Facebook and the Climate Divide: A Study of Brazilian Political Discourse

December, 2023

Analysis by

Despite the urgency of discussing the climate crisis in Brazil, the online communication from Congress members remains mostly apolitical and disaster-specific. When comparing the volume of posts on climate-related issues to overall posts, climate issues do not have a significant share of the online discourse.

Lula's centre-left Worker's Party dominated Facebook posts with nearly 30% of the overall posts and an even higher frequency of 34.2% on climate-related topics. In contrast, the right-wing Liberal Party contributed significantly less to the climate discourse, at only 6.9%.

Political discourse on climate change within Brazil is highly polarised, as the two most engaged politicians, Carla Zambelli and Eduardo Bolsonaro, often criticise the actions of the Lula government. In contrast, the next two highly engaged politicians praise the government's accomplishments in addressing climate-related issues.

Within climate-related Facebook posts, we found five main topics: (i) Regional Challenges and Disasters; (ii) Government Response and Aid; (iii) Congress Award for Politicians; (iv) Environmental Awareness and Global Concerns; and (v) Sustainable Development and Energy.

Climate change remains a divisive topic in Brazilian politics. The entrenched interests of the agribusiness sector have traditionally posed a challenge for creating effective environmental policy and meeting the country's set emission goals. Since taking office in early 2023, the newly elected Lula administration has pushed for the implementation of greater environmental protections, in stark contrast to the deregulation and pro-agribusiness stance of the previous Bolsonaro government. This
has led to renewed engagement on the international stage and a greater commitment to reducing deforestation, which reached record levels under Bolsonaro's leadership. In advance of Brazil’s appearance at the 2023 COP-28 Summit in Dubai, the country has faced a deadly heatwave and recently recorded its hottest-ever temperature.

This analysis was performed by Democracy Reporting International.

Methodology

This report examines the online discourse surrounding climate change in Brazilian politics throughout 2023. Specifically, the researchers wanted to understand which politicians and political parties discuss climate change the most, what levels of engagement they receive, and the language they use to address this subject. In addition, this research also seeks to examine which topics dominate the climate discourse in Brazil, as well as the popularity of disinformation and climate denial narratives.

To do this, we examine how politicians, specifically the 594 members of Brazil’s Congress, discuss the topic of climate change on their social media accounts. Because the current 57th Legislature of the National Congress began its mandate in February, we limited our analysis of the politicians' social media posts to Instagram posts between February 1st, 2023, and November 27th, 2023. Out of the collected total of 229,712 posts, we then created a subset of only the posts relating to climate change. This was done by applying a linguistic-rule filter built by researchers from the FGV ECMI onto the larger dataset. This subset consisted of 1,627 total posts by deputies in the selected timeframe.

For the quantitative analysis, we employed two primary methods for interpreting the posts: (i) topic modelling, a technique that allows us to match words found in Instagram comments to their probability of association with broader topics, and (ii) engagement analysis, an examination of the number of interactions (reactions, shares, and comments) each post received.

This report has two major sections: (I) “The Climate Crisis in Brazil”, which examines the impact of climate change in Brazil, and (II) "Climate Change as a Subject of Political Debate", which examines the climate change-related social media posts of the 594 members of Brazil's Congress, displaying which parties and individuals talk about the topic the most and their levels of engagement. (II) "The Climate Change Discourse" explores the topics and themes associated with climate change based on
the content of the social media posts and the levels of denial and disinformation employed surrounding the topic.

I. The Climate Crisis in Brazil

- Brazil has been subjected to a variety of natural disasters, from droughts and extreme temperatures to floods and storms. Between 1991 and 2020 alone, more than 63,000 disasters were recorded, according to a survey released in 2022 by the Ministry of Regional Development.

- Recent disasters have included extreme droughts: the Amazonas region, for example, recorded the 5th worst drought in history in Manaus in September. On the other hand, the country's southern region has faced heavy rain and wind gusts, causing floods and landslides, especially in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.

- In the Southeast, São Paulo recorded record temperatures during the winter, with thermometers in the capital reaching over 34°C. In addition, at the beginning of 2023, the coastal region of São Paulo was devastated by heavy rains, landslides and falling barriers, resulting in calamity.

- This series of natural disasters across Brazil reflects the country's profound vulnerability to the escalating climate crisis. These disasters are urgent reminders of the need for robust environmental policies and proactive strategies to address climate change. In the following sections of this report, we observe how congress members discuss the climate agenda online, the engagement they receive when they do, and the main topics they address.

II. Climate Change as a Subject of Political Debate

- As the first object of analysis, we observed the volume of posts from the profiles of politicians who discussed climate topics and compared this against posts about any non-climate topics during the analysed period. This comparison is crucial to understanding how much of an issue climate change is to the current parliamentarians.

- One of the more striking observations of this report is the relatively small number of posts by congress members devoted to climate compared to other topics. Facebook posts by the deputies relating to the environment and climate
made up a mere 0.7% (1,627) of their total overall posts (229,712) during the observed time frame.

**Graph 1: Volume of Climate-Related Posts Compared to Overall Posts**

The pie chart shows the share of climate-related posts compared to the overall posts from federal deputies since 1 February.

*Source: Facebook  | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International*

- To understand better which parties and deputies lead the online debate on climate-related issues, the analysis is divided into two parts: which parties guide the discussion and who leads the debate; both analyses consider the volume of posts and average engagement.

**Leading Parties**

- To understand which parties were active the most in the online climate discourse in 2023, we contrasted each party's total Facebook posts with their proportion of climate-related posts:
Parliamentarians of Lula’s centre-left Worker’s Party posted the most, almost a third (29.1%) of the overall Facebook posts during the observed time frame. Regarding content about climate-related topics, PT politicians posted at an even higher frequency (34.2%).

In contrast, parliamentarians from Bolsonaro’s right-wing Liberal Party (PL) posted disproportionately less about climate-related topics. Only 6.9% of the observed climate-related posts were by members of the Liberal Party. This low level of debate may be explained by the party’s support of deregulating Brazilian industry, a policy they pursued aggressively under the Bolsonaro government to the detriment of environmental protections.

Source: Facebook  |  Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International
Despite making up a mere 6.9% of the posts in the climate subset, congress members from the Liberal Party received, on average, considerably more engagement than other parties, about 2022 interactions per post. This may be explained by the party’s popularity and the content of PL posts, which often display the Lula government as scandalous and appeal to their bases’ political biases (see later section). Liberal Party Deputies such as Carla Zambelli and Eduardo Bolsonaro in particular enjoy large followings on social media, with over three million followers each on Facebook alone. These numbers likely explain the high levels of engagement and mobilisation popular PL politicians receive regardless of their post’s topics.

In contrast, smaller parties such as NOVO and PSDB enjoyed a higher average engagement with their followers than larger parties such as PT. This may be because smaller parties often have much more active and engaged bases. For example, Deputy Marcel van Hattem (NOVO-RS), whose posts accounted for
most of NOVO’s representation in the climate subset, has over 900,000 followers on Facebook. Deputies from smaller parties often wield significant influence in Brazil’s polarised political landscape, exemplified by figures like Deputy Marcel van Hattem, a prominent advocate within Bolsonaro’s political sphere on social media platforms.

- Even though PT accounted for well over a third of the overall climate-related Facebook posts by deputies in the observed timeframe, their posts received only about 229 interactions on average each, or about one-tenth the average engagement as their main opposition party, the PL.

**Top Voices**

- Apart from understanding the parties which potentially have climate as an agenda in their online communication, it is interesting to observe the federal deputies and senators who post the most on the topic, some of the topics they are discussing, and those who receive more attention online, with a higher average engagement.

**Graph 5: Top 5 Federal Deputies with Highest Volume of Climate-Related Posts on Facebook**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deputy</th>
<th>Number of Climate-Related Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evair Vieira de Melo (PP)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilto Tatoo (PT)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Paula Lima (PT)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chico Alencar (PSOL)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zé Silva (SOLIDARIEDADE)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bar chart above displays the total number of climate-related posts for each of the top 5 most frequent posting deputies on Facebook between Feb 1 and Nov 27 2023.

Source: Facebook  | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International
Deputy Evair Viera de Melo (PP-ES) posted about climate-related topics the most during the observed time frame, posting more than twice as much as the next most frequent poster. The majority of these posts, however, were not political but rather updating his followers on the weather in his state.

In the above image, Deputy Evair Viera de Melo (PP-ES) warns residents in a city in his state: “More rainfall records from Brejetuba! The rains hit the city on Tuesday night, October 31st. Stay alert, and don't take unnecessary risks. Take care.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

Deputies Nilto Tattoo (PT-SP) and Ana Paula Lima (PT-SC) frequently posted their support for the Lula government’s climate policies. They promoted the administration’s actions to combat climate change and provide aid in the face of natural disasters:

Caption: Above, Deputy Ana Paula Lima (PT-SC) alerts citizens in Santa Catarina about extreme weather: “The situation remains worrying in Santa Catarina and the Civil Defense has issued an alert for new risks of storms. At the moment, 6,000 people remain homeless.”
Tomorrow, we will meet with the Santa Catarina government and Minister Waldez Góes in Brasília to discuss actions for the state. I would like to thank the Lula government for its immediate support in saving the lives of the people of Santa Catarina.”

Source: Facebook  | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

Who Receives the Most Attention

Graph 6: Total Number of Posts and Average Engagement by Parliamentarian

![Graph 6: Total Number of Posts and Average Engagement by Parliamentarian](image)

The graph compares the total climate-related posts and average engagement between congress members who had the highest number of posts and the highest engagement rate.

In our analysis, we compared the engagement levels of the top five politicians who posted the most frequently with the top five politicians who received the highest engagement on their posts. We found a significant disparity in online engagement patterns: politicians who posted most frequently tended to receive relatively low levels of engagement on average. Conversely, those who enjoyed the most engagement were not frequent posters. This pattern suggests a possible barrier to entry in Brazil’s online climate discourse. Frequent posting and possibly more invested politicians attract less attention in the climate discourse, whereas those with larger follower bases achieve substantial engagement despite less frequent posting.
- This trend becomes more significant when noting that the two top most engaged posters were deputies from the Liberal Party: Carla Zambelli and Eduardo Bolsonaro. Both deputies have over three million followers each on their Facebook profiles and posted often about the perceived climate failures of the Lula government. Deputy Zambelli, in particular, enjoyed a high level of total engagement on climate-related topics, more than three times the next highest deputy. In the post below, Zambelli criticises Lula for embarking on an international trip instead of visiting a region devastated by a cyclone in September.

In the above image, Deputy Carla Zambelli (PL-SP) comments, “Once again, Lula has shown that he is more concerned with seeking the limelight for himself than being a ruler for Brazil. This is an inhumane and lenient attitude towards the position he shows he is not qualified to hold. In addition, journalist Paulo Cappelli reminds us in an article for Metrópoles of the great contradiction since Lula visited the city of Araraquara, as a result of the rains, exactly on January 8th.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Of the top 25 most engaged posts in the climate subset, 6 posts - all by Deputies Zambelli and Bolsonaro - expressed scepticism about climate change overall and insinuated that climate change was merely a weapon used by the left to criticise Jair Bolsonaro’s government.
Deputy Zambelli: "We need more "conspiracy theories", because all of them have already been proven. To give you an idea of the scale of the problem, read below the statements made by the tycoon known as the "owner of the world":

In an article published on Thursday 16, George Soros, magnate founder of Open Society, which funds left-wing NGOs around the world, made an analysis of the global panorama in the face of supposed climate change caused by human action and effusively praised President Lula....

Soros also mentions the January 8 demonstrations, in which the buildings of the Praça dos Três Poderes were invaded, and compares them to January 6, 2021, in the United States, when supporters of former President Donald Trump invaded Congress. "Lula led the coup attempt with mastery and established his authority as president," the tycoon praised. As a reminder, the late Enéas referred to George Soros as the world's biggest drug dealer."

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Deputy Bolsonaro especially entertained conspiratorial narratives about a “green globalist agenda” being “forced down the throats of farmers” and praised global efforts by farmers to resist government efforts to cut emissions.
In the above image, Deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro praises the electoral victory of the Dutch Pro-Farmer party: “The tiny Citizens Farm Movement Party, with just 11,000 members, dominated the state elections and won a majority in the Senate - ring a bell? It’s a reaction to the federal government pushing a green globalist agenda down the throats of farmers with repercussions for consumers - perhaps inspired by Sri Lanka, where the government banned foreign chemical fertilisers, which devoured national reserves, increased the price of the product and made the country even more dependent on imports, culminating in the overthrow of the government there.

But now he will have to work hard - and hard - to pass these measures since his party is not the largest or has a majority in either the Senate or the House.

Victory for the freedom of expression of the people who protested several times in an organised manner.”

Source: Facebook  | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- In contrast, the following two most engaged politicians were Dondara Tonantzin and Senator Humberto Costa, both members of PT. Posts by these deputies often praised the Lula government's efforts to address climate change and conveyed satisfaction at having an administration seriously tackling such pressing issues.
In the above image, Senator Humberto Costa (PT-PE) comments, “It’s good to have a president who cares about the environment, isn’t it? Since the beginning of the year, the PF has been monitoring deforestation alerts for illegal mining in the region, which have been falling. In April, there were 19 alerts. In May, 10. Now, as of June 15, no alerts have been recorded.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- This sample indicates the current polarised discourse around climate in Brazilian politics, with two of the most engaged politicians frequently posting on Facebook denouncing the Lula government's actions. In contrast, the next two most engaged politicians laud the current government's climate achievements.

- Deputy Marcel van Hattem (NOVO-RS) also received above-average engagement. Most of his climate-related posts were about the deadly floods in his state, Rio Grande do Sul, and his and the government's steps to aid those affected. The floods, caused by an extratropical cyclone, received national attention after killing 40 people and displacing several thousand others in southern Brazil. In his subsequent Facebook posts, van Hattem announced his
support for an increase in federal funds aimed at preventing similar natural disasters:

Above, Deputy Marcel van Hattem (NOVO-RS) announces “I tabled an amendment to the bill that opens a supplementary credit in favor of various ministries so that we can reallocate R$465 million that would have been earmarked for Codevasf (Companhia de Desenvolvimento dos Vales do São Francisco), an agency that is often the target of investigations for embezzlement of federal funds, to National Civil Protection and Defense Actions, especially in Rio Grande do Sul. It is urgent that we help the municipalities in the state that have been hit by tragic floods in recent days. I will seek to approve this amendment in the Joint Budget Committee as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the country is susceptible to other natural disasters, such as drought and floods, and the federal budget needs to fund prevention policies, ensuring that there is a constant effort to at least lessen the impact of these tragedies.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

III. The Climate Change Discourse

- The graph below presents the main topics in the analysed posts. The topic modelling in this section is a technique that allows for identifying and extracting significant topics from a large set of unstructured data, such as social media posts.

- Within the climate-related subset, we found five main topics: (i) Regional Challenges and Disasters; (ii) Government Response and Aid; (iii) Congress Award for Politicians; (iv) Environmental Awareness and Global Concerns; and (v) Sustainable Development and Energy. We analyse each topic below to comprehend which subjects they discuss when talking about each theme.
When observing how these topics were discussed throughout the analysed period, we observe that two main topics had a higher volume during 2023, with peaks in specific months.
Regional Challenges and Disasters

- The most prominent topic was the coverage of regional disasters throughout 2023 in different regions of Brazil. Within this set of posts, we observed different themes: (i) solidarity with the affected population, (ii) informal alerts and tips on actions to take due to extreme weather, and (iii) legislative actions they have worked on due to the calamity. Most posts rely on the first and second themes and are relatively apolitical in their tone.

- We observed four prominent peaks with a higher volume of posts on regional challenges and disasters, reflecting disasters that occurred in the country. The first one, in February 2023, reflects the flooding of various cities on Brazil's coast, especially in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo, among others. We observed frequent posts of alerts and proposals of governmental actions within this set of posts.
Federal Deputy Evair Vieira de Melo says: "Attention Espírito Santo! Inmet has issued a yellow alert (potential danger) of heavy rainfall for a part of the state’s south. The warning is valid until TOMORROW (24/02) at 10 am. Check out the map to see which regions are under alert. Redouble your precautions! In the event of an emergency, call Civil Defence (199)."

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

Reginaldo Lopes, Federal Deputy, argues: “These tragedies can be avoided if there is investment in prevention, and that’s what we want: for nobody to die because of the rains. I propose creating a fund to support disaster, calamity and emergencies. A year after the request to open the bill was made, a working group or special..."
commission was established to discuss the issue. I hope the bill will now progress in the Chamber of Deputies and benefit millions of Brazilians.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- The other observed peaks happened during September and October 2023. The posts mainly focus on two significant events happening in the country: floods in the southern region of Brazil and extreme heat waves in Rio de Janeiro. We observed the solidarity tone from parliamentarians, as well as legislative proposals.

Federal Deputy Márcio Biolchi expresses: “The devastating consequences of the heavy rains in our state deeply sadden us. The lives lost and the damage caused are truly distressing. At this challenging time, it is important that everyone unites in solidarity and offers their help in any way they can. Donations are essential to help those who need it most. Together, we are strong! Let’s overcome this adversity and build a safer and more prosperous future for all the people of Rio Grande do Sul.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International
Senator Rodrigo Cunha celebrates: In the Committee on Economic Affairs, we approved that state and municipal funds created to support actions to prevent natural disasters and recover affected areas should also receive 5% of the funds from judicial and extrajudicial agreements to repair environmental damage. Many municipalities need help managing the risks of environmental disasters, such as our state, and we are seeing more and more natural disasters in the news. That's why this approval was so important, as it makes it necessary to channel resources to strengthen the management capacity of these municipalities.

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

**Government Response and Aid**

- The second-most prominent topic observed in the data was the current government’s response and aid to regional disasters. Within this set of posts, we observed a polarised discussion. While congress members from the opposition parties, such as PL and Novo, criticised actions and policies developed by the current administration, parliamentarians from supportive parties highlighted the favourable policies developed so far.
Criticism of the Lula Government’s Climate-Related Policies and Actions

- Deputies belonging to Bolsonaro’s Liberal Party were more likely to criticise the current administration than those from other parties. Posts from PL deputies often highlighted areas that haven’t markedly improved under the Lula administration as proof of the administration’s ineffectiveness, usually alleging that were the previous Bolsonaro government still in power, such failures would receive a greater degree of attention and criticism.

Above, Senator Jorge Seif Junior (PL-SC) declares “The people of Manaus don’t deserve to breathe the worst air in the world! The Lula government’s performance in relation to the environment is the same as in other areas: a disaster, a step backwards, omission and abandonment.

With each new event, it becomes clearer that the press is manipulating information in order to construct narratives. Imagine if we were in the Bolsonaro government, the news would certainly point to him as the culprit.”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

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Senator Flavio Bolsonaro says: “Where did the duo who said they would look after the Amazon go? While Lula was travelling and squandering public money, the Brazilian sanctuary was covered in smoke. It was never about the climate, never about environmental preservation.”
Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

● Others asserted that officials in the Lula government are corrupt and embezzling funds:

Senator Magno Malta (PL-SC): “Environmental corruption? Coordinator appointed by Lula is denounced for embezzling millions. While the Climate Change Forum should be leading actions to protect the environment, Sergio Luís de Carvalho Xavier's management seems to have prioritized its own financial gain. The accusations of embezzling R$6 million and the use of front companies demonstrate a sad reality of corruption that undermines trust in public administration. I can only say one thing: the search for the truth must prevail if justice is to be done.”
Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

● In a similar vein, Lula was also accused by Deputy Zambelli of pretending to care about the environment while seeking closer ties with China, one of the world's largest environmental polluters:
“Another embarrassment for Lula’s international vexations. For someone who makes himself look like a great ‘defender of the environment’...” The text reads “Lula defends one of the world’s major emitter of pollutants! China is the world’s largest emitter of pollutant gases, producing 25.2% of the global total.”

Source: Facebook  |  Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

**Support of the Lula Government’s Climate-Related Policies and Actions**

- Politicians from left-wing parties such as PT and PSOL were more likely than other parties to post on Facebook their support of the Lula government’s climate action as well as champion their own decisions and policies.

Deputy Rogério Correia (PT-MG): “The government has asked Congress to withdraw Bill 191/20, proposed by Bolsonaro, which would allow mining, oil and hydroelectric generation on demarcated indigenous lands (TIs). In addition to all the environmental damage, illegal mining has been causing a veritable genocide of the inhabitants of these regions. Since the campaign, President Lula has pledged to take care of indigenous lands. These are also...
essential for environmental preservation. The government’s attitude reinforces this banner and signals greater dignity and respect for our native peoples. As coordinator of the External Commission monitoring the crimes committed by Vale in Mariana and Brumadinho, I can only celebrate!”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Posts supporting President Lula also referred to his actions with international actors, especially discussing the current efforts to protect the Amazon:

Federal Deputy Rubens Otoni says: "BRAZIL IS BACK! Lula strengthens ties with the UK and gets support for Amazon protection. Continuing Brazil’s recovery agenda, after having become a pariah in world geopolitics, President Lula landed this Friday (5) in London, England, where he will attend the coronation of King Charles III. Upon his arrival, Lula was received by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, with whom he discussed trade relations and environmental issues. The meeting yielded good results: after the meeting, Sunak announced that the UK will invest in the Amazon Fund with a contribution of R$500 million [...]."

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- In regards to the distribution of this topic over time, we observed a peak in September. When analysing these posts qualitatively, we understand that they refer to two main events that occurred that month: the approval of a legislative decree (PDL) 321/2023 as a response to the heavy rains and floods in Rio Grande do Sul, and Lula’s speech at the UN conference and Brazil becoming the president of the G20 in 2024.
Federal Deputy Paulo Paim says: “On Tuesday, the Plenary approved draft legislative decree (PDL) 321/2023, which I authored, recognising a state of calamity in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, which was recently hit by an extratropical cyclone that caused dozens of deaths, flooding and destruction in several cities. The state of calamity suspends the rules of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LC 101 of 2000), facilitating the transfer and application of resources, and is in force until 31 December 2024. The proposal was presented following a letter sent by the governor of Rio Grande do Sul, Eduardo Leite, requesting the approval of the National Congress on the issue [...]”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Regarding Lula’s speech at the UN’s 78th General Assembly, most posts support the President’s talking points and role as an international leader. Most posts celebrated Lula’s approach of defending the necessity of environmental policies to combat the climate crises. The same support was shown when discussing the presidency of the G20 group.
Federal Deputy Pries Joao says: President Lula opened the 78th UN General Assembly today. After 14 years, Lula returned to the UN as one of the world’s most outstanding leaders. He will speak about the fight against hunger and poverty in the world, the defence of democracy, the defence of the environment, our forests and biomes and the transition to a new energy model to save the world from global warming catastrophe. Follow us on social media.

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

Environmental Awareness and Global Concerns

- Within this subset of posts, parliamentarians discussed the climate crisis on a global level, and raised awareness about its impact on society and the environment. Most politicians used thematic days such as “Environment Day” or “Tree Day” to raise awareness and debate necessary actions to counter climate change.
Senator Ana Paula Lobato argues: "The planet is on the brink of the climate change that scientists have warned about for so long. As a senator committed to the environmental cause, I understand the urgency of facing up to this challenge. It's time for us to act collectively, making the whole world aware of this crucial issue. In recent years, we have witnessed an increase in violence against forests and indigenous peoples. Today, with President Lula, we are reviving environmental policy and, together, working to promote a # based on sustainable practices. We will not allow agribusiness to be associated with the destruction of our biomes. Our children and grandchildren deserve a cleaner, healthier world. Important to remember: Preserving the environment is a shared responsibility. Do your part and be the change the world needs. #AnaPaulaLobato #Environment #EnvironmentDay #5June”

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Furthermore, within this dataset, we also observed politicians undermining the climate crisis. One example is from federal deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro arguing that the climate crisis is a way for authoritarian governments to implement socialism:

Eduardo Bolsonaro argues: “The so-called "climate change" - previously billed as global warming - is just the backdrop for authoritarian people like Lula to seize your freedom and force you and your family to live the way he wants. This is the only way, in his mind, that socialism can work, and since this is his last chance to see the application of all the social engineering that he and his cronies have machined all their lives, he's going to speed it up even more. In good Portuguese: this video portrays the project of a bloodthirsty dictator, just like Chávez,
Sustainable Development and Energy

- Another topic observed in the posts relates to sustainable development and energy. The posts in this dataset usually referred to more innovative policies, such as the carbon market, a critical mechanism in the global effort to mitigate climate change:

> Senator Leila do Vôlei says: “Global warming caused by increased greenhouse gas emissions has resulted in extreme events such as storms, prolonged droughts and natural disasters that kill thousands of people year after year. In addition, air pollution caused by carbon emissions contributes to respiratory and cardiovascular problems.

> These are historical problems for which humanity has been searching for solutions for years. A window of opportunity to regulate the planet's climate is opening up. It's the Carbon Market, which works like a shop where companies can "buy" and "sell" the ability to capture these greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Brazil has a billion-dollar, sustainable future ahead of it. We have an immensity of forests, which act as clean air "factories", absorbing carbon and releasing oxygen. We have a unique opportunity to contribute to a cleaner world and also benefit our economy. It is estimated that we could attract more than US$ 100 billion by 2030. That's why the regulation of this market is already being discussed in the Federal Senate.”

> Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

- Among other topics discussed, a significant number of posts discuss Green Hydrogen as a clean energy source. The debate gained strength once different policies were developed to move this agenda forward in the Brazilian Congress. One legislative action was Bill 3173/2023, still in debate, which aims to create Prohidroverde - the National Green Hydrogen Programme. Another example discussed was the creation of the Special Commission to Debate
Public Policies on Green Hydrogen in the Senate.

Senator Marcos Pontes says: "A big step for the future: the green hydrogen bill, PL 3173/2023, which creates Prohidroverde - the National Green Hydrogen Programme. This initiative aims to boost the production, distribution and use of hydrogen generated from renewable energy sources in our country. It is an honour to be part of the Commission that is debating and constructing this proposal, actively contributing to the development of the energy sector in Brazil and being the author of this proposal. Since my time at the MCTI, I have been working hard and studying the viability of green hydrogen as a sustainable and promising alternative for the future. By promoting the production and use of this fuel of the future, we are taking an essential step towards the transition to a cleaner and more sustainable energy matrix. Green hydrogen will not only reduce carbon emissions, it will also position us as global leaders in the production of this clean fuel. I believe in the potential of green hydrogen and in Brazil's ability to lead this transformation!"

Source: Facebook | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International

Congress Award for Politicians

- Interestingly, within the posts that mentioned climate-related issues, a sizable amount, around 12%, discuss an annual award for Congress members organised by Congresso em Foco.

- Many politicians used this award to promote their work with climate policies. However, these posts were mostly apolitical, only raising awareness that they have been nominated and asking for votes. The observed peak in Graph 6 refers to the day of the award.
Federal Deputy, Tabata Amaral posts: Voting for the Congress in Focus Award has begun, folks! This is the award that recognises the highlights of parliament and I'm competing in some categories, such as: Best in the Chamber, Climate and Sustainability and Defence of Education. All this is the result of our collective work! In my first year as a federal parliamentarian, I received the award for best parliamentarian and that was a motivator to keep working with a lot of determination and courage! Can I count on you to spread the word and vote a lot?

Source: Facebook  | Elaboration: Democracy Reporting International
About the Media and Democracy Project

The School of Communication, Media, and Information of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV ECMI) and the European Union (EU) have established a partnership to collaborate on strengthening Brazilian democracy and the integrity of digital spaces. The initiative, known as the Media and Democracy Project, will be conducted in collaboration with the fact-checking platform Lupa, the German centre for public debate analysis Democracy Reporting International (DRI). The project focuses on debates concerning gender issues, racial inequality, minority rights, hate speech, and other important agendas in Brazilian politics. The project encompasses monitoring and analysis of digital media, fact-checking, and the establishment of a Council as a public space for promoting positive dialogue, involving researchers, civil society, representatives from the government, and platform stakeholders.

Authorship:

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