

# THE GLOBAL FAR RIGHT

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**Brazil Establishes Own Ecosystem on Parler  
and Mimics American Far-Right Wing**



**Rio de Janeiro, April 2021**

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# **The Global Far Right:**

Brazil Establishes Own Ecosystem on Parler  
and Mimics American Far-Right Wing

Rio de Janeiro

**FGV DAPP**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the results of an analysis of the articulations and actions of radicalized groups in alternative social media platforms. The growing migration of users into this sociotechnical networks may be related to the more incisive measures being taken by big techs such as Facebook and Twitter to contain hate speech and attacks against democratic institutions. To understand this process, we will analyze the presence of far-right groups on Parler, a platform with minimal rules regarding banning or removing messages and profiles. From a global database of 93.4 million publications made between November 3, 2020 and January 7, 2021, we seek to: i) identify the major topics, influencers and groups interacting in that period; ii) conduct a specific analysis of the participation of the Brazilian group in the platform; and iii) map out the interactions between far-right groups in Brazil and in the United States. The results showed the formation of a transnational network engaged in the reproduction of discourses aiming to corrode the credibility of democratic institutions.

Keywords: Parler. Far right. Social media platforms. Political mobilization.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- The network presents a peak in messages during the counting of votes of the presidential American elections, and in the period of the invasion on the Capitol;
- Interactions from the conservative Brazilian group react to publications from American far-right wing influencers who spread accusations of fraud in the elections of the United States;
- 53.6% of profiles connected to the group regarding Brazil interacted with content about electoral fraud in this period, mirroring American arguments to the Brazilian context;

- The sharing of an ideology of denial and conspiracy must be taken as a wake-up call in order for the actions of discredit of democracy or of institutional attacks will not be mimicked in a global scale;
- Data alerts to a possible ideological interference from right-wing extremist groups from authoritarian countries or others in the race of 2022, placing Brazil as a player in the geopolitical game of antidemocratic radicals.

## PRESENTATION

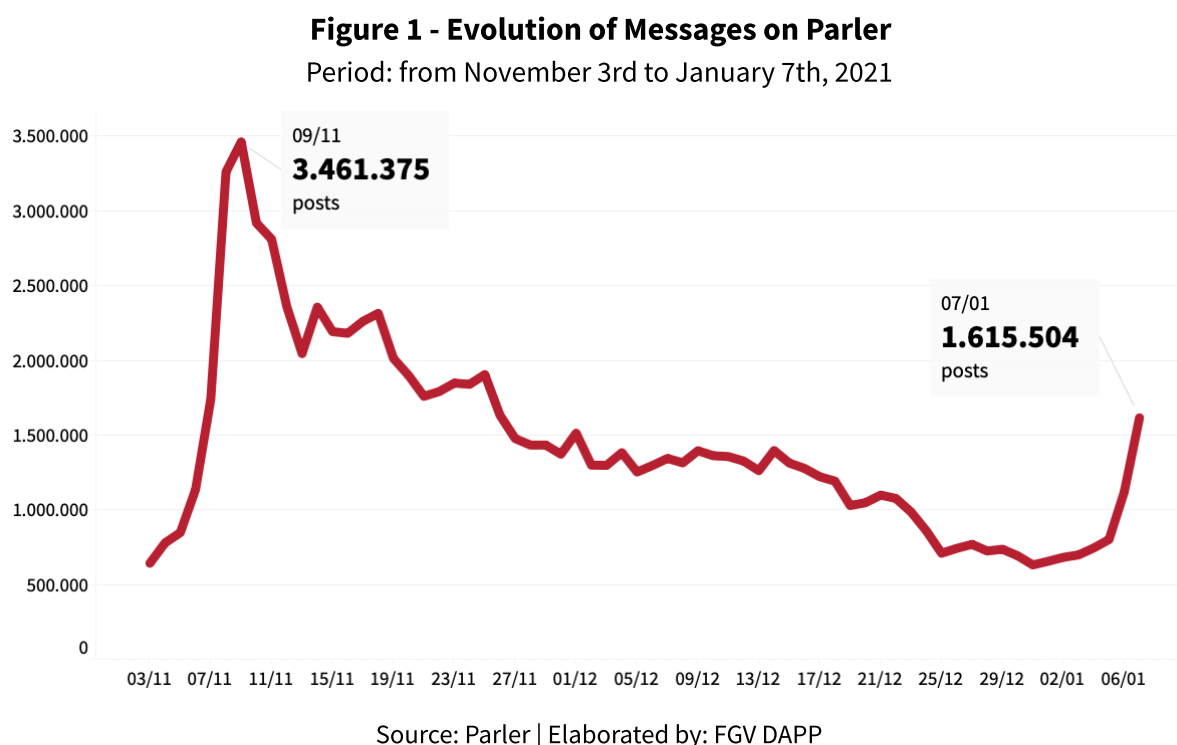
In an unprecedented monitoring, the Department of Public Policy Analysis of Fundação Getulio Vargas (**FGV DAPP**) collected **93.4 million posts from the platform Parler**, between November 3rd and January 7th, 2021. The period comprises both the day of the **presidential elections of the United States as well as the day after the invasion on the Capitol** by Donald Trump supporters.

Parler is a platform of social media in a microblog format, meaning it is organized by short publications with up to a thousand characters each. In the platform, the users can follow publications from selected profiles that are organized in a timeline through a chronological criteria. The functionalities of Parler are similar to Twitter, with a possibility of voting, commenting and echoing publications. The network, however, is presented as an alternative to Twitter, reinforcing the defense of freedom of speech and **adopting minimum criteria to the banning and message deleting** (pornography, terrorism, etc.).

The network was already being used by the American far-right wing at least since 2019. Twitter's decision to delete publications from President Donald Trump, for infringing the community rules, accelerated the transition from the group of more radical followers of the President to Parler. In Brazil, since July 2020, there were also campaigns for the the right wing to join the network, with members of the government and conservative



influencers, among others, creating accounts. These campaigns were intensified with the presidential elections in the United States.



The graphic of the evolution of publications shows significant peaks in key-days for the electorate of Donald Trump. On November 9th of 2020, during the counting of votes of the elections of the United States, 3.4 million of publications were collected, more than 5 times the volume observed during the voting day, on November 3rd. The volume of publications, then, starts to present a constant decline until the days of January 6th and 7th, days of the invasion of the Capitol and its repercussion. These couple of days added 2.7 million of publications.

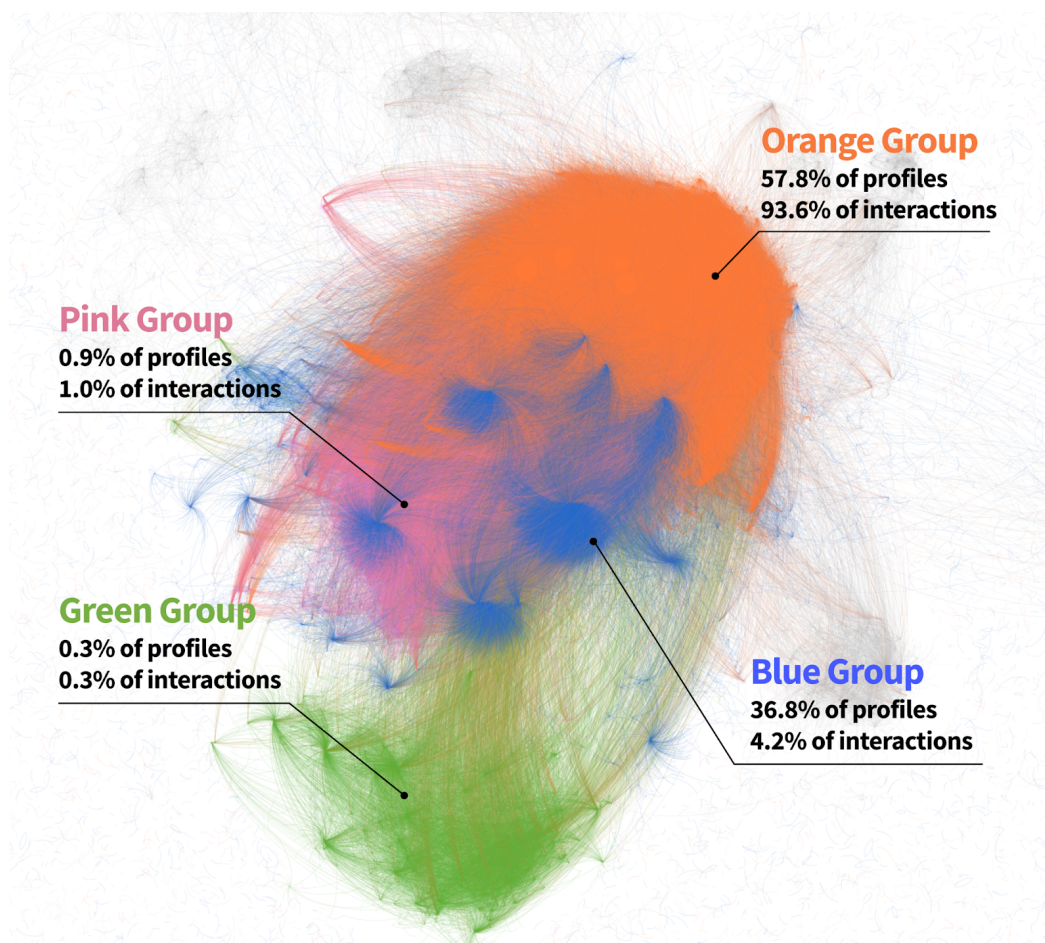
**Parler** presents a structure that differs from the observed in other platforms of social media usually analyzed. The main distinction is related to the **absence of representativity of political perspective**. Among the 4 main groups found, which add up to 99.1% of the interactions occurred in the platform, there is **vast consensus regarding the defense of**

**the conservative topics, especially connected to the political platform of Donald Trump.** The differences, which will be analyzed next, occur through divergences and different framings of matters inside the same political spectrum.

The distribution of the groups in the map of interactions next points to some indications of the dynamic of debate that occurs in **Parler**. The Orange group is the biggest and most dense, which represents a larger concentration of profiles and interactions. Now, the Blue and Pink groups present a more spatial distribution and with a lot of intersection points with the main group. Both of these groups, especially the Blue one, distinguish themselves from the Orange spatially and also by the less dense format, with several isolated groups. Through this, it is possible to say that these groups conform sub-narratives or sub-groups of actors with connections to the main group. The Green group, in turn, is highlighted from the other groups. Furthermore, it presents separated knots and less density.

## Figure 2 - Map of Interactions on Parler

Period: from November 3rd to January 7th of 2021



Source: Parler | Elaborated by: FGV DAPP

### Orange – 57.8% of Profiles | 93.6% of Interactions

Main group of the platform, it presented a hyper-concentrated distribution, with more than 90% of the interactions from the whole collection. It was composed of presenters and commentators connected to Fox News, conservative influencers and defenders of theories such as QAnon, as well as activists of anti-immigration topics. Among the posts with more interactions, there is a great predominance of accusations of fraud in the American elections, with three main approaches: 1) Publications that list supposed evidence and arguments that would prove the fraud in the voting system, with highlights to the convocations to the submission of personal registries of members regarding supposed irregularities in their localities; 2) conspiracy theories regarding collusions between

countries, companies, the Democratic party, media vehicles and platforms of social media for the execution of the supposedly electoral fraud and consequent defeat of Trump; 3) convocations for manifestations and measures against the supposed electoral fraud and in defense of Trump, with highlights to the manifestation of January 6th in the Capitol, in a message by the Republican Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, who, among other demands, highlights the need of mobilization of a armed base among the manifestants.

#### **Blue – 36.8% of Profiles | 4.2% of Interactions**

Sub-group of the Orange group, the Blue group presented as the main influencers the main official page of the Donald Trump's campaign; conservative TV and radio hosts; the founder and CEO of Parler, John Matzer; as well as some profiles with some involvement with the institutional politics, such as former Congressmen of the Republican party. The group engaged with topics related to the accusations of electoral fraud, but also presented, among its main publications, a defense of the legacy of Donald Trump, such as the purchasing of Covid-19 vaccines and measures against corruption. Lastly, there are several publications regarding the entrance of new members on Parler and reports regarding embarrassments that happened in other platforms.

#### **Pink – 0.9% of Profiles | 1.0% of Interactions**

Group composed of common users, usually without photo identification or profile name. Among the main publications, a few highlights are tutorials about the features of Parler, as well as lists and indications of profiles to be followed by new members. The posts present less structured characteristics around the arguments or accusations, presenting a troll behavior, with a lot of use of emojis, ironic messages and attacks to other users of the platform.

### **Green – 0.3% of Profiles | 0.3% of Interactions**

Base composed of influencers, supporters and politicians of the Brazilian conservative movement. Among its main influencers, the highlights are the political profiles connected to the government, such as the President himself, Congressmen and Senators, as well as influencers without any connection to the institutional politics. It is the only group outside of the United States to appear among the main groups of discussion in the platform. Among the main posts, a few highlights are the repercussions to the supposed electoral fraud in the United States and to the manifestations organized in defense of Donald Trump, with highlight to the publications that reported episodes of supposed irregularities in the moments of voting and establishment. The implementation of paper ballots in Brazil was the topic of one of the most interacted publications. There was also mobilization regarding topics related to internal politics, such as the debate regarding the use of the supposed preventive treatment against Covid-19, criticism to the measures of governors in the pandemic and the spread of positive measures and results from Jair Bolsonaro's management.

### **Brazilian Debate on Parler has an International Aspect, with References to the American Political Context**

Despite concentrating only 0,3% of the interactions in the period, the Brazilian group was the only one outside of the United States to form an independent network on the platform. As we have already pointed out, the four main groups detailed in the map added up to 99.1% of the interactions in this period, which leaves only 0.9% as the presence of other right-wing supporters across the world. In other words, **in the platform of social media that gathers the most radical profiles of the American conservative movement, Brazil is the 2nd country in concentration of the main topics in discussion.**

The presence in the debate of other countries in the platform shows to be either more diluted or strongly integrated to political debate in the United States. **The anglophone**

**countries, especially, are mixed within the groups that refer to the American debate, not constituting their own network regarding topics of their respective localities.**

The group that debated topics connected to Brazil added up to **136 thousand interactions made by 8.1 thousand profiles** (not necessarily Brazilians). That's a small group in comparison to the number of right-wing supporters in other social media. However, the inclusion of the communicative ecosystem composed of the right wing in Brazil involves a distinction among the roles and specificities in each network for the formation of the narratives and strategies of actions taken by this base.

### Figure 3 - Word Cloud of the Interactions of the Green Group

Period: from November 3rd to January 7th, 2021



Source: Parler | Elaborated by: FGV DAPP

The cloud of words of the interactions of the Green group shows the strong presence of terms connected to the American context, with references and hashtags associated to the campaign of Donald Trump. The presence of the hashtags with names of American states, such as #Wisconsin2020, #Arizona, #NorthCarolina and #GeorgianElections, refer to publications that relate to the process of vote counting, usually followed by accusations of supposed electoral fraud. The mentions in Portuguese, in turn, present institutional terms,

such as “President”, “government” and “ministries”, which points out to a standardized communication in a language distinct from the interactions produced by political groups in other social media platforms.

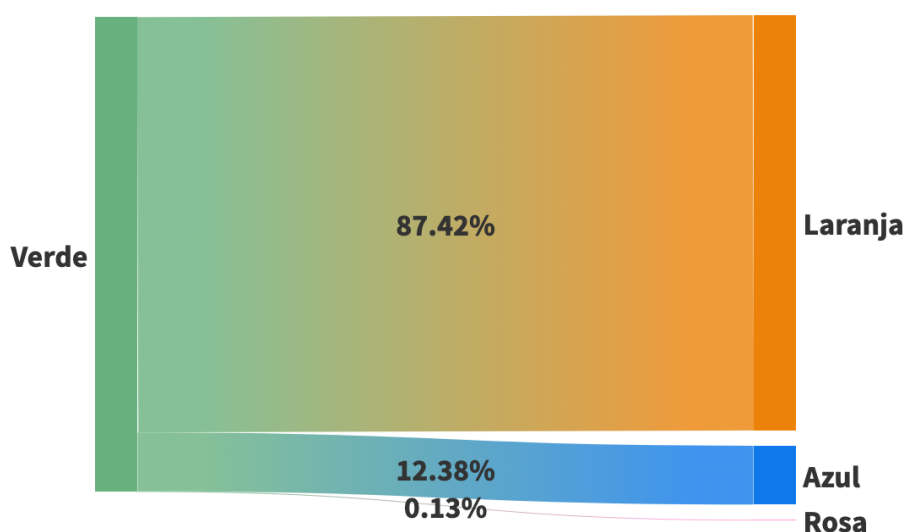
Along these lines, the international aspect of the discussions occurred on Parler and the strong influence of topics connected to the American Far-Right Wing motivated a specific analysis regarding the interactions between the group composed of actors engaged in Brazilian topics and other groups evidenced in the analysis of the map of interactions.

## The Interactions Between the Brazilian Right Wing and the American Far-Right Wing

**Of the 136 thousand interactions occurred in the Brazilian group, 29.6 thousand (21.7%) were directed towards profiles and publications of other groups in the map of interactions.** The graph below presents which groups the interactions from the Brazilian group were aimed towards:

**Figure 4 - Interactions of the Green Group with Other Groups**

Period: from November 3rd to January 7th | Total Interactions: 29,664



Source: Parler | Elaborated by: FGV DAPP

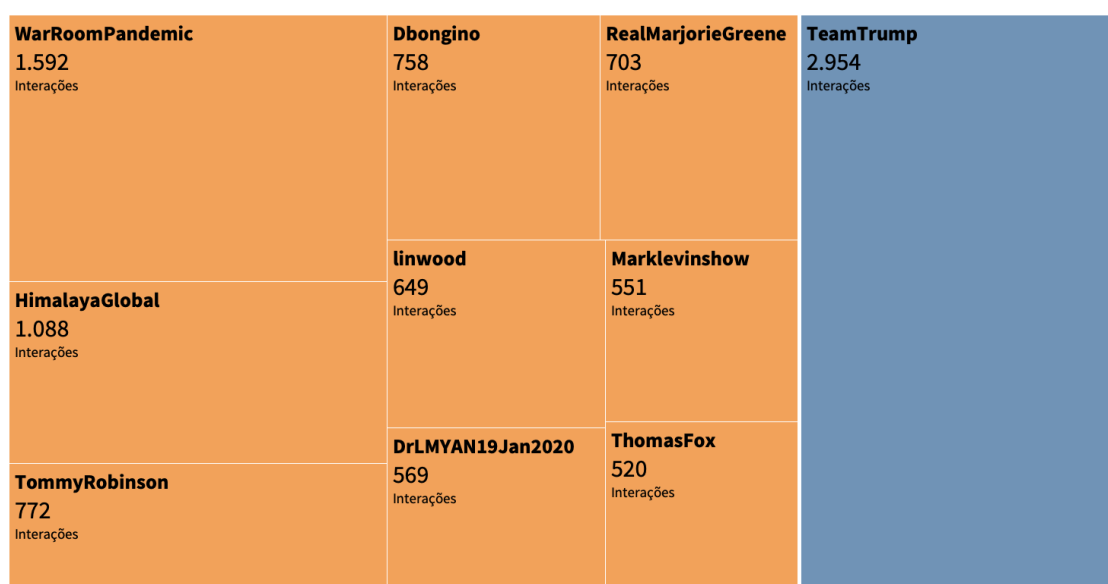


As the graph above shows, the Orange group was the target of most part of interactions from the Green group. **A highlight, also, goes to the activity from the Green group to the Blue one, with 12.38%.** In contrast, the Pink group was the target of only 0.1% of interactions from the Green group to other groups which suggests that the references from the group of Brazilian topics are influencers and commentators that are consolidated in the American debate.

The following graph shows the main profiles that received interactions that originated from the Green group. Initially, the strong presence on Parler from the official profile of Donald Trump's campaign, **@TeamTrump**, is observed, which explains the volume of interactions with the Blue group. The second profile with most interactions from the Green group was **@WarRoomPandemic**, show hosted by the American far-right wing ideologist Steve Bannon. In turn, there are profiles such as the hosts Mark Levin and Don Bongino, the lawyer L. Lin Wood, as well as the Republican Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, **who was punished by the Congress of the United States for supporting conspiracy theories, such as QAnon, and who was one of the names that called for manifestations in the Capitol.**

**Figure 5 - Main Profiles Interacting with the Green Group**

Period: from November 3rd to January 7th, 2021



Source: Parler | Elaborated by: FGV DAPP



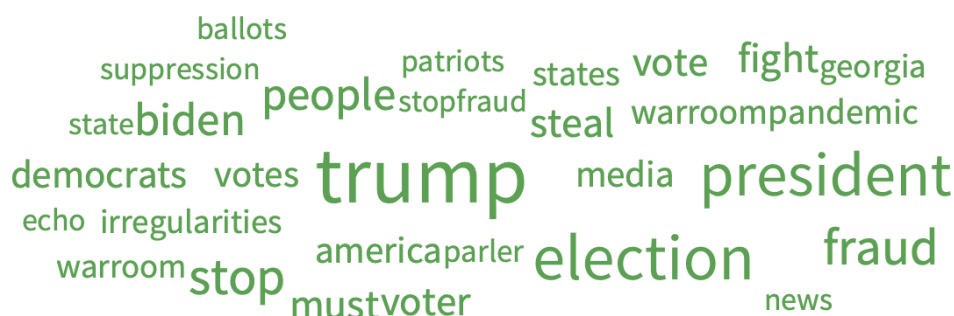
The graph evidences the establishment of links with leaderships from the global far-right wing movement, and, in particular, with actors who regularly use their networks to direct attacks to the democratic institutions. The following section analyzes the specific content that was mobilized in these interactions.

## Attacks to Institutions and Accusations of Electoral Fraud Are Among the Main Content that the Green Group Most Interacted With

In an analysis of most frequent words in the publications that profiles from the Green group interacted with, a highlight was the predominance of publications that mobilized accusations of supposed electoral fraud in the process of vote establishment of the American presidential elections, as well as encouraged criticism and attacks to the institutions of the country. This characteristic is evidenced by the strong presence of **terms associated with the debate about ballot fraud, with words of accusation, such as “fraud”, “irregularities”, and “suppression”, words of order, such as “stop fraud”, expressions of action, such as “stop” and “must”, as well as mentions to the candidates and parties involved in the race.**

**Figure 6 - Word Cloud from the Publications the Green Group Most Interacted With**

Period: from November 3rd to January 7th, 2021



Source: Parler | Elaborated by: FGV DAPP

Additionally, a specific filtering was performed in order to measure the volume of the discourse in the Green group related to narratives of electoral fraud. **From the 136 thousand interactions that occurred in the Green group, 106 thousand contained textual elements, and, from these, 35.5 thousand (33.4%) mobilized terms connected to the narratives of ballot fraud, paper ballots, and distrust in the electoral system, both in Portuguese and English.**

The engagement of the topic is also expressive when analyzed from the point of view of the profiles that composed the Green group. The calculation of groupings used by the FGV DAPP identified **8138 profiles in the Green group, from which 4365 (53.6%) interacted with publications that mobilized terms connected to the narratives of ballot fraud, paper ballots, and distrust in the electoral system, both in Portuguese and English.**

Therefore, not only the presence of a Brazilian group in a network widely used by the far-right wing is observed, but also its interactions with profiles connected to attacks to the American institutions and conspiracy theories, as well as, most specifically, the vast interaction with publications that encouraged narratives of fraud in the American electoral system.

**However, there is also a standard of reactive activity in the interactions of the Brazilian conservative group with the far-right wing groups from the United States, with repercussion of declarations of American leaders and attempts to mimic their arguments to the Brazilian context, such as the emergency of the topic of paper ballots. Actions that allowed for an establishment of involvement of the Brazilian group to the planning and execution of the attacks to the Capitol were not observed. Only the way that this discourse impacted the Brazilian group was identified, which weaponized it with arguments to the questioning of the candor of the procedures and electoral institutions of the country.**

**The data points out to a potential mimicking of the institutional tension during the election, mirroring what occurred in the United States, and alerts for an urgent**

**organization against the ideological interference of external far-right wing groups or said groups from authoritarian countries in the presidential elections of 2022. Brazil cannot become a geopolitical game of antidemocratic radicals.**

The global astonishment with the violence and disrespect to the institutions observed in the manifestation that invaded the Capitol increased the concern with the increasingly dissemination and adhesion to the discourse that aims to undermine the trust in the democratic institutions. **The social media platforms are decisive environments in the process of democratic corrosion**, allowing for the articulation of networks that take advantage of the lack of regulation and dissemination of radicalized discourses.

**These movements, far from restricting themselves in their national contexts, also establish networks with radical movements from other countries**, allowing for exchange of experiences, tactics and arguments that prospered in each location according to their social, political, and institutional context. Meaning, the reaction of American institutions against the manifestants and Joe Biden's inauguration **do not guarantee that anti-democratic discourses will be neutralized**, especially considering how these narratives are received by leaderships and militants in other countries.

In an increasingly connected world, **threats to the democratic institutions must be comprised in a global perspective**. The mapping of networks of virtual interactions between radical groups is a central task in this process, and the identification of relations of Brazilian profiles with groups that promote anti-democratic actions in the United States **alerts to a need of actions that reinforce the trust in the democratic institutions and embarrass the increase of threats against democracy in the country**.

## CONCLUSIONS

Parler is a platform of social media that presents public debate with very distinct characteristics from platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, for example. Overtaken by actors connected to right-wing movements, it presents a very homogenous discussion, with very little space for disagreement. The analysis conducted by the **FGV DAPP** with more than **93.4 million of publications in the platform between November 3rd and January 7th of 2021** show that the network presented peaks in mentions during key-moments in the political defeat of Donald Trump, such as the vote counting of the presidential elections and the day of the protest that invaded the Capitol.

Three of the four main groups that composed the debate in the platform were formed by profiles connected to the American politics and mobilized accusations about the supposed electoral fraud, as well as criticisms to the press and other platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

The fourth group, in turn, was composed of profiles connected to the Brazilian political debate, with strong repercussion of positive measures from the government. Little more than a third of the interactions from the group were directed towards the groups connected to the American debate, commenting on the accusations about the supposed electoral fraud and **receiving posts from American far-right wing influencers, such as the ideologist Steve Bannon and the Republican Congresswoman connected to the QAnon movement Marjorie Taylor Greene.**

The platform is observed to be **one of the main spaces for exchange among supporters of the Brazilian conservative movement and the debate established among political influencers and politicians connected to the American far-right wing.** It is worth noting, also, that Brazil is the **only country, aside from the US, to establish its own network in**

**the platform**, which demonstrated the level of coordination and digital mobilization of the Brazilian conservative movement in digital environments.

In a specific analysis about the engagement of the Green group around the accusations of electoral fraud, **the presence of the debate in 33.4% of textual posts reverberated in the group was observed**. The engagement is even bigger when analyzed from the point of view of actors, in which **53.6% of the profiles connected to the Green group established at least one interaction with publications related to the accusations of electoral fraud**.

Lastly, it is important to establish some ponderations about the role and the size of Parler in the Brazilian communicative ecosystem, and, more specifically, in the right-wing support base. The volume of messages and the engagement identified on Parler is low if compared to what is observed on networks such as Twitter and Facebook. The communicative ecosystem established in the past few years, however, cannot be understood solely on numbers; each platform's functions must also be highlighted.

Parler presents itself as a platform aimed towards militants with a high level of engagement, **constituting itself as a space of “internal” discussion, without the presence of disagreeing topics, opinions and debates** that can disperse the process of construction of narratives. The strong presence of institutional communication also positions it as an initial space of widespread of positive content regarding the government, feeding the allied base with arguments against the dispute and criticism in other environments.

Parler is also mobilized in **discourses that aim to feed criticism about supposed persecutions and censors against the conservative militancy in other platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube**. The great presence of posts with reports of bans and deletions in other networks is an indicative of this consonance among the conservative narratives and the platform – which intentionally feeds it.

Maybe the most distinctive characteristic of Parler, however, is its **strong international aspect, with the establishment of interactions of networks among radical right-wing groups in different countries, with a highlight to Brazil and the United States**. This is evidenced by the presence of more than a third of the interactions aimed towards profiles of groups connected to the American debate, and also by the thematic influence of debated topics in the groups regarding the American politics, with highlight to the accusations of electoral fraud.

The ban of the platform by Google, Apple and Amazon in January of 2021 suggests that the platform might still lack stability, putting in question its permanence and growth over time. **Its relevance in recent political events, however, is a demonstrative of the potentiality of this kind of digital environment for the formation and organization of radical political groups**. The data presented, therefore, far from establishing closed conclusions, seek to contribute in the enrichment of the debate, pointing to ways and patterns of political communication and digital mobilization in the contemporary world.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

All of the data used in this publication originate from the group of data collected and made available by Aliaspolios et al. (2021).

The data basis was modeled as a sociogram through the expressed relations between the author of each publication and the author of the referenced publication in the Parent field. In this way, an angle was created between each user interacting with the original publication of other users.

The groups were divided through the application of an algorithm of groupability (Blondel et al., 2008). Each color in the picture of the map of interactions represent one of the largest four groups identified by the algorithm.

The size of each one of the profiles in the sociogram proportionally reflects the number of interactions received by each knot, independent of its kind.

In this study, no data not belonging to the original database was collected, stored or analyzed by the FGV DAPP team.

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