized experts, legal operators, media organizations and religious groups in discussions on sexual violence and exploitation, child pornography and pedophilia. This integration between different fields of knowledge enhanced the circulation and the impact of the meanings of pedophilia in the entire society, oscillating between a “political case” and a “police case” (Lowenkron, 2013).

The point we wish to highlight is that, as of 2011, the collective memory of the “pedophile hunt” began to be strategically recontextualized in another parliamentary context and related to another social theme, as it will be seen in the analysis of Jair Bolsonaro’s pronouncements in the last section. From then on, his pronouncements began to recurrently associate homosexuality with pedophilia in order to discursively frame the newly proposed Homophobia-Free School Kit as a public educational policy to encourage the sexualization of children, instead of as a measure to tackle homophobia in schools.

This way, the politician shifted and transferred the meanings of the investigations on sexual crimes against children and adolescents, and, with that, also society’s emotional shock in 2008 — the fear, the anguish and indignation — to the debates on measures to tackle homophobia in schools in 2011. Therefore, he managed to re-signify both the memory of 2008, as if it were a debate on gender issues, and the parliamentary discussions of 2011, as if they were related to pedophilia. It was also in 2011 that the Truth Commission was established by the pro-left government in power, which was responsible for clarifying both the facts and the circumstances related to the serious violations of Human Rights in the country from 1946 to 1988. In view of this, such a commission became the core of the attacks of military ultraconservatism on the federal government (Alonso, 2018).

It was, therefore, through Bolsonaro's political discourse that different historical currents of authoritarianism and reactionarism began to come together, making the constitutive meanings of the contemporary Brazilian Far Right emerge, reiterated and consolidated until the present days. This political crossover even precedes the "conservative wave" of 2013 to 2016, which was responsible for reinforcing and expanding the circulation of this discourse in the public scene.

Thus, one can consider 2011 as the year in which what we will call the "moral turn" of the political discourse of the Far Right took place, when Bolsonaro began to position himself, at the same time, as a defender of military ultraconservatism and as a representative of a national "moral crusade", producing an inflection between the pro-military dictatorship discourse and the Christian fundamentalist discourse. This interdiscursivity (Fabrício and Moita Lopes, 2020) was expressed even in the gradual change of Jair Bolsonaro's political name to Jair Messias Bolsonaro, a way in which he sought to condense the image of a retired captain of the Brazilian Army with that of "the anointed one" in 2016 in the waters of the Jordan River (Alves, 2016) as a spokesman for religious conservatism in politics.

During the 2010s, the deputy explicitly aligned himself with the conception of "Cultural War", that is, with the "fundamentalist understanding of the world, whose corollary is the pure and simple elimination of everything that is diverse" (Rocha, 2021, p. 115). Therefore, he imaginarily created the opposite side of the "trench", fusing the binary logics of military warfare and religious crusade via the association of the "red enemy" with the "homosexual monster". The very political figure of Dilma Rousseff (PT), the country's first elected female president, in 2010, condensed the meanings of danger for the group, as she was both a woman and a former political guerrilla member. No wonder, her mandate was filled with insults related to her torture, her feminine condition and her sexuality.

In civil society, the fight against both the image of the Communist — contrary to the social order — and that of feminist and LGBTI+ groups — transgressors of the patriarchal order — was promoted, rhetorically simplifying the symbolic body of the subversives. In particular, the figure of the teacher — both school and university — emerged as a potential point of convergence for these meanings, making education the main battlefield for these groups. In 2016, this interdiscursivity was consolidated as spectacle and aesthetics in the votes of Jair Bolsonaro and his political field for the impeachment, when Bolsonaro "publicly and politically anointed himself" as the main voice of the conservative reaction to the 2018 presidential elections by embodying the motto "for God, for our mother country and for the family" (Sanque, 2020).

Hate Speech, Sexuality Control and Moral Panic in Brazil (1975 to 2019)

On November 11, 2018, Antônia Urrejola, rapporteur of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (IACHR/OAS),

expressed concern about the hate speech increase in the country against freedom of expression, universities, the LGBTI+ population, human rights defenders, immigrants and asylum seekers. According to the rapporteur, “there were advances, but we found a country that has failed to address and resolve the main historical debts to citizenship, the structural problem of inequality and profound discrimination” (Comissão [...], 2018, p. 1). Then she added, “those who use hate speech are against human beings. Hate speech encourages and incites [abhorrence], with very serious consequences” (Comissão [...], 2018, p. 1, our translation).⁴

According to António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, hatred “undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values and can create the basis for violence, delaying the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and human dignity” (Guterres, 2019). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), on its part, defines hate crimes as “violence and offense motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance or prejudice against a person’s disability, sexual orientation or gender identity” (FRA, 2022). From the perspective of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): “[hate speech] poses serious dangers to the cohesion of a democratic society, the protection of human rights and the rule of law. If left unresolved, it can lead to acts of violence and conflict on a broader scale” (ECRI, 2022).

The Brazilian legal system is aligned with the Inter-American System of Human Rights, and the government ratified the American Convention on Human Rights — The Pact of San José, Costa Rica — in 1992, and accepted its competence in 1998 (Schäfer *et al.*, 2015). The document emphasizes that “all propaganda in favor of war, as well as any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, crime or violence shall be prohibited by law” (OAS, 1970 *apud* Schäfer *et al.*, 2015, p. 144). In 2014, the country signed the Inter-American Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, which holds the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) responsible for working towards the “total and unconditional eradication of all forms of discrimination and intolerance” (OAS, 2013 *apud* Schäfer *et al.*, 2015, p. 147-148).

According to Schäfer *et al.* (2015), hate speech is characterized by encouraging “the repudiation of what is different”. Inducing violence — both physical and symbolic — against excluded groups and making them public enemies also configures a criminal fact, which affects the dignity of those to whom it is directed. It focuses on triggering moral panic and awakening collective fear against a social transformation in process that may harm the *status quo* of the dominant group, responsible for these violent and criminal actions (Schäfer *et al.*, 2015).

⁴ Original: “[h]ouve avanços, mas encontramos um país que não conseguiu abordar e resolver as principais dívidas históricas com a cidadania, o problema estrutural de desigualdade e a discriminação profunda” (Redação, 2018, p. 1). And, “[q]uem utiliza discurso de ódio está contra o ser humano. O discurso de ódio encoraja e incita, com consequências muito sérias” (Comissão [...], 2018, p. 1).

Nevertheless, the Brazilian legal system still lacks a legal typification of hate crimes, which means the absence of a more specific characterization of the limits and punishments related to the dissemination of racist, sexist, antisemitic or homophobic ideologies by state agents themselves in the exercise of their democratic functions, causing a chain reaction in society. The legal instrument under which complaints can be filed in this regard is Article 3, Item IV, of CF/88, which “establishes the promotion of the ‘well-being of all, without prejudice as to origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination’” (Brasil, 1988 *apud* Schäfer *et al*, 2015, p. 150).

In spite of this, conservative politicians have taken advantage of the constitutional prerogative to defend the freedom of expression to continue to incite prejudice and violence against such groups. Anchored in this legal loophole, the increase of this type of discourse in parliamentary speeches can be noted since the 1999 draft legislative decree known as “Gay Cure”, which sought to associate sexual desire with mental illness, encouraging the “cure of homosexuals” through psychological treatment (Schäfer *et al*, 2015).

In 2014, for example, federal deputy Marco Feliciano (PSC) published on Twitter: “[the] rottenness of the feelings of homosexuals lead (sic) to hatred, to crime, to (sic) rejection” (Schäfer *et al.*, 2015, p. 150). As we can observe, there is an argumentative inversion of guilt, typical of intolerant discourses, in which the subversion of the norm would supposedly be generated by those who suffer the violent actions, and not by those who commit it, the victims being categorized as “abject” or “repulsive”. This would legitimize the transformation of the aggressor into the assaulted, of the guilty into the victim, and of oppression into correction (Morais, 2019).

When analyzing the charge made by the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office (MPF), Minister Luís Roberto Barroso, rapporteur of Investigation 3,590 at the Supreme Court (STF), concluded that “this law [on hate crimes] does not exist. There is even a bill under discussion in the National Congress. So, as reprehensible as this manifestation may be on the moral aspect, I think it is not possible to define it as a crime” (Schäfer *et al.*, 2015, p. 150). In view of this, the accusation could not be accepted by the STF and the case was filed.

Quinalha (2018) points out that, although no specific law on LGBTI+ rights has ever been approved by the National Congress, the judiciary seems to have taken institutional responsibility for the advancement of sexual rights in the country. In the 1990s, there was legal recognition of social security and tax rights for homosexual couples. In 2011, by unanimous decision, the STF recognized same-sex steady unions. In 2013, the National Council of Justice (CNJ) considered it the duty of notary publics to perform legal unions and civil marriages between people of the same sex. In 2018, the STF voted for the recognition of the gender identity of transgender people. However, according to Quinalha (2018), the legal exclusivity for the recognition of these rights — also called sexual citizenship — expresses the fragility of these norms, since they are easier to change than laws, which presuppose a parliamentary majority and legal control.

“The meanings attributed to bodies, social gender roles, affective-sexual desires, family structures and kinship relationships were disputed and re-signified with the progressive politicization of the private sphere operated by cultural and customs contestation”, asserts Quinalha (2018, p. 221). The organization of the feminist and LGBT movements, in 1975 and 1978 respectively, brought numerous achievements related to sexual citizenship in Brazil. This undermined the country’s family standards, moral grammar, and virility and masculinity ideals, deconstructing the determination of the body by its biological destiny, centered on human anatomy and on its reproductive function. In parallel, conservative reactions began, the current offensive being the maturation of this backlash (Quinalha, 2018).

In the parliamentary sphere, moral panic has been manifested by the proposal of bills related to the fight against “gender ideology” — a “pejorative expression that seeks to designate a set of ideas that would naturalize supposedly *deviant* behaviors and identities, even in *children*” (Quinalha, 2018, p. 213, emphasis added) — and against the supposed ideological dominance of the Left in schools (see Schultz, 2020, on this issue at Colégio Pedro II). These initiatives, such as the Nonpartisan School, foster an imaginary state of war between good citizens, defenders of heterosexual and religious family values, and enemies, contrary to traditional norms and institutions.

Also, according to Quinalha (2018), with the launch of the Brazil Free from Homophobia Program (Programa Brasil Sem Homofobia) in 2004, whose objective was to create official means to tackle violence and prejudice against the LGBTI+ population in schools, the federal government began to act in the training of educators regarding gender and sexuality issues. The Homophobia-Free School Kit, an educational kit with the purpose of raising awareness about sexual diversity, is the result of this public policy. Soon after its announcement, it began to be pejoratively called the “Gay Kit” by the Evangelical parliamentary group, for whom there was an attempt to promote and condone homosexuality in the school environment. The federal government’s retreat ended up increasing the pressure power of religious fundamentalism in politics, thus inaugurating the main “moral scarecrow” of the 2018 elections (Quinalha, 2018).

The Brazil Free from Homophobia Program and the creation of the National LGBT Council in 2010 promoted similar proposals at the municipal and state levels in the country, creating an incipient national network of public policies for LGBT groups (Aragusuku, 2020). With the “expansion of LGBT collectives and movements, the emergence of Pride parades, new identities and sociabilities, media and academic diffusion” (Aragusuku, 2020, p. 110), there was a favorable scenario for the awareness of sexual rights in society. Conversely, “this new scenario generated a process of reorganization of conservative groups in the legislative arena, which began to exert a strong political offensive against the ‘degradation’ of morals, of traditional values and sexual customs” (Aragusuku, 2020, p. 111).

The 2010s mark the abandonment of a predominantly defensive conservative position in favor of a political and legislative offensive with regard to the debate on gender and sexual identity. According to Aragusuku (2020), the promotion of this moral

agenda in the country is linked to the reaction to (1) the deepening of sociocultural changes and the consequent legal, political and artistic destabilization of sexuality and gender standards; (2) the organization of collective movements in civil society, which pressed for the incorporation of their demands by political parties, foundations and associations of professional, trade union and academic nature, and (3) the attempt to draft laws and implement specialized public policies at the municipal, state and federal levels.

In 2003 — Aragusuku (2020) continues — the phrase “gender ideology” began to be used in the Congress. Until 2014, however, its frequency of occurrence is low, as it was still restricted to conservative Catholic groups. In the period, no bill referring to the subject was proposed, although there were 15 pronouncements with the expression, growing from one per year in 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2010 to three in 2013 and eight in 2014. From 2015 to 2018, its use became massive, when the Evangelical parliamentary group began to dominate the actions in this regard, with 160 pronouncements — 30 in 2015, 48 in 2016, 50 in 2017 and 23 in 2018 — and 16 bills. In parallel, there was a diversification of party acronyms which began to use the expression, reaching 16. Finally, in 2019, “gender ideology” acquired public policy status in the Bolsonaro government (Aragusuku, 2020).

In summary, in 2015, the phrase “gender ideology” began to unify the various antagonisms related to sexual practices, producing a unique discourse that condensed themes such as abortion, homosexuality, family, etc. (Aragusuku, 2020). Thus, it became a strong semiotic instrument in relation to the Brazilian conservative public, as it organized and began to index the political-discursive agenda of this parliamentary group, of which Bolsonaro was a catalyst member. No wonder, the Provisional Presidential Decree 870 was the first to be signed by the former president, on January 2, 2019, removing actions aimed at guaranteeing LGBTI+ rights from the Human Rights Policy (Schuquel, 2019).

Hate Speech, Performativity and Lexical Analysis

According to Butler (1997), language is action, given its performative nature. By the repetition and consolidation of meanings, it produces effects on interlocutors, guiding their thoughts and actions in the world. If it moves us into trusting others, speaking with and collaborating with them, it also makes us silence, attack, belittle and humiliate others. “The one who utters hate speech is responsible for the manner in which such speech is repeated, for reinvigorating such speech, for reestablishing contexts of hate and injury”, says Butler (1997, p. 27). Our research makes recourse to quali-quantitative instruments that help us understand the relationship between lexicon and injury in the discourse of the current Brazilian Far Right.

Berber Sardinha (2004, p. 85) points out that language investigations can only benefit from the use of computers, given that “[i]n the first place, they are consistent.

Computers do not get tired, so they can do tedious tasks [...] efficiently and reliably. Secondly, they allow greater scope in the amount of data that can be handled” (Berber Sardinha, 2004, p. 85). In our opinion, the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods can bring the descriptive power of large-scale text processing (Gitari *et al.*, 2015; Davidson *et al.*, 2017; Bassignana *et al.*, 2018; Augenstein *et al.*, 2019) closer to the explanatory depth of the interpretivist method (Moita Lopes, 1994), in which the assumptions of qualitative research make it possible to analyze the entextualization of lexical items locally used in utterances.

Our corpus consists of 922 pronouncements by deputy Jair Bolsonaro from 2000 to 2018 (Brasil, 2023). For this purpose, “python language libraries were used, such as *requests*, responsible for making the requests to the Chamber of Deputies website for the download of the shorthand notes” (Nascimento *et al.*, 2022, p. 2). This procedure allowed us to download all the files related to deputy Jair Bolsonaro in PDF language. However, we are still refining the collection method so that the program is capable of transcribing into text those prior to 2000, available only in image files. That is the reason why our chronological cut-off encompasses these eighteen years.

We were interested in both evaluating how lexical items related to the military and religious discourses⁵ oscillate in the speeches of the parliamentarian throughout this period and understanding which discourses are indexed in his offensive speeches against the LGBTI+ communities. Methodologically, we divided the collected pronouncements in a database with 499 talks given from 2000 to 2010 — containing 283,012 words — and another with 423 talks given from 2011 to 2018 — containing 151,355 words —, considering 2011 as the year of the “moral turn”. As we have pointed out above, in 2011, there were some “conservative triggers”: Dilma Rousseff became president, the Supreme Court recognized same-sex steady unions, the Truth Commission was established and, finally, MEC (the Brazilian Ministry of Education) proposed the Homophobia-Free School Kit as a public education policy.

For the word count, we used the AntConc software (Anthony, 2022). Specifically, the Concordance tool, which allowed searching for keywords considering both the context to their left and to their right. With regard to term recurrence from 2000 to 2010 and from 2011 to 2018, we placed the words in Excel’s Find All tool, so that the program identified the number of cells in which the searched item occurred. Each cell encompasses a pronouncement.

Initially, we prepared a list with 40 relevant words to the debate on Bolsonarism, dividing them into four discourses, namely: for the *religious discourse*, Family, God, *Moral*, Evang*, Catholic*, Relig*, Pastor, Bibl*, Priest, Jesus; for the *homophobic*

⁵ Discourse refers both to socially constructed knowledge — Discourse with a capital first letter — and to the enunciative articulation of this knowledge by the subjects in situational conditions in order to produce meanings between interlocutors — discourse with a lowercase first letter — (Fabrício; Moita Lopes, 2019, 2020). In addition, as subjects perform their interactions, they give clues or signals by means of the lexicon about the relationships between the micro, local context and the macro, social context, consciously and/or unconsciously connecting the discourse (with a lowercase “d”) with the Discourse (with capital “D”), and creating indexicality orders (Moita Lopes; Fabrício, 2018; Sanque, 2020).

discourse, *Sex*, Homoph*, Gay, Gay Kit, LGBT, Lesbian*, Cross-dresser, Pedophilia, Gender Ideology, Pornography; for the *political discourse*, Democr*, Dictator*, Left*, *Educ*, *Pover*, Freed*, Ideol*, *Hunger, Employment, Right; for the *police and military discourse*, Milit*, Armed* Force*, Army, Crim*, Polic*, Kidnap*, Criminal*, Assault*, Safety, Viol*⁶.

However, the table ended up being too extensive and inoperative for the space of an academic article. We then operated on a specific cutting, selecting, among the initial 40 keywords, the 20 that were statistically more relevant to describe military and religious representativeness in this discourse and subdivided it into two discourses, the military ultraconservative one and the Christian fundamentalist one, as already mentioned. Once this was done, we began the comparative analysis in the two sub-corpora, contemplating the lexical preferences on the deputy's part as shown by AntConc and the distribution of these words in his pronouncements in Excel.

After the quantitative analysis, we moved on to the qualitative one. We selected the keyword “pedophilia”, given its moral panic bias in the hate speech conveyed by Bolsonaro as of 2011 regarding gender discussions. The gains brought by a second analytical movement of the same text — that from the quantitative to the qualitative — stem from the fact that numbers and tables do not speak for themselves. Interpretative work is still necessary on what is most relevant to the construction of meanings in enunciative practices. In our work, “pedophilia” indexes both the military ultraconservative and the Christian fundamentalist discourses, a founding interdiscursivity in the Brazilian Far Right's Discourse.

The word pedophilia, in our view, condenses in a privileged way the intention of increasing social insecurity via urban violence, sexual control and the “invasion” of bodies. Moreover, it is curiously not found in Sedgwick's (2019) theoretical elaborations on the key concepts from the classical Right to the contemporary Far Right, except for a footnote on page 100 referring to an article on a historical analysis of the problem. This may indicate the importance of considering Brazil as one of the epicenters of the creation of the discourse on moral panic evoked by the item pedophilia in the international Far Right.

In the qualitative analysis, we considered the left occurrence context as having 25 words, with “pedophilia” always being the 25th. To understand the re-signification of this lexical item in new occurrence (con)texts between 2011 and 2016, the period of the cutting, we anchored the analysis on the work of language anthropologists Bauman and Briggs (1990), for whom language functions as a symbolic system integrated into space-time in which it emerges, as a continuous practice of decontextualization, entextualization and recontextualization between interlocutors (Moita Lopes; Fabrício, 2018). Entextualizing is “[...] the process of making a discourse extractable [decontextualizable], of making a piece of linguistic production a unit — a text —

⁶ Asterisks refer to the search for related words. For example, when giving the search command for *SEX*, the program considered bissexual(s), homosexual(s), transexual(s), etc. In the case of milit*, with the asterisk only to the right, AntConc included words like **military**(ies), **militarism** and **militarization**, for example.

that can be taken out of its interactional scenario” (Bauman; Briggs, 1990, p. 73). Decontextualizing makes these “textual projectiles” travel through new symbolic spaces, involving multiple processes and people, as well as multiple meanings. Finally, recontextualizing refers to fitting these semiotic indexes — texts as amalgams of signs of various natures — into new discourses, involving new values and operations in the events in which they emerge (Bauman; Briggs, 1990).

Homosexuals as “Pedophile Monsters” (2011 to 2018)

In the 1990s, Bolsonaro’s militaristic positions rarely echoed in wide acceptance, whether inside or outside the Congress. In 2011, the “Gay Kit” turned out to work as a “trigger” for the expansion of his electorate. In the table below, the reader will find the variation in the number of occurrences of the searched keywords and their proportional weight in each sub-corpora. Note that in “pronouncements” we highlight the number of pronouncements in which the keywords occur.

Table 1 – Lexical comparison between Christian conservative and military ultraconservative Discourses

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALIST DISCOURSE	Keyword (2000 - 2010)	Keyword (2011 - 2018)	Pron. (2000 - 2010)	Pron. (2011 - 2018)
SEX	53 (0.001%)	285 (0.01%)	17 (3.4%)	67 (15.8%)
FAMILY	120 (0.004%)	197 (0.01%)	36 (7.2%)	88 (20.8%)
GOD	88 (0.003%)	114 (0.007%)	66 (13.2%)	81 (19.1%)
MORAL	80 (0.002%)	56 (0.003%)	59 (11.8%)	43 (10.1%)
GAY	24 (0.0008%)	173 (0.01%)	8 (1.6%)	54 (12.7%)
LGBT	3 (0.0001%)	69 (0.004%)	2 (0.4%)	28 (6.6%)
LESBIAN*	11 (0.0003%)	55 (0.003%)	4 (0.8%)	24 (5.6%)
CROSS-DRESSER	5 (0.0001%)	51 (0.003%)	4 (0.8%)	25 (5.9%)
PEDOPHILIA	0	31 (0.002%)	0	11 (2.8%)
GENDER IDEOLOGY	0	8 (0.0005%)	0	8 (1.8%)
ULTRACONSERVATIVE MILITARY DISCOURSE	Keyword (2000 - 2010)	Keyword (2011 - 2018)	Pron. (2000 - 2010)	Pron. (2011 - 2018)
MILIT*	2265 (0.08%)	531 (0.03%)	372 (74.5%)	174 (41.1%)
ARMED* FORCE*	799 (0.02%)	216 (0.01%)	267 (53.5%)	118 (27.8%)
ARMY	643 (0.02%)	143 (0.009%)	233 (46.6%)	72 (17%)
CRIM*	168 (0.005%)	155 (0.01%)	87 (17.4%)	104 (24.5%)
DEMOCR*	182 (0.006%)	209 (0.01%)	105 (21%)	105 (24.8%)

DICTATOR*	140 (0.004%)	157 (0.01%)	69 (13.8%)	82 (19.3%)
POLIC*	169 (0.005%)	93 (0.006%)	72 (17.4%)	32 (7.5%)
KIDNAP*	180 (0.006%)	63 (0.004%)	30 (6%)	40 (9.4%)
SAFETY	132 (0.004%)	76 (0.005%)	79 (15.8%)	42 (9.9%)
VIOL*	62 (0.002%)	45 (0.002%)	42 (8.4%)	29 (6.8%)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

We can observe the strong presence of the ultraconservative military discourse in the political discourse of Jair Bolsonaro, as demonstrated by the first two columns of the keywords and pronouncements. Let us compare, for example, the items *sex* and milit*, which have the highest number of occurrences for each evaluated discourse. In the case of *sex*, we have 53 (0.001%) lexical occurrences from 2000 to 2010 and 285 (0.01%) from 2011 to 2018, an increase in representativeness by 10 times, as can be noted by the decrease of one decimal place. In terms of pronouncements, it grew from 17 (3.4%) to 67 (15.8%) respectively. When we move on to milit*, we have 2265 (0.08%) lexical occurrences for the first period and 531 (0.3%) for the second, decreasing from 372 (74.5%) pronouncements to 174 (41.1%). Although military agendas, including those for public security, have remained strong over the 18 years, there is an increasing balance with the religious discourse as of 2011. This pattern is reproduced throughout the table.

The word “family”⁷ goes from 120 (0.004%) occurrences in the first period to 197 (0.01%) in the second, also increasing its presence in the number of pronouncements, with a growth from 36 (7.2%) to 88 (20.8%). The word God, used 88 (0.003%) times in the period from 2000 to 2010, was used 197 (0.007%) times from 2011 to 2018. With regard to gender identity performativities, all terms demonstrate growth. For example, Gay — excluding Gay Kit uses — goes from 24 (0.0008%) to 173 (0.01%) uses and from 8 (1.6%) to 54 (12.7%) pronouncements, similar to LGBT, Lesbian(s) and Cross-dresser.

By proportionally reducing the reference to the ultraconservative military discourse, balancing it with the religious one, Bolsonaro expanded the circulation, impact and representativeness of his political statements in the Brazilian public sphere. The keyword Armed Force(s) dropped from 799 (0.02%) to 216 (0.01%) uses, and the pronouncements from 267 (53.5%) to 118 (27.8%). The word Army decreased from 643 (0.02%) to 143 (0.009%) occurrences.

Two other movements seem to be interesting, the increase in keywords linked to the debate on Democracy/Military Dictatorship and the decrease in those linked to public security. In the first case, the word democracy grew from 182 (0.006%) to 209 (0.01%) uses and maintained 105 pronouncements for each period, with the difference that its

⁷ See also Sanque (2020), whose Corpus Linguistics research indicates a large percentage of usage of the item “family” during the voting of Dilma’s impeachment, indexing the conservative moralist Discourse.

proportional importance increased in the period from 2011 to 2018, going from 21% to 24.8% of representativeness. In parallel, the word Dictatorship increased from 140 (0.004%) to 157 (0.01%) uses and from 69 (13.8%) to 82 (19.3%) pronouncements. The growth of occurrences of the lexical item Democracy does not necessarily mean support for this political regime. On the contrary, for Bolsonaro, there is a semantic inversion that considers the Military Dictatorship as a democratic regime and Brazilian democracy as a dictatorship (Nobre, 2020).

The second relevant aspect is the reduction of lexical occurrences of public security in the deputy’s speeches. Although there was the proportional growth of the words crim* (crime, criminal, criminality etc.), from 0.005% to 0.01%, and of the pronouncements with them, from 87 (17.4%) to 104 (24.5%), the other lexical items evaluated seemed to lose strength. Polic* (police, policeman/men) kept basically the same proportional weight regarding lexical usage, 0.005% (169 occurrences) and 0.006% (93 occurrences), respectively, but fell from 72 (17.4%) to 32 (7.5%) pronouncements. The item “security” also showed a slight proportional increase for keywords — from 0.004% to 0.005% — and a decrease for pronouncements, from 79 (15.8%) to 42 (9.9%). Viol* (violence, violent etc.) kept the same proportional impact, but dropped from 42 (8.4%) to 29 (6.8%) pronouncements. Thus, the incitement to public insecurity was balanced with the growth of moral agendas. In addition to balance, Bolsonaro’s “moral turn” seemed to try to re-signify his rhetoric of hatred by condensing agendas of military ultraconservatism in public security with Christian fundamentalism in moral issues, moving to prioritize sexual crimes in his speeches.

While from a quantitative point of view the frequency of “pedophilia” does not say much, in a qualitative observation it is quite strong. First, just like “gender ideology”, it did not occur from 2000 to 2010, but was more intensely used than “gender ideology” from 2011 to 2018. Second, although “gender ideology” functions as an umbrella term for all indices of the moral crusade against gender discussion, the word “pedophilia” occurred almost four times as often, with 31 (0.002%) lexical occurrences versus 8 (0.0005%), and 12 (2.8%) pronouncements versus 8 (1.8%). Third, the item “pedophilia” has a high impact in generating panic, commotion and engagement with conservative discourses in society. The table with its contextualized occurrences may be found below.

Chart 1 – Left context for the keyword pedophilia in AntConc (25 words)⁸

Date	Left textual context (25 words)
03.17.11	[...] ¹ LGBT rights we will have the statute of lesbians of gays of bisexuals of cross-dressers this will all be impregnated in schools they are throwing open the doors of Pedophilia .

⁸ Each [...] marks the beginning of a 25-word left context.

Date	Left textual context (25 words)
05.05.11	[...] the pornographic short films and the so-called educational material to tackle homophobia that in fact I repeat encourage homosexuality [sic] and throw open the doors to Pedophilia .
07.16.12	[...] [the educational materials that are used to teach the] [...] boy from an early age to be a homosexual I doubt that they will prove me otherwise and open door that is actually an open door to Pedophilia .
10.17.12	[...] the homosexual cause [pron. 632.] At the request of PT deputies I will talk about Fernando Haddad Mr. President Haddad has a policy to encourage Pedophilia .
03.14.13	[...] elementary schools stimulating homosexuality [sic] in schools we will no longer have seminars of lesbians gays bisexuals cross-dressers transgender people for the youth public encouraging Pedophilia .
03.27.13	[...] table to Henrique Eduardo Alves I hope he reads so that he knows what that [Human Rights] Committee represented the promotion of child homosexuality [sic] the promotion of Pedophilia [...] of lesbians gays bisexuals cross-dressers and transgender people Evangelical Catholic Spiritist Brazilian people etc. atheists do you know what this is this is a promotion of Pedophilia .
10.12.14	[...] regarding rape she [Maria do Rosário] wanted to defend the rapist Champinha in São Paulo it was what a week earlier out of coincidence she was the rapporteur of the CPI of Pedophilia [...] You are confusing Mr. President I ask for another minute to conclude it is not possible this way he wants to stifle the truth she belonged to the CPI of Pedophilia .
06.23.15	[...] 'PT's proposal to elementary schools PT wants to turn 5 6 7-year-old children into homosexuals and throw open the doors to Pedophilia .
07.14.15	[...] be true so for this PT government I can even say here if I have immunity Mr. President why Dilma Rousseff wants to legalize Pedophilia [...] wants to legalize pedophilia if you give me the right to say what I wish here I will say why Dilma Rousseff wants to legalize Pedophilia [...] family is above all we cannot continue to live with this shame shame greater than all of this is having a president who supports Pedophilia [...] President of the Republic and she has her back to this problem if the President gives me authorization to say here why she defends Pedophilia [...] that Dilma Rousseff wants to legalize pedophilia in Brazil but let's go it says here about truth so this document from the Secretariat of Human Rights the Pedophilia [...] I speak as long as he does not give it I cannot speak otherwise I will be sued here and it continues what characterizes the crime is not the Pedophilia [...] in a brothel being exploited this is pedophilia but if some scoundrel protected by the President of the Republic sexually abuses a child that is not Pedophilia [...] so there are children 3 years old 4 years old 10 years old being sexually abused it is pedophilia but if only one criminal is abusing them it is not Pedophilia [...] the crime is not pedophilia but the act of sexually exploiting a child that is if a child is in a brothel being exploited that is Pedophilia [...] sexually abusing a child that is not pedophilia if in a brothel then there are children 3 years old 4 years old 10 years old being sexually abused it is Pedophilia [...] Washington I even apologize for what I am going to say here now because it is a shame I just heard pastor Silas Malafaia talk about Pedophilia .

Date	Left textual context (25 words)
09.14.16	[...] that the girl was not born a girl by encouraging homo or hetero sex at an early age Ms. Deborah Duprat is throwing open the doors to Pedophilia [...] in this General Committee a social worker from the Federal District's Department of Children stated that rape is culture obviously she did not say it but one may conclude that Pedophilia [...] the time when Ms. Maria do Rosário was at the Secretariat of Human Rights the website http://www.humanizaredes.gov.br was very clear in the sense that Pedophilia [...] case only by way of an example in 2003 you then a member of the CPI of pedophilia scheduled a warrantless arrest in Porto Alegre to combat Pedophilia [...] that he suffers from a disorder he will not be punished but treated it is the people who defend these ideas who come here to speak against Pedophilia [...] scaffold for him to be hanged talk about your brother-in-law deputy show that you really want to fight violence against women and Pedophilia [...] of age do all are responsible for themselves I mention the case only by way of an example in 2003 you then a member of the CPI of Pedophilia .
10.03.16	[...] because they will end up imposing this [promotion of early sex] here and I say more PT I have in my office documented via the Secretariat of Human Rights wants to relativize Pedophilia [...] pedophilia this is very clear on the Humaniza Redes website hosted at the Secretariat of Human Rights of PT's Dilma Rousseff when it talks about Pedophilia [...] your that is through corruption buy votes to approve what interests you among other things the omission as in the case of Pedophilia .

Source: Authors' elaboration.

As we can observe in Table 1, there are 31 uses of pedophilia in 11 pronouncements, distributed as follows: except for 2014, when it was present in only 1, the lexical item occurred in 2 pronouncements in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. Based on Bauman and Briggs (1990), we understand that the continuous processes of decontextualization, entextualization and recontextualization negatively re-signify the Homophobia-Free School Kit in each recontextualization, damaging the pedagogical purposes underlying its design.

On March 17th, 2011, Bolsonaro added aspects linked to religious fundamentalism to his military ultraconservatism. To this end, i) he decontextualized the lexical item “pedophilia” from the 2008 CPI investigations to recontextualize it in the parliamentary debate on combating homophobia in schools; ii) he decontextualized “Human Rights” to recontextualize the item as “LGBT rights”, disqualifying the meanings of “Human Rights”, once the LGBTI+ population is considered in his discourse as morally inferior and, therefore, with no right to have rights; iii) he decontextualized the item “Family Statute” to recontextualize it as the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Cross-Dresser Statute”, again placing LGBT rights as contrary to the moral values of Brazilian society; iv) he recontextualized “pedophilia” as “Human/LGBT rights” and “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Cross-Dresser Statute”, in which the fight against homophobia is now seen as the promotion of homosexuality.

Thus, according to the deputy, instead of the “Family Statute”, the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Cross-Dresser Statute” was in discussion; instead of “Heterosexual Rights”, “LGBT Rights”; instead of “Education”, “Pedophilia”. Bolsonaro therefore aimed to create the perception of a moral inversion in society, represented by the Chamber of Deputies, so that the “House of the People” was supposedly turning into the “LGBT House”, given that it was supposedly increasingly dominated by the enemies of the family, therefore indexing religious fundamentalism. The following semantic chain was then created (Morais, 2019): Gay Kit → LGBT Rights → Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Cross-Dresser Statute → Pedophilia. “Pedophilia” then functions as a “semiotic weapon” for the Bolsonarist group in its debates about the Kit in the House.

This symbolic movement may be said to have derived from the collective memory built by the Parliamentary Investigation Committee (CPI) on Pedophilia in 2008, which functioned as the imaginary space-time from which the sign “pedophilia” was extracted to begin its continuous recontextualization until 2016, as we can observe in Table 1. Thus, this recontextualization sought to transfer the population’s fear and anguish in 2008 to again dramatize a political struggle of good against evil and build homosexuals as the new monster to be hunted, the new “public enemy”. Resuming the context of the 2008 parliamentary investigations into the practice of pedophilia in the year 2011, therefore, allowed the parliamentarian to redefine the “moral crusade” with a focus on a new “deviant body”, also associated with “crime”, “desire”, “vice” and “wound”. Enunciatively, the context of 2008 was now linked to the early sexualization of children in schools, while the context of 2011 was linked to the debate on pedophilia.

In our view, this was the main reason why the parliamentarian preferred to talk about “pedophilia” than about “gender ideology”, an expression that circulated in the Brazilian parliament since 2003. “Pedophilia” brings with it the memory of the sexual crimes against children revealed by the CPI, expanding the circulation power of the moralizing discourse by the panic it indexes. In addition, it enhances the transposition of gender debates into religious discourse. Another factor is that one cannot positively re-signify the term pedophile as it has been done with the term *Queer*, for example (Butler, 1997, p. 32). Who could be in favor of pedophiles? The “denunciation” of pedophilia aligns with the accusation of “the rottenness of homosexual feelings” in the message of deputy Feliciano in 2014, aiming to legitimize the *reversal of blame*, turning sexual rights into the sexualization of minors.

In May, 5th, 2011, Bolsonaro decontextualized the Kit’s educational videos, “so-called educational materials”, to recontextualize them as “pornographic short films”, indexing again the Christian fundamentalist discourse. He thus reinforced the meanings of the Homophobia-Free School Kit as a Pedophilia Kit. The alleged attempt to “combat homophobia” would actually be an attempt to teach “gender ideology” in schools. If we add to this pronouncement the indexation processes promoted by the deputy in his previous speech, the following semantic relationship can be established: Homophobia-Free School Kit → LGBT Rights → Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Cross-Dresser Statute → Gay Kit → pornographic short films → so-called educational

materials → encouraging “homosexualism” (sic) → throws open the doors to pedophilia. That way, ultimately, fighting homophobia implies pedophilia.

On July 16th, 2012, he stated that “[the educational materials ... are used to teach the] [...] boy to be a homosexual from an early age”. Sexuality, according to Bolsonaro, was a matter of education, one can teach boys to be either heterosexual or homosexual. Without the effort of controlling bodies, the Christian guilt and the abjection towards homoaffectivity, the doors would be open for the increase of these deviant bodies in society. The continuous association between pedophilia and combating homophobia sought to consolidate these meanings, strengthening their appeal to the Brazilian conservative public. Trying not to be legally imputed by his statements, he shifted the burden of proof to the accused parties: “I doubt they can prove me otherwise”. It would be up to the federal government and the Committee on Human Rights and Minorities to prove he was lying, and not up to himself to prove his statement true.

In October, 10th, 2012, he recontextualized the Kit as a “pedophilia promotion policy” one more time, reiterating his stance as a moral whistleblower in the House, for political gains. From Bolsonaro’s point of view, Minister Haddad’s project politicized sex, something taken as natural for the Christian fundamentalist discourse — therefore, not debatable. This way, he managed to make discussions about sex education migrate from the political to the religious discourse, and from the “public” to the “private” sphere. Moreover, by shifting discussions about gender identity to the hybrid space between sin and crime, Bolsonaro shifted sexual citizenship from the “political case” to the “police case”, also indexing the ultraconservative military discourse. Through both the fundamentalist and the militarist biases, Bolsonaro promoted abjection, revulsion, fear and hatred against the LGBTI+ communities, in particular, and against Human Rights and the Left, in general. The federal government at the time would be primarily responsible for trying to turn pedophilia into a public education policy.

The following year, on March 13th, the deputy associated pedophilia with the House Committee on Human Rights and Minorities (CDHM) and with the Kit, decontextualizing seminars promoted by the CDHM as “seminars for lesbians gays bisexuals cross-dressers transgender people”. By renaming them “LGBT seminars”, similar to “LGBT Rights”, he reduced their debates to the defense of the values of these groups, to the “homosexual cause”, and not to the defense of democratic values and citizenship, in accordance with the constitutional norms of the CF/88. The semantic opposition was then between the “family”, symbol of universal values, and the “enemies of the family”, symbols of minority values. By “groupalizing” these parliamentary activities, therefore, he aimed to prevent any empathy and support on the part of the wider public for their political activities, which were reduced to the exclusive — and immoral — interests of one group.

On March 27th, Bolsonaro indexed the Christian fundamentalist discourse by once again associating the CDHM with pedophilia, stating that it “represented the promotion of homosexuality and pedophilia”, in addition to once more accusing “lesbians, gays, bisexuals, cross-dressers and transgender people” of practicing pedophilia. Once again,

the fight against homophobia and sex education implied the promotion of pedophilia and the Kit, the federal government and the Ministry of Education supposedly defended the sexualization of children in schools as a human right. This way, he kept his strategy of producing moral panic and public enemies, typical of hate speeches, calling out the “Brazilian Evangelical Catholic Spiritist people, etc. atheists” to repudiate the Kit.

Since 2014, Bolsonaro’s pronouncements have become increasingly aggressive, following the crisis of the Dilma Rousseff’s (PT) Government. In October 2014, the deputy added the theme of “rape” to the pedophilia accusations, which had their semantic context in vogue at the time due to the CPI of Pedophilia. His basis was the social shock caused by the Champinha Case,⁹ in 2003. As we have seen, in the 1990s, Bolsonaro was more directly associated with military ultraconservatism, which was constitutive of the agendas related to punitivism in public security during the democratic period. As of 2011, a moral turn was identified in his discourse, incorporating the Christian fundamentalist perspective on (homo)sexuality. From 2014 onwards, an inflection between these two discourses can be seen in the deputy’s growing focus on sexual crimes, intersecting the theme of “public security” with that of “gender ideology” in connection with rape crime at the lexical level.

On October 10th, 2014, by bringing back the 2003 Champinha Case, the politician intensified his attack on Human Rights defenders, enemies since the period of the Military Dictatorship, and went on to accuse them of defending rape and rapists. Instead of Fernando Haddad, his political enemy in 2011, who had been Minister of Education from 2005 to 2012 and Mayor of São Paulo from 2013 to 2016, Bolsonaro now directed his attacks to federal deputy Maria do Rosário (PT/RS), accusing her of defending Champinha. Thus, he indexed the ultraconservative military discourse, adding to his talks political proposals such as the age of criminal responsibility, chemical castration for rapists and the death penalty. Champinha represented the flaws of the Brazilian penal system: a minor at the time of the murder, he committed a heinous crime by raping and killing a girl and was considered unaccountable due to a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder (Baranyi, 2017).

In this pronouncement, Bolsonaro merged different parliamentary discussions into a single reactionary narrative, condensing the 2003 “Champinha Case”, the 2008 “CPI of Pedophilia” and the 2011 “Homophobia-Free School Kit”. He indexed, therefore, the ultraconservative discourse on the age of criminal responsibility, chemical castration and death penalty (Champinha Case in 2003) and the fundamentalist Christian discourse on sexuality (CPI of Pedophilia in 2008), having as his main enemies the political Left, Human Rights and the LGBTI+ population. By causing moral panic, he intended both to promote engagement with the toughening of penal laws and with the fight against sexual citizenship. In common, one finds the military and religious war logic.

⁹ Champinha was the teenager involved in the gang rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl in São Paulo. Among those involved, only Champinha did not go to jail, but to an Experimental Health Unit, for having “antisocial personality disorder and mild mental retardation” (Baranyi, 2017, p. 1).

On June 23rd, 2015, Bolsonaro stated that “[...] PT’s proposal to elementary schools PT wants to turn 5, 6, 7-year-old children into homosexuals and throw open the doors to Pedophilia”. In that year, as we have seen, the Evangelical parliamentary group began to dominate moral issues and educational agendas in the Chamber of Deputies, causing “gender ideology” to become a semiotic instrument that brought together the different political causes of the Brazilian Far Right, such as family, abortion and gender policies. The recontextualization of pedophilia associated with the Homophobia-Free School Kit — a “PT proposal” — anchored the meanings of “Gay Kit”, consolidating that the fight against homophobia means the “promotion of child homosexuality” from a conservative perspective and indexing the Christian fundamentalist discourse.

Almost a month later, on July 14th, 2015, there was a debate over the terminology of child abuse, whether it should be treated as “pedophilia” or as “sexual exploitation”. For Bolsonaro, the use of the latter expression aimed to prevent the punishment of pedophiles by seeking to define this crime via the psychiatric discourse. At a certain point in his talk, absent in Table 1 above, the deputy stated: “[in] this document from the Secretariat of Human Rights [the educational booklet of the Campaign to Prevent Sexual Violence against children and adolescents] pedophilia is a personality disorder characterized by the sexual desire for children under 13 years of age”. Thus, in his words, “for a person to be considered a pedophile, there needs to be a diagnosis from a psychiatrist”.

In harmony with his positions in relation to the Champinha Case, Bolsonaro re-indexed the psychiatric discourse as an alleged government and Human Rights Defenders strategy to protect sex offenders, as he made clear in the following excerpt: “[from the perspective of Dilma’s Government,] the crime is not pedophilia but the act of sexually exploiting a child that is if a child is in a brothel being exploited that is Pedophilia”. And he added, if “then there are children 3 years old 4 years old 10 years old being sexually abused it is pedophilia but if only one criminal is abusing them that is not Pedophilia”. The deputy sought to maintain the term “pedophilia” and its moral weight, in contrast to “sexual exploitation” and its focus on the exploitation of the victim as a commodity (Brasil, 2021) to deal with sexual crimes, associating them with the Left and LGBTI+ groups.

Bolsonaro indexed the interdiscursive relationship between crime and sexuality, between punitivism and moral crusade, to accuse the “PT Government” of wanting to “legalize” pedophilia, which, in other words, would mean trying to turn this sexual practice into a law and, therefore, forcing families to expose their children to early sex in schools. The attacks on President Dilma Rousseff were now more straightforward, accusing her of irresponsibility, along with the Secretariat of Human Rights, for allegedly relativizing the sexual abuse of minors and personally protecting these criminals. The motto “family is above all”, the indignation towards the “shame” and the personal reference to “Pastor Silas Malafaia” settled the religious fundamentalism of his political discourse. Ultimately, sexual agendas functioned as a political strategy to attack the

federal government and its supporters, accusing them sometimes of being permissive, sometimes of being criminals.

The association between “Kit”, “gender ideology” and “pedophilia” returned on September 14th, 2016, when Bolsonaro sought to defend himself from accusations by political opponents of having “condoned rape” in the case of the gang rape of a 16-year-old girl in Rio de Janeiro. To this end, he reversed the accusation by reiterating that the educational materials would politicize human sexuality, something that was natural, from the perspective of a conservative Christian discourse. The attempt by Human Rights defenders to deconstruct gender, by stating that “a girl was not born a girl”, in his words, would ultimately be an attempt to “encourage homo or hetero sex at an early age”. In addition, such groups would try to relativize sexual violence, once “Ms. Deborah Duprat” [Federal Prosecutor for Citizen Rights], the “General Committee” of the Chamber and the “Federal District’s Department of Children” allegedly stated that “rape was a cultural practice”, as pedophilia would be, by inference.

The discursive inflection was between military ultraconservatism, which would defend harsher punishments for criminals, and religious fundamentalism produced meanings. The latter related the 2016 parliamentary context to those of 2003 and 2008, associating “rape” and “pedophilia” with “gender ideology”. Returning to the 2003 Champinha Case, he reaffirmed his opposition to the uses of Human Rights and of the psychiatric discourse to promote impunity in Brazil: “he [a criminal] suffers from a disorder he will not be punished for but treated it is the people who defend these ideas who come here to speak against pedophilia”.

In addition to the Left, the 1988 Federal Constitution itself is considered an enemy of society, as it would be the main source of legal insecurity and moral permissiveness in the country. Bolsonaro continuously decontextualized and recontextualized discourses on civil and sexual rights, evoking policing, with a militaristic connotation. The concept of crime in his talk had a strategic plasticity by relating gender policies not only to pedophilia, but also to rape, to the age of criminal responsibility and to the death penalty.

In the last pronouncement, from October 3rd, 2016, Bolsonaro said that “[PT and the government] will end up imposing this [promotion of early sex]”, that “PT [...] wishes to relativize Pedophilia through corruption”, that “pedophilia [...] is very clear on the Humaniza Redes website hosted by Dilma Rousseff’s Secretariat of Human Rights” and that “omission [...] in cases of Pedophilia” is directly of interest to the party and the government. Following the same pattern, the “Gay Kit” was recontextualized as part of a policy of sexualization and sexual abuse of children in schools. He also referred to corruption cases associated with the federal government as a way of relating political corruption to the Kit’s moral corruption. Ultimately, the government was allegedly buying votes to promote pedophilia in schools and the destruction of Brazilian families.

Bolsonaro’s strategic mobilization of pedophilia aimed to hinder any positive recontextualization of LGBTI+ identity performativities and the political discourse with which they are associated, promoting moral insecurity to move from politics to morality and from morality to policing. In this process, he brought back the memory of

the 2003 “rapist monster” and the 2008 “pedophile monster” to associate them with the 2011 Kit, creating as such the “homosexual monster”. The performative development of panic created imaginary enemies, so that the war logic brought political benefits to Bolsonaro, gradually transforming him into the main militarist and fundamentalist voice of the Brazilian extreme right.

Closing Remarks

In this text, we aimed to advance the understanding of the discursive movements that allowed Jair Bolsonaro to reach the Presidency of Brazil in 2018. Bearing this in mind, in the first section, we evaluated how his political discourse, traditionally militaristic in content, suffered a “moral turn” in 2011 and began to approach the agendas of the Evangelical parliamentary group. Next, in the second section, we discussed the concept of hate speech, based on the legal debate on the subject to understand the functioning of moral panic in relation to sexuality. In the third section, we brought together the quantitative approach of Berber Sardinha (2004) and the interpretivist proposal of Moita Lopes (1994) to suggest a quali-quantitative methodology for hate speech research via lexical analysis. Finally, in the fourth and last section, we undertook a quantitative analysis of the interdiscursivity of the political discourse of the Brazilian extreme right through 20 keywords, divided into 10 words for the Christian fundamentalist discourse and 10 for the military ultraconservative discourse. Among them, we chose the word “pedophilia” for a qualitative analysis of the entextualization, decontextualization and recontextualization processes in the Bolsonarist Rhetoric of Hatred. We argue that Bolsonaro began to index the Christian fundamentalist discourse in the discussions about the Homophobia-Free School Kit since 2011, promoting a moral turn. Interdiscursively, he displaced the debates and the collective shock originated from the CPI of Pedophilia (2008) to rename it the “Gay Kit” and accuse its defenders of seeking to promote pedophilia.

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MORAIS, A. R. A. de; MOITA LOPES, L. P. Virada moral e entextualização do homossexual como pedófilo em falas de Bolsonaro no Congresso (2000 a 2018). *Alfa*, São Paulo, v. 68, 2024.

- *RESUMO: no presente artigo, reportamos sobre uma pesquisa quali-quantitativa em 922 pronunciamentos — notas taquigráficas — do Deputado Federal Jair Bolsonaro na Câmara*

dos Deputados no período de 2000 a 2018. Como objetivos, pretendemos analisar (i) a presença de itens lexicais religiosos e militares na retórica do ódio bolsonarista ao longo desse recorte cronológico e (ii) a “virada moral” no discurso político do parlamentar; quando, a partir de 2011, passa a associar a homossexualidade à pedofilia. Para tanto, ancoramo-nos em uma metodologia de análise lexical, aproximando a Linguística de Corpus da Antropologia Linguística. Nesse intuito, distribuímos os dados em dois subcorpora, de 2000 a 2010 e de 2011 a 2018, tendo como parâmetro, em um primeiro momento, descrever o contraste diacrônico nas ocorrências de 20 palavras-chave, divididas em dez para o Discurso religioso e dez para o militar; e, em um segundo, explicar o funcionamento da entextualização do signo “pedofilia” na (re)organização da relação entre discurso de ódio, homofobia e pânico moral nas falas do político. Os pronunciamentos foram processados no programa AntConc e no Excel. A partir de 2011, o Discurso bolsonarista se associa ao moralismo religioso, equilibrando o uso de léxicos do Discurso ultraconservador militar e do Discurso fundamentalista cristão.

- PALAVRAS-CHAVE: bolsonarismo; análise qualiquantitativa; extrema direita; discurso de ódio.

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