

Overview of corruption scandals in Brazil: communication analysis between news portals and Twitter

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, corruption scandals publicized by the media have had a major impact on the political game. In some ways, scandals trigger concentrated debates about social and political life that focus on legality, ethical morality, and the behavior of individuals and institutions.¹ Thus, behavior and political characteristics become relevant factors judged by the public in the media.²

If, on the one hand, new technologies have allowed a great expansion of correspondence and impact on the behavior of political leaders and their activities, on the other hand, these tools also contribute to break the idea of the private by making content accessible to hundreds of people through visibility media that go beyond the political sphere.³ Therefore, it is hard to imagine a scandal without the media's involvement.⁴

The visibility of the media becomes controversial in an environment of intense information with an ever-increasing number of publications of

¹ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion to media and scandal*. Routledge, 2019, pp. 10-21.

² SOUZA, CIBELE SILVA: «A personalização da política e processos da construção da imagem: estratégias de Dilma Rousseff e Aécio Neves nas Eleições 2014 e Impeachment 2016». Repositório UFJF, 2018, <https://repositorio.ufjf.br/jspui/handle/ufjf/6725>.

³ THOMPSON, JOHN B: «A nova visibilidade». *Matrizes*, v. 1, n. 2, 2008, p. 15-38; CASTELLS, MANUEL: «An introduction to the information age», *City*, vol. 2, n. 7 (1997), pp. 6-16.

⁴ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21; WAISBORD, SILVIO R: «Knocking on newsroom doors: The press and political scandals in Argentina». *Political Communication*, (1994), v. 11, n. 1, p. 19-33; Allern, Sigurd & Ester Pollack: *Scandalous!: the mediated construction of political scandals in four Nordic countries*, Nordicom, University of Gothenburg, 2012, pp. 07-29.

content.⁵ Considering the theory that social media tends to negatively affect perceptions of corruption both in political institutions and in relationships of trust.⁶ Thus, while the media enables the advertising culture that allows politicians' images to spread, at the same time, it makes them vulnerable in the context of scandals.⁷

In this media environment, news about corruption published by the media amplifies the impact of political scandals and thus contributes to the mobilization of public opinion regarding this phenomenon. In a mediatized world, political integrity is in the foreground, being one of the factors considered in public judgment, especially in cases of corruption.⁸

Whereas, in this environment individuals react in the face of corruption scandals to defend their interests, social standing, and reputation, it is difficult to imagine scolding without media coverage.⁹ Thinking about that, the main objective of this work is to analyze how news about corruption scandals is shared by information portals and, on the other hand, how public opinion reacts through tweets from these portals regarding these scandals.

This study attempts to analyze two different angles, focusing on the news from the portals Brasil de Fato, Estadão and G1, and on the public comments from citizens on the Twitter pages of each portal, in contemplation of to clarify: a) What are how the corruption scandals and political actors that appear in the news portals of Brasil de Fato, Estadão and G1 and their respective pages on Twitter? b) How do the corruption scandals published in the news of the portals (Brasil de Fato, Estadão and G1) differ from the tweets of citizens on the respective pages of these vehicles? c) What are the main narratives in the two vehicles?

To design the construction of this case study, the method of content analysis¹⁰ and automated content analysis were used, which allows mapping the scandals together with the categories found, both on the portals and on Twitter.

⁵ THOMPSON, JOHN B: «A nova visibilidade», *Matrizes*, op. cit., pp. 15-38.

⁶ CHARRON, N. & P. ANNONI: «What is the influence of news media on people's perception of corruption? Parametric and non-parametric approaches», *Social Indicators Research*, 153(3), 2021, 1139-1165.

⁷ TUMBER, HOWARD: «Scandal and media in the United Kingdom: From major to blair», *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(8), 2004, 1122-1137.

⁸ WATTENBERG, MARTIN: *The Rise of Candidate Centered Politics – Presidential Elections of the 1980s*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁹ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandals». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

¹⁰ BARDIN, LAURENCE (1991): *Análisis de contenido* (vol. 89). Ediciones Akal. Lisboa: Edições 70, 1977.

Using this methodology, a unique and pioneering case study is created that looks at the way news about corruption scandals cases is brought to the population through the portals, as well as the reaction of the population through the comments of the citizens in the tweets, more specifically, the position of Brazilians in relation to the corruption scandals in the country. This is because research focusing on political scandals tends to show how the public reacts to revelations of crimes, especially when it comes to their political representatives.¹¹

The justification for this research is that media coverage leads the public to make decisions based on the information presented, putting into the background the quality of the information, which consequently influences electoral choices and decision-making.¹² In addition, the work is characterized by the fact that it was conducted in a period of one year before the elections in Brazil, in which the electoral environment for the 2022 elections begins to be shaped. Against this backdrop, corruption scandals publicized by the media have become an opportunity to undermine or disrupt the political game.

Finally, it should be noted that the phenomenon of corruption has had a negative impact in both politics and business, and has therefore been the subject of academic research over the years.¹³ After all things considered, this work will contribute to academic research that addresses the relationship between the media and corruption.

In the scope of this work, first, we present the theoretical basis that refers to the research carried out, then the methodology used is briefly shown. The third part, which comprises two subchapters, exposes the results in contemplation to clarify the divergences and convergences of corruption scandals in portals and twitter and how political actors and scandals are represented.

MEDIA AND POLITICAL SCANDAL

The media has become technologically, financially, and politically powerful and has escaped strict political control, mainly due to the fact that it has

¹¹ McDERMOTT, M. L., D. SCHWARTZ & S. VALLEJO (2015): «Talking the talk but not walking the walk: Public reactions to hypocrisy in political scandals». *American Politics Research*, 43 (6), 952-974.

¹² DAMGAARD, M. (2018): «Cascading corruption news: explaining the bias of media attention to Brazil's political scandals». *Opinião pública*, 24, 114-143.

¹³ COSTAS-PÉREZ, E., A. SOLÉ-OLLÉ & P. SORRIBAS-NAVARRO (2012): «Corruption scandals, voter information, and accountability». *European journal of political economy*, 28(4), 469-484.

become a source of information and opinion in society.¹⁴ Thus, the changes that have taken place in the media lately have contributed to the visibility of scandals.¹⁵

In today's world, on the one hand, the media acts as a fourth state that controls the government and denounces the abuse of power.¹⁶ On the other hand, in a democratic environment, the more intense a political scandal is portrayed in the media is the visualizations, and the stronger the impact of scandals in the media, the greater the concern for accountability through denunciation.¹⁷

In a sense, scandals will persist in perpetuity because they have become a dominant feature of journalism as it takes the position of a truth that is always up for debate.¹⁸ Moreover, the media plays an important role in providing some of the information by becoming policymakers and providers of information for the electorate to make decisions.¹⁹

To understand the construction of a political scandal and why some facts become scandals or not, it is necessary to understand the visibility of the media, as the scandal is constructed from the leaking of information to the dissemination of information by a reliable and credible source.²⁰ Therefore, when scandals are maintained in the media, conservation of history occurs.²¹

There are studies that endorse that the information published by the media tends to change the beliefs of voters when it comes to corrupt activities related to the involvement of the judiciary, revealing justified

¹⁴ CASTELLS, MANUEL: «An introduction...», *City*, op. cit., pp. 6-16.

¹⁵ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

¹⁶ TUMBER, HOWARD: «Scandal and media...». *American Behavioral Scientist*, op. cit., 1122-1137.

¹⁷ ARAÚJO, C.M., S.F. COSTA & I. FITTIPALDI (2016): «Boa noite, e boa sorte: determinantes da demissão de ministros envolvidos em escândalos de corrupção no primeiro governo Dilma Rousseff». *Opinião Pública*, 22, 93-117.

¹⁸ LULL, J. & S. HINERMAN (2000): «En búsqueda del escándalo». *Estudios sobre las culturas contemporáneas*, (10), 61-93.

¹⁹ DI TELLA, R. & I. FRANCESCHELLI (2011): «Government advertising and media coverage of corruption scandals». *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3(4), 119-51.

²⁰ ARAÚJO, C.M., S.F. COSTA & I. FITTIPALDI (2016): «Boa noite, e boa sorte...». *Opinião Pública*, op. cit., 93-117.

Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Political scandal: Power and visibility in the media age*. John Wiley & Sons.

²¹ MANCINI, P., M. MAZZONI, A. CORNIA & R. MARCHETTI (2017): «Representations of corruption in the British, French, and Italian press: Audience segmentation and the lack of unanimously shared indignation». *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(1), 67-91.

or unfounded cases.²² Moreover, occurs cases that scandals expose more corruption and irregularities by revealing how society defines certain norms and behaviors as acceptable or unacceptable, these scandals show how the public fights or demands its laws.²³

Despite the impact of scandals in the media, the negative connotations associated with this content are significant.²⁴ In some cases, there is a perception that politicians involved in scandals have a more difficult road in dealing with voters than politicians involved in simple scandals.²⁵ This fact certainly gives some politicians an edge over others in the controversial environment. In a context that, the media enables the advertising culture that makes politicians popular, it also makes them vulnerable to scandal.²⁶

The press, seen as the public's watchdog against corruption, is on the public agenda and consequently attracts public attention by reinforcing ideological and partisan positions.²⁷ However, it is interesting to note that the increase in the news involving political scandals provides politicians with a new set of strategies to counter the effects of negative images.²⁸

As a carrier of information, the media can change the direction of public policy by publishing material about corrupt leaders.²⁹ Therefore, it is necessary to consider the cases in which the media's practices become questionable by placing them at the center of the scandal and consequently opening an agenda for questioning the role of journalism.³⁰ In this case, the truthfulness of the information is questioned and the media loses its credibility.

²² COSTAS-PÉREZ, E., A. SOLÉ-OLLÉ & P. SORRIBAS-NAVARRO (2012): «Corruption scandals...». *European journal of political economy*, op. cit., 469-484.

²³ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Political scandal: Power and visibility in the media age*. John Wiley & Sons.

²⁴ LULL, J. & S. HINERMAN (2000): «En búsqueda del escándalo». *Estudios sobre las culturas...*, op. cit., 61-93.

²⁵ McDERMOTT, M. L., D. SCHWARTZ & S. VALLEJO (2015): «Talking the talk but not walking the walk...». *American Politics Research*, op. cit., 952-974.

²⁶ TUMBER, HOWARD: «Scandal and media...». *American Behavioral Scientist*, op. cit., 1122-1137.

²⁷ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21; ARAÚJO, C.M., S.F. COSTA & I. FITTIPALDI (2016): «Boa noite, e boa sorte...». *Opinião Pública*, op. cit., 93-117.

²⁸ TUMBER, HOWARD: «Scandal and media...». *American Behavioral Scientist*, op. cit., 1122-1137.

²⁹ Altschull, J. H., & AltAdams, H. J. (1995). *Agents of power: The media and public policy*. Prentice Hall; TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

³⁰ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the idea that news about corruption scandals is spread through communication tools and are translated by the population, which consequently uses social media to present its ideas and opinions. This article analyzes the communication of news portals as a source of information and their reflections on public opinion in the media of Twitter.

Therefore, it attempts to answer the following questions, the research is based on 478 reports published by the news portals Brasil de Fato,³¹ Estadão³² and G1,³³ and 587 tweets from their respective Twitter pages @brasildefato,³⁴ @estadão,³⁵ @g1.³⁶

Table 01: **Content of the survey news Portals and Twitter**

Media	Brasil de Fato	Estadão	G1
Portals	42	149	287
Twitter	30	472	85

Source: data collected in this research

The page ranks³⁷ The Page Rank of each portal, an independent measure that allows scaling Google's perception of the quality, authority and credibility of an individual website, was used as a guide for the selection.

Of the news portals studied, Brasil de Fato is in the center-left spectrum with a Page Rank of 07/10, the portal Estadão is in the center-right spectrum with a Page Rank of 08/10, and finally G1 is in the center-right with a Page Rank of 9/10.

With the interest to compile the necessary categories for the design of the research based on the content analysis method,³⁸ two programs were

³¹Brasil de Fato. Available at: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³²Estadão. Available at: <https://www.estadao.com.br/>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³³G1. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³⁴Brazil de Fato. Available at: <https://twitter.com/brasildefato>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³⁵Estadão. Available at: <https://twitter.com/Estadao>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³⁶G1. Available at: <https://twitter.com/g1>. Accessed in 01/09/2022.

³⁷Google PageRank (Google PR) is a measure from 0 to 10 that Google uses to determine the relevance or importance of a page. The most relevant pages receive a high PageRank and therefore are more likely to appear at the top of Google search results. (PR) is a measure from 0 to 10.

³⁸BARDIN, LAURENCE (1991): *Análisis de contenido* (vol. 89). Ediciones Akal. Lisboa: Edições 70, 1977.

used that helped in the collection and analysis of the content, SentiOne³⁹ and T-Lab.⁴⁰

To collect the material, starting from corruption scandals, keywords were selected that relate to the phenomenon in Portuguese since this is a study about portals and Twitter in Brazil. Therefore, seven terms related to corruption were considered (corruption, bribery, venality, nepotism, clientelism, collusion, embezzlement, and «money laundering»), which, with the support of the software, served as raw material to capture the content collected in the study.

Table 02: **Words linked to the concept of corruption**

Clientelismo (Clientelism)	Conluio (Collusion)	Corrupção (Corruption)	«Lavagem de dinheiro» («Money Laundering»)
Nepotism (Nepotism)	Peculato (Embezzlement)	Propina (Kickback / bribe)	Suborno (Bribery)

Source: data collected in this research

The choice of these terms⁴¹ borrows from the studies of Rothstein and Varraich (2017),⁴² who advocate corruption as an «umbrella term» and characterize the phenomenon as having multiple ramifications that correspond to the phenomenon. Besides the fact that the phenomenon of corruption has negative consequences in both politics and business, it has been analyzed.⁴³

NEWS PORTALS AND TWEETS: HOW CORRUPTION SCANDALS DIFFER AND CONVERGE AND WHICH ARE THE MAIN NARRATIVES?

Given the tendency for a corruption scandal to be associated with a political figure,⁴⁴ in which the integrity of the politician is an important factor, especially when corruption is involved. With this in mind, this section analyzes the portrayal of corrupt leaders in news portals and on

³⁹SentiOne: software that collected the data for content analysis

⁴⁰T-Lab: software was used to map the specific content.

⁴¹Corruption, bribery, kickback, nepotism, clientelism, collusion, embezzlement, «money laundering».

⁴²ROTHSTEIN, B. & A. VARRAICH (2017): *Making sense of corruption*. Cambridge University Press.

⁴³COSTAS-PÉREZ, E., A. SOLÉ-OLLÉ & P. SORRIBAS-NAVARRO (2012): «Corruption scandals...». *European journal of political economy*, op. cit., 469-484.

⁴⁴WATTENBERG, MARTIN: *The Rise of Candidate...*, op. cit.

Twitter, focusing on the comparison between the bias of news published in the portals Brasil de Fato, Estadão, and G1 and the public comments in the tweets of the respective carriers.

Since these are news portals and tweets, it is worth mentioning that the information unfolds in different ways. However, this paper will analyze how corruption scandals are presented in news portals and how this information is translated by citizens and posted as tweets on the respective Twitter pages. In a sense, the assumption here is that tweets are part of an information flow resulting from news content (and vice versa) that citizen's access and express their opinions through the social platform.

As can be seen in Table 03, the news portals consistently emphasize the presentation of the causes and consequences, the exposure of the politicians involved, and the unfolding of the corruption scandal in an expository and investigative manner. The comments of Brazilian citizens in the tweets present a further bias, reflecting the outrage over corruption through the use of negative adjectives, allusions to morality, and the exacerbation of political polarization. Thus, the background of a scandal story is articulated with a moral backdrop that reinforces social institutions.⁴⁵

Table 03: **differences between in relation to the corruption scandal**

News in the Potals	Opinion publishes Twitter
narrative causes consequence citing more than one actor involved; Lula and bolsonaro are the focus of most of the news; research outcome/minds explored; focus on the bolsonaro family, President Bolsonaro and the recurring Lula; Resumption of previous corrupt cases.	recurrent use of derogatory adjectives public opinion and expressive indignation Focus on just a few corruption scandals political polarization (PT ⁴⁶ x other parties) Lula x Bolsonaro scandal little explored/developed judgment resumption of old corrupt cases

Source: data collected in this research

These points of difference between what is revealed in the news and what public opinion, in relation to the political scandal, reinforce the idea that public reaction to scandals ranges from political trials to legal investigations that are concluded with the first revelations consequently,

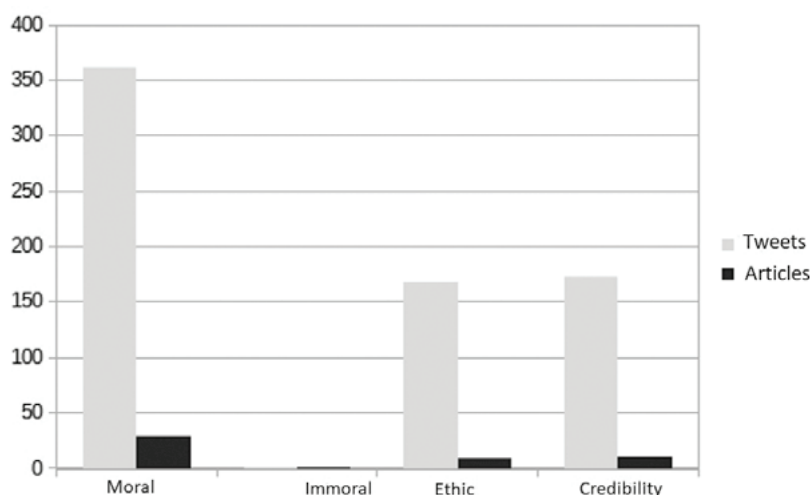
⁴⁵ LULL, J. & S. HINERMAN (2000): «En búsqueda del escándalo». *Estudios sobre las culturas...*, op. cit., 61-93.

⁴⁶ PT: workers' parties.

individuals and institutions react with the aim of defending their interests, social position, and reputation.⁴⁷

Based on the comparison between the news portals and the tweets of Brasil de Fato, G1, and Estadão on the topic of corruption scandals, the return of the narrative in favor of morality (87%), ethics (40%), and credibility (42.5%) emerge as characteristics that stand out in the Twitter comments. Citizens' tweets thus show widespread concern about these factors, which are rarely addressed in the portals. Scandals thus provoke symbolic meaning across the boundaries of public morality.⁴⁸

Graph 01—main recurrences



Source: data collected in this research

The media extends the critical role, scandals provide for the unfolding of the actions of various political actors who constitute the scandals through reactions, accusations, defense, public reaction, and judicial processes.⁴⁹ Therefore, Twitter becomes the arena of arguments about the meaning of corruption due to the selectivity of the media that configure it as a scenario

⁴⁷ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

⁴⁸ LULL, J. & S. HINERMAN (2000): «En búsqueda del escándalo». *Estudios sobre las culturas...*, op. cit., 61-93.

⁴⁹ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

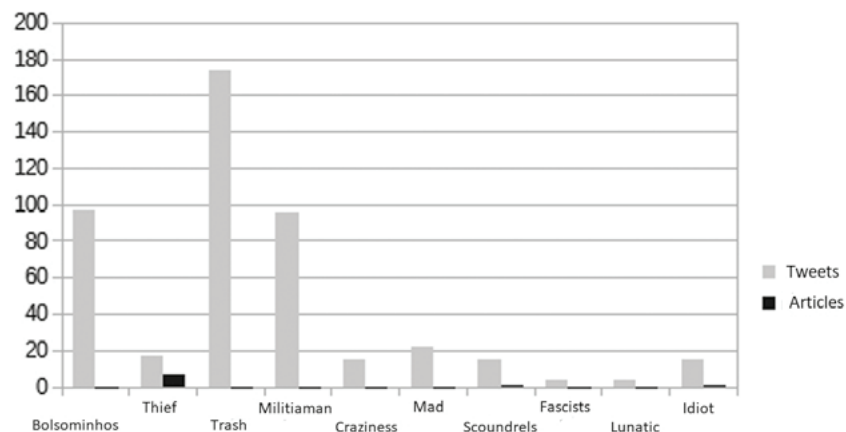
of inclusion and exclusion, strategies, appointments and evaluation of morality, mainly in an intense political-political context.⁵⁰

This fact is in dialogue with popular concerns about political behavior in favor of morality, ethics and credibility as main issues in the face of corruption scandals. However, as can be seen, these issues are not a major concern presented to the population in the news.

In addition to the widespread concern about morality, ethics, and credibility in the tweets compared to the news, the public opinion in the posts on the social platform is influenced by the use of negative adjectives that stand out compared to the news. As is possible to note (Graph 02), in the tweets, the term «trash» is used as an adjective in 85% of the comments, followed by «militia» (45%).

The use of these negative adjectives for political figures in the tweets is related to finding someone to blame in a scandalous context. Finally, «trash» is used to not add value, followed by «Bolsomions», a pejorative nickname for Bolsonaro's supporters, and «militia», officer, and non-commissioned officer, who is not part of the permanent staff of military troops. Thus, the emphasis on these adjectives in a negative use form confirms the aggravation and assessment of the scandal in other media.

Graph 02—deconstructive adjectives



Source: data collected in this research

⁵⁰ PAIVA, A.L.D., A.S. GARCIA & D.V.C. ALCÂNTARA (2017): «Disputas discursivas sobre corrupção no Brasil: uma análise discursivo-crítica no twitter». *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, 21, 627-647.

In this way, qualifying adjectives such as *bolsominions*, «trash» and *milico* are the most constant in the comments of the social platform, used in a pejorative way and therefore little explored in the news. In some cases, these adjectives are used as a form of attack on corruption, to evaluate the corrupt actor who carries out the action or even to attack between tweets.

On Twitter, public focus on the construction of corrupt politicians such as «trash», «militia», pedophiles and *bolsominions* in most posts, while in the portals, adjectives such as «thief» and *bolsominions* are the most common.

This discrepancy between the news portals and the tweets has three reasons: first, the citizens' indignation about the recurrent corruption scandals in the country; second, the possibility of a more informal posting enabled by the social platform, which contributes to aggravated posts; and third, the fact that the structure of the news in the portals is deliberate and formal. This is because the greater the intensity of a political scandal in the media in a democratic environment, the greater the concern for accountability through denunciation.⁵¹

Given these facts, it can be observed that popular outrage over corruption scandals actually takes place on Twitter, as this platform allows citizens to make their opinions known on a wide scale, from disqualifying adjectives to alluding to a moral and ethical stance in the political scene.

NEWS PORTALS VERSUS TWITTER: INVOLVED POLITICIANS AND RECURRING CORRUPTION SCANDALS

In analyzing the research, it was found that the figures published in the news portals *Brasil de Fato*, *Estadão*, and *G1* about politicians involved in corruption scandals differ from the representations of the same politicians in Twitter posts.

Among the news portals, ten politicians stand out for the frequency of articles about corrupt leaders. In the analyzed period, the repetition of politicians involved in scandals includes President Bolsonaro (672), who leads most of the analyzed topics, followed by ex-President Lula (259), ex-Environment Minister Ricardo Salles (197), Pazuello (174), Witzel (118), Eduardo Cunha (93), ex-Justice Minister Sergio Moro (49), ex-President Michel Temer (42), Flavio Bolsonaro (37), as shown by the visual relationship of those involved in corruption through the keyword search in Figure 04.

⁵¹ ARAÚJO, C.M., S.F. COSTA & I. FITTIPALDI (2016): «Boa noite, e boa sorte...». *Opinião Pública*, op. cit., 93-117.

Figure 04: Association between corruption and politicians in portals



Source: data collected in this research

When analyzing the tweets of Brazilian citizens linking corruption scandals to political actors, one can notice a contrast with the portals. Thus, the association of corruption scandals through tweets is significant, even if the frequency of citations of political actors is lower compared to the portals. On the social platform, only 7 actors stand out: Bolsonaro (161) and Lula (72), but the numbers are lower compared to the portals. Ricardo Salles (36), Flavio Bolsonaro (7), Pazuello (4), Sergio Moro (3) (Table 04 and Graph 03).

In contrast, it is interesting to point out that on the social platform, topics related to leaders and political actors tend to focus on partisan issues, the comparison of corruption in Brazil before and after Bolsonaro, or the PT, in addition to religious and moral expressions, with some political protagonists in the background. In this way, the construction of corruption is part of production processes and meanings inserted in the social and political fields, and it acts as a main actor by being part of the construction of the political scandal.⁵²

⁵² PAIVA, A.L.D., A.S. GARCIA & D.V.C. ALCÂNTARA (2017): «Disputas discursivas sobre corrupção...». *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, op. cit., 627-647.

Graph 03—Recurrence of exposure of politicians in corruption scandals



Source: data collected in this research

The articles that concern President Bolsonaro (672) in the analyzed period mostly deal with investigations by the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI), which investigates the actions and omissions of the federal government during Covid-19's term in office related to the field of health. The investigation includes oversight of government publicity campaigns, tours and events during the pandemic.

Other highlights of Bolsonaro's involvement with corruption in the stories include the president's involvement in tenders that also implicated former Health Minister Pazuello and the unfolding of the politician's political interference in the Federal Police.

It should be noted that the general of the Brazilian Army, the government's former health minister, Eduardo Pazuello (174), also appears repeatedly in the articles because he is associated with frauds related to the Ministry of Health's contracts in Rio and the selection of bid of companies for the renovation of old state buildings.

Table 04: Content of the survey news Portals and Twitter politicians references

Politicians linked to corruption cases	Investigations– Operations	Portals: n° references	Twitters: n° references
Bolsonaro (President of Brazil 2018-2022)	Covid-19 CPI	672	161
Eduardo Cunha (Former Federal Deputy)	MDB quadrillion	93	0
Flavio Bolsonaro (Federal Senator)	Rachadinhas investigators of the «cracks».	37	7
Luiz Inácio Lula (Ex-president)	Lava-Jato	259	72
Michel Temer (Ex-president 2016-2018)	MDB quadrillion	42	0
Eduardo Pazuello (Former Minister of Health of Brazil)	Covid-19 CPI	174	4
Ricardo Salles (Former Minister of the Environment)	Akuanbuda Operation	197	36
Sérgio Moro (Former Minister of Justice)	Spoofing Operation	49	3
Wilson Witzel (PSC) (Former Governor of Rio de Janeiro)	CPI Covid	118	0

Source: data collected in this research

Thus, most approaches are about the motivations and opportunity structure in which actors engage in political corruption.⁵³ From this perspective, while the media plays its critical role in the face of a ladder, the actions of multiple actors arise, after all, the disclosure of information unleashes sources, whistleblowers, investigators, agencies, corporations, activists and civil servants.⁵⁴

As analyzed, the involvement of politicians linked to the president involved in corruption ladders is recurrent, another name associated with the president and among political actors is Flavio Bolsonaro (37), Bolsonaro's son, who is among the researchers of the «cracks». The senator and his former adviser Fabrício Queiroz were denounced by the Public Ministry of Rio for involvement in a criminal organization, embezzlement, and money laundering under the «cracks» when the politician was a deputy in the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro (Alerj).

⁵³ HEYWOOD, P. (1997): «Political corruption: Problems and perspectives». *Political studies*, 45 (3), 417-435.

⁵⁴ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

As previously mentioned, the former Minister of the Environment, Ricardo Salles (197), is also part of this cast as he is the target of the Federal Police's «Akuanbuda Operation», which investigates the illegal export of Brazilian wood abroad, United States and Europe. According to data from the G1 news outlet, Salles had been in the position of Minister since the beginning of the government and was one of the ministers most aligned with President Jair Bolsonaro.

In the analysis of the news portals, former Justice Minister Sergio Moro (49) seems to be involved in «Operation Spoofing», in which the former judge is being investigated for interfering in the activities of the Federal Police during the period in which he held the post of Minister. In addition, the image given to Moro in relation to corruption is highlighted by the interception of messages seized during this operation, which consequently raised doubts about the events that resulted from the work of Operation Task Force Lava Jato, raising doubts about Moro's professional performance.

This scandal involving Moro had repercussions for other political figures involved in corruption scandals, such as the case of ex-President Lula (259). The politician is quoted in relation to the decision of the Supreme Federal Court (STF) on the inability of the 13th Federal Court of Curitiba, linked to Moro, to judge the cases of the «Operação Lava Jato» against the former president. In addition, the image of former President Lula is also associated with the 2022 elections, as he was one of the controversial candidates at the time.

President Michel Temer (42), who assumed the presidency after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, is also one of those cited when it comes to matters related to corruption. The news about politics and also involving former deputy Eduardo Cunha (93), highlight the acquittal in the Federal Court of involvement with the «quadrilhão»,⁵⁵ for lack of evidence and proof.

Finally, another scandal of the month of May that show the impeachment of the former governor of Rio de Janeiro, Wilson Witzel⁵⁶ (118), convicted of a crime of responsibility in the irregular hiring of field hospitals during the Covid-19 pandemic. The reports inform that the politician loses his position definitively and his political rights for a period of 5 years.

⁵⁵ The decision made acquitting politicians from the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), among them former president Michel Temer, in the so-called 'quadrilhão' (squad), does justice by rejecting an accusation.

⁵⁶ Wilson José Witzel was governor of Rio de Janeiro from January 1, 2019, until his impeachment on April 30 of the year of this research.

Taking into account that dealing with corruption and the media, the narratives are diverse due to both the reach of the public and the repercussions of the phenomenon. In the case of Twitter posts, the points of view of the characters linked to corruption differ, given that the posts focus more on accusations of corruption and remembrance of the immoral past of these actors.

It is interesting to note in this section the predominance of adjectives such as thief, criminal and corrupt in the direction of describing the popular indignation at the corruption scandals in which these actors are involved. In this sense, when dealing with the representation of corruption and its link with politicians, it is observed that the actors enter the scene on social media as a way of claiming a better country and even indignation about the national scenario. In a way, the public has the perception that the politician who commits a hypocritical offense is less competent to hold office.⁵⁷

As can be seen in Table 09, Bolsonaro (161) is one of the most frequently cited politicians when it comes to posts about corruption. Most posts emphasize popular outrage over the scandals in which the president is involved, one example being the politician's interference in the Police Federal, with the aim of favoring politicians from his allied base. The excerpts from the tweets show the outrage against the politician and are expressed as follows: «in the Bolsonaro government, theft is free».⁵⁸ Corruption linked to Bolsonaro's image also appears in posts that allude to the 2022 electoral scenario, and the possibility of the politician's candidacy, in which tweets support outrage at the fact that the country will continue to be governed by the corrupt. The president's son, Flavio Bolsonaro (7), is cited among those cited in the tweets for being involved in a discussion about corruption, in which the politician called Renan Calheiros a «Vagabundo».⁵⁹ There are tweets criticizing the as follows: «The Bolsonaro Family is smeared in public coffers».⁶⁰

The second most cited in the Twitter posts dealing with the return of corruption to the country is Lula (92). Like Bolsonaro, one of the subjects mentioned in these Tweets is the indignation at the electoral possibilities for the 2022 scenario, in view of the politician's involvement with scandals during the PT government, as exemplified by the excerpt of a tweet «I don't

⁵⁷ McDERMOTT, M. L., D. SCHWARTZ & S. VALLEJO (2015): «Talking the talk but not walking the walk...». *American Politics Research*, op. cit., 952-974.

⁵⁸ «No governo Bolsonaro o roubo é livre».

⁵⁹ «Vagabond»

⁶⁰ «The Bolsonaro Family is smeared in public coffers».

know who it is worse, he or Lula»⁶¹ or «Lula and Bolsonaro are liars and equal».⁶² At other times, the following affirmation is done on Twitter, «If Brazil's image is bad with Bolsonaro... imagine with a guy who was arrested for corruption until yesterday... you don't see that in any other country».⁶³

In some case highlight expressions of hatred and call the politician a thief and corrupt, also informing that the politician does not give credibility to discuss the issue of corruption due to his history. The link between Eduardo Pazuello (4) with corruption on Twitter occurs in posts that show the indignation of the tweets in the following way: «now they need to be ashamed of themselves and call “secret budget” a corruption scheme»⁶⁴ or «It's not good for you with corruption, no?». The politician is accused of spending public money on the illegal bidding for a renovation of a ministry shed in RJ during the pandemic.

The crime news of Environment Minister Ricardo Salles (36) also stands out in the tweets about «PF seeing ‘strong indications’ of Salles’ connection to timber smuggling». Another highlight in the Twitter posts is ex-Justice Minister Sergio Moro (3), who is accused of corruption in the posts. «He is corrupt, he is a bandit», reads the posting excerpt, the outrage towards the politician is due to his alleged involvement in the persecution of political opponents and corruption.

It can be concluded that the portrayal of corruption involving individuals is different because they have a lower relationship with politicians compared to news portals. Moreover, it is Twitter that expresses the indigenization of the population with the corruption scandals involving politicians.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this work was based on two questions that guided the study: What are the differences between corruption scandals in news portals and public comments on Twitter, how these scandals are published in the two means of communication, and which are only scandals and the most frequent authors. Thus, the research focuses its efforts on the analysis of the corruption ladder published in the articles of the news portals and public comments on the respective twitter pages of these portals.

⁶¹ «Não sei quem é pior, ele ou o Lula».

⁶² «Lula e Bolsonaro são mentirosos e iguais».

⁶³ «Se a imagem do Brasil é ruim com Bolsonaro... imagina com um cara que estava preso por corrupção até ontem... não se vê isso em nenhum outro país...».

⁶⁴ «Falta agora tomarem vergonha na cara e chamarem “orçamento secreto” de esquema de corrupção».

From this perspective, it was observed that despite the information about these two vehicles being complementary, they differ on some points.

While the articles in the portals have a greater focus on history and developments highlighting political actors, such as Lula, Bolsonaro, Ricardo Salles and Pazuello and corruption investigation operations. The comments of the population on Twitter on the pages of these portals, bring to light the public opinion with the tendency of the judgment of ethics, morals and credibility, being these the main recurrences of the comments. In this perspective, if, on the one hand, the news presents information to the population, on the other hand, there is a judgment and a recurring indignation in the tweets in relation to the scandals of the Brazilian scenario.

The articles linked to corruption scandals in portals tend to present the scandals in an informative way, based on the cause-consequence narrative, citing political actors and new ones, with a recurrent focus on political figures. These causal-consequential narratives focus mainly on politicians such as former president Lula and current president Bolsonaro and his family, in a context that is part of the electoral construction of the 2022 elections. Therefore, scandals in the portals focus on the developments of political actors, opening space for accusations, defense, actions, and reactions.⁶⁵

On Twitter, when analyzing public comments related to corruption cases, the scandals are not in-depth or detailed. The public's focus on the social platform is on the repeated use of derogatory adjectives, which show the population's indignation by showing the fine line between news and public opinion. In this way, the tweets become an arena for discussion about corruption, focusing on issues of morality, credibility, and ethics, in which the population expresses its indignation in relation to corruption.

In addition to raising the issue of the politician's commitment to the population through his ethics. The comments published on the social platform regarding the corruption scandals are characterized by a significant political focus on two actors, highlighting the polarization of the nation, Bolsonaro, and Lula, but also by greater attention to scandals such as the Covid CPI and the Lava-Jato Operation.

⁶⁵ TUMBER, HOWARD & SILVIO WAISBORD: «Media and scandal». In *The routledge companion...*, op. cit., pp. 10-21.

The study thus undertakes a small analysis of the context of contemporary corruption scandals in news portals and tweets, opening the way for new research that seeks to translate the information revealed by the media and public opinion. However, there is still much to be studied in relation to corruption scandals in different vehicles. Taking into account that, despite the information exposed by the articles in the portals dialogizing with public tweets, the study points out that there is still a gap about some corruption scandals, which are not part of the repertoire of discussions of the tweets, are only presented by the portals.

In addition, the comments published on the social platform regarding the corruption scandals are characterized by a significant focus on two political actors, highlighting the polarization of the nation, Bolsonaro and Lula, but also by greater attention to scandals such as the Covid CPI and the Lava-Jato Operation. Thus, the study thus undertakes a small analysis of the context of contemporary corruption scandals in news portals and tweets, opening the way for new research that seeks to translate the information revealed by the media and public opinion.