

#FandomsPeloVoto (#FandomsfortheVote): Fan Activism for Youth Voter Engagement in the 2022 Brazilian Elections

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the media literacy skills at work in the content shared by fans on Twitter during the #FandomsPeloVoto (#FandomsfortheVote) campaign. In a convergence culture environment, media literacy comprises five skills: curation, creation, critical understanding, participation, and collaboration. Launched in May 2022, the campaign—carried out in partnership with Mídia Ninja, the National Student Union (*União Nacional dos Estudantes*, UNE), and the Brazilian Union of Secondary School Students (*União Brasileira dos Estudantes Secundaristas*,

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UBES)—brought together more than 100 pop culture fandoms in Brazil to mobilize 16- to 18-year-olds to obtain a voter registration card and be eligible to vote in the 2022 elections. It can be concluded that the activism of fandoms goes beyond transposing fan culture practices into the realm of political participation, also encompassing the critical interpretation of the sociopolitical issues that were part of the action and the creative production of posts on Twitter. Accordingly, *#FandomsPeloVoto* has aspects of political resistance, as one of its primary objectives is the removal of President Jair Bolsonaro, leader of the far right in Brazil, from power.

Keywords

Fan culture; media literacy; activism; 2022 elections; Brazil.

#FandomsPeloVoto: o ativismo de fãs no engajamento dos jovens eleitores nas eleições brasileiras de 2022

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as habilidades da literacia midiática, propostas por Mihailidis (2014), que estão em operação nos conteúdos compartilhados pelos fãs no Twitter durante a campanha #FandomsPeloVoto. De acordo com o autor, no ambiente da cultura da convergência, a literacia midiática é pautada por cinco habilidades: a curadoria, a criação, a compreensão crítica, a participação e a colaboração. Lançada em maio de 2022, a campanha, realizada em parceria com o Mídia Ninja, a União Nacional dos Estudantes e a União Brasileira dos Estudantes Secundaristas, reuniu mais de 100 fandoms da cultura pop no Brasil na mobilização de jovens de 16 a 18 anos para tirarem o título de eleitor e estarem aptos a votar nas eleições de 2022. Conclui-se que o ativismo dos fandoms vai além da transposição das práticas da cultura de fãs para o âmbito da participação política, abarcando também a interpretação crítica das questões sociopolíticas que integraram a ação e a produção criativa de publicações no Twitter. Desse modo, o #FandomsPeloVoto tem contornos de resistência política por ter como um de seus principais objetivos a retirada do poder do então presidente Jair Bolsonaro, líder da extrema-direita no Brasil.

Palavras-chave

Cultura de fãs; literacia midiática; ativismo; eleições 2022; Brasil.

#FandomsPeloVoto: activismo de los fans para la participación de los votantes jóvenes en las elecciones brasileñas de 2022

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las habilidades de alfabetización mediática que operan en los contenidos compartidos por los fans en Twitter durante la campaña *#FandomsPeloVoto*. En el contexto de la cultura de la convergencia, la alfabetización mediática se guía por cinco habilidades, a saber, curaduría, creación, comprensión crítica, participación y colaboración. Con su lanzamiento en mayo de 2022, la campaña, realizada en asociación con Mídia Ninja, la Unión Nacional de Estudiantes y la Unión Brasileña de Estudiantes Secundarios, reunió a más de 100 *fandoms* de la cultura pop en Brasil para movilizar a jóvenes de 16 a 18 años a registrarse para votar y poder votar en las elecciones de 2022. Se concluye que el activismo del *fandom* va más allá de la transposición de las prácticas de la cultura fan al ámbito de la participación política, lo que también abarca la interpretación crítica de las cuestiones sociopolíticas que formaron parte de la acción y la producción creativa de publicaciones en Twitter. De esta manera, el *#FandomsPeloVoto* tiene contornos de resistencia política por tener como uno de sus principales objetivos sacar del poder al presidente Jair Bolsonaro, líder de la extrema derecha en Brasil.

Palabras clave

Cultura de fans; alfabetización mediática; activismo; elecciones 2022; Brazil.

Introduction

Although it was occasionally part of the discussions by Hills (2002) and Jenkins (1992) during the first wave of fan culture studies, research focused on investigating the relationship between fandom practices and activism became increasingly popular in the 2010s (Amaral et al., 2015; Brough & Shresthova, 2012; Lima & Cavalcanti, 2020). According to Malini and Antoun (2013), convergence culture and social media were crucial to spreading civic and political movements associated with fandoms. However, as early as the 1990s, fans had already organized themselves on forums and email listservs. As the authors note, fandoms at that time acted in small niches and sporadically, “[...] through actions by non-governmental organizations, activists involved in gender, racial, gay, environmental and anarchist movements, and entertainment aficionados” (2013, p. 24).

More recently, activism has expanded and been incorporated into different fan culture practices. The popularization of different technologies (websites, social media, free file storage and sharing services, etc.) and a participatory culture environment have allowed mobilizations around sociopolitical causes to spread instantaneously, reaching fans worldwide and contributing to the pluralization of discussions, no longer affecting only specific layers of society (Bennett, 2012). In this respect, Gournelos and Gunkel (2011) consider this an era of organization, protest, and rapid change facilitated by the development of new media creation, distribution, and circulation tools. The authors also perceive it as a new era of surveillance, censorship, and monopolies.

Guerrero-Pico (2017) and Lopez (2011) believe media literacy is integral to fan activism. The authors argue that fandoms’ emotional and intellectual involvement encourages the development of critical skills. Guerrero-Pico (2017) notes that even indirectly, fans draw a parallel between the universe of the artists and/or the series/film and contemporary society. The bridge established between media content and reality would enable mobilizations around sociopolitical issues, encompassing actions ranging from creating content challenging creative industries’ narrative choices to protests related, such as women’s rights and gender equality. According to Alvermann and

Hagood (2000) and Hirsjärvi (2013), fan communities configure themselves as conducive environments for young people to develop skills related to media literacy, encompassing content creation, online collaboration, and informal learning. Thus, fandoms involve active participation and the sharing of knowledge, fostering the development of skills related to critical and creative thinking.

Considering this context, this paper aims to analyze the *#FandomsPeloVoto* (*#FandomsFortheVote*) campaign conducted in May 2022. The campaign brought together over 100 pop culture fandoms in Brazil to encourage people aged 16 to 18 to participate in that year's presidential elections. The analysis followed the methodological framework proposed by Mihailidis (2014) to identify how their fan practices relate to media literacy. According to the author, in a convergence culture environment, media literacy is generally characterized by five skills: 1) curation (the ability to organize multimedia content), 2) creation (the ability to produce, remix, and share content on online platforms), 3) critical understanding (the ability to critically analyze and understand online content), 4) participation (the ability to comment on, edit, and disseminate posts on platforms), and 5) collaboration (the ability to produce content collaboratively).

The sample comprised 14,249 tweets published on May 2 by profiles actively participating in the *#FandomsPeloVoto* campaign. These tweets were coded based on the media literacy skills proposed by Mihailidis to be analyzed in this study. However, before presenting the results, it is crucial to delve into the discussion of fan activism, its correlation with media literacy, and the backdrop of the 2022 elections in Brazil.

Fan Activism: The Intersection between Cultural and Political Participation

Fan activism involves the creative, cultural, social, or political mobilization of fans or fandoms around a common objective (Brough & Shresthova, 2012; Ronsini et al., 2015). For Van Zoonen (2004), groups of fans are social formations with a structure analogous to political affiliations. Engagement around a collective cause can unfold in various ways, including campaigns advocating for the renewal of a TV show, petitions demanding increased minority

representation in narratives, removing actors accused of sexual harassment, fundraising for NGOs, etc.

According to Ronsini et al. (2015), fan activism is driven by the intersection between cultural and political resistance. Although some actions organized by fandoms have a purely political focus, the mobilization around a common cause is configured through a cultural product. In other words, a fan's political participation is based on their affective and intellectual involvement with a fictional universe or an artist. For example, The Handmaid's Coalition aims to raise awareness about women's rights and the importance of gender equality by engaging fans of the US series *The Handmaid's Tale* (Hulu, 2017–2022). With the slogan “Fight to keep fiction from becoming reality,” the Coalition blends the fictional universe in Hulu's narrative with the reality of countries such as the United States, Canada, and Brazil. One of the group's primary actions is protests that borrow aesthetic references from the show: In addition to maintaining silence, the activists dress up as June, the protagonist of the show, portrayed by actress Elisabeth Moss (Sigiliano & Borges, 2018).

Ronsini et al. (2015) also note that the mobilizations organized by fans are usually short-lived and targeted. The aspects indicated by the authors can be observed, for example, in some actions taken by the fandom of Limantha, the ship for Lica (Manoela Alipert) and Samantha (Giovanna Grigio), from *Malhação: Viva a Diferença* [*Young Hearts: Embrace Diversity*] (TV Globo, 2017–2018) (Borges & Sigiliano, 2022). Although political engagement is not the focus of the couple's fans, support for social causes has been part of discussions among Twitter users on several occasions. The posts critically consider issues related to meritocracy, social inequality in Brazil, racism, feminism, and the importance of introducing public policies for marginalized young people. However, even while endorsing sociopolitical agendas, these fan's activity is limited to specific media events such as the finale of *Big Brother Brasil* (TV Globo, 2002–present), the Women's World Cup, etc.

Brough and Shresthova (2012) argue that fan activism has four central aspects: interconnections between political and cultural participation,

the tension between involvement and resistance, the role of affect/taste in mobilizing civic participation, and the impact of mobilizations on the fandom. In this context, the rallies organized by fans are initiated by the avid consumption of media products and are characterized by three axes: activism, information, and discussion. According to Bennett (2012), TV, film, and music public figures lead different forms of organizing and engaging with fandoms.

This ability of celebrities to mobilize is related to the concept of performative intimacy. According to Marwick and Boyd (2011), social media give fans a sense of closeness and familiarity with their idols, strengthening the impression of belonging and complicity. Campaigns organized by public figures thus spread quickly online, gaining traction almost instantly, as, for example, the actions launched on Twitter by Lady Gaga to combat bullying. Since 2012, the singer has been using her platform to give visibility to social causes. Gaga's strategies on the microblogging website include hashtags to condemn and share cases of bullying, donations to philanthropic institutions in different countries, and projects by the *Born This Way Foundation* in collaboration with the US National Council for Behavioral Health.

However, “[...] fans are also adopting these social tools without being directly requested by celebrities, to organize and mobilize in these acts” (Bennett, 2012). Social media platforms enable the engagement of fandoms around specific topics and the rapid spread of ideas. As such, because they are not limited to the initiatives of public figures, actions promoted by fandoms enable mobilization around local issues, which directly involve the reality of a particular group of fans.

Kligler-Vilenchik and Shresthova (2014) recognize three fundamental components for this type of organization: recruitment, mobilization, and sustained action—shared media experiences (members gather around cultural objects), a sense of community, and a desire to contribute. The latter is closer to what we understand as “traditional” civic engagement. This desire can have many motivations (forms of socialization, political vision, faith, or inspiration from participating in shared cultural activities). By combining civic objectives with the pleasures of participatory culture, these commu-

nities attract a younger audience, which often feels excluded or disengaged from the universe of party politics (Kligler-Vilenchik & Shresthova, 2014).

According to Alvermann and Hagood (2000), Jenkins (2020), and Kahne and Bowyer (2019), digital platforms, mainly social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, play a central role in the civic participation and mobilization of contemporary youth. In this context, the participatory culture environment facilitates various civic and political engagement activities, such as fundraising for social causes, debating and sharing party and ideological perspectives, and mobilizing individuals and groups to pressure governments and large corporations (Kahne & Bowyer, 2019).

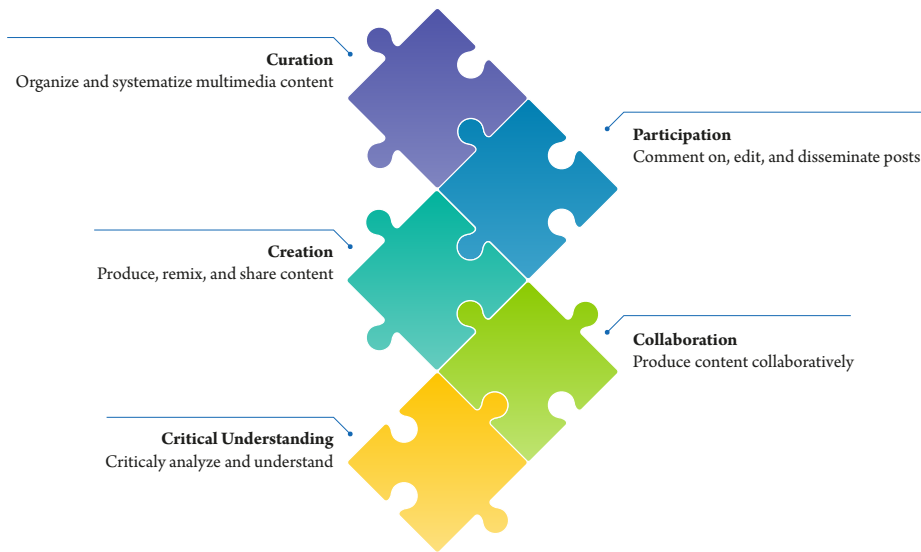
However, according to Alvermann and Hagood (2000) and Kahne and Bowyer (2019), media literacy—meaning the ability to access, create, comment on, and share content—is crucial not only for young people to have a critical understanding of the political landscape in which they are immersed but also to develop creative skills for the effectiveness of these mobilizations. In this context, Hirsjärvi (2013) asserts that fans play a significant role in discussing the relationship between media and youth empowerment. According to the author, fan communities involve active participation and knowledge sharing, contributing to young people's informal learning in networked environments.

In this sense, awareness of the importance of citizen participation in social, political, and economic contexts has gained new dimensions in the digital environment. It has allowed thousands of fans to meet in communities that often act in real-time. Research into media literacy, in this context, has made it possible to deepen our understanding of the cognitive, aesthetic, media, and affective skills, among others, that are at work in the relationship between subjects, and especially fans, and the social reality in which they are inserted.

For Mihaildis (2014), convergence culture offers new modes for producing and consuming media content. Mihaildis (2014) argues that skills development goes beyond traditional media flows in a networked environment, encompassing the critical interpretation of interactive and mul-

timodal sets and integrating different digital platforms. In this context, the author defines five media literacy skills: curation, creation, critical understanding, participation, and collaboration (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Skills Proposed by Mihailidis (2014)



Source: Adapted by the authors (2023).

Importantly, in addition to these skills being developed throughout a person's life, they are interrelated and constantly transformed. Mihailidis (2014) thus argues that the same individual can exhibit different skills to different degrees based on the media context to which they belong.

This element is precisely what we find in the context of the *#Fandoms-PeloVoto* campaign, in which different Brazilian fan communities carried out joint and coordinated actions to encourage greater political participation among 16- and 17-year-olds. However, unlike many of the activist organizations led by fans, which are engaged with social causes without necessarily expressing an explicit partisan political position (Kligler-Vilenchik & Shresthova, 2014), this action targeted the electoral period to seek the vote of young people aligned with progressive causes that have traditionally been closer to the left, including diversity in race, gender, and sexuality, to halt the rise of the far right in Brazil.

Media literacy skills in #FandomsPeloVoto

According to the Superior Electoral Court (*Tribunal Superior Eleitoral*, TSE), over the last decade, the number of 16- and 17-year-old adolescents who applied for their first voter registration card has decreased by 82 % (CNN, 2022). The TSE suggests that this low participation is related to a lack of interest in politics and party identification (CNN, 2022). However, recent data indicate that compared to 2018, the Brazilian electorate grew by about 6.21 % in 2022 (Agência Senado, 2022). According to research published by the Senate's news agency, Agência Senado (2022), of the 156 million eligible citizens, one of the most significant increases recorded was in the number of 16- and 17-year-olds, for whom voting is optional. In all, 2.1 million young people are registered, representing an increase of 51.13 % in this age group (Agência Senado, 2022). The TSE (2022) and Agência Senado (2022) indicate that most of the young people who obtained a voter registration card in 2022 did so between January and May. According to the organizations, the growth is due to awareness campaigns involving different spheres.

Since the beginning of 2022, several artists have created engagement actions to mobilize their respective fandoms to apply for a voter registration card (Oliveira, 2022). According to TSE analyst Diogo Cruvinel, in addition to social media playing a pivotal role in sharing and accessing information about the electoral process, the participation of public figures such as Anitta, Juliette, Zeca Pagodinho, Whindersson Nunes, and Luísa Sonza contributed to the identification of young people, expanding their enrollment in the electoral register (CNN, 2022). As Cruvinel suggests, “They [famous people] understood how important it was for us to have the participation of this audience, which is largely young people, and they spoke to their respective audiences” (CNN, 2022). In other words, by targeting an audience with which they already had a certain proximity, the artists were able to mobilize young people in a way that legal entities such as the TSE would never have been able to do; for example, the tweet⁴ posted by Anitta on her Twitter account. Within minutes, the post received more

4 Available at: <<https://twitter.com/Anitta/status/1506780146744836097?s=20&t=PO1FYWSP1VbPP5gmmv-gOA>>. Accessed on: Sep. 24, 2022.

than 244k likes and was retweeted by 16,000 accounts on the microblogging platform. Other artists like Mark Ruffalo and Leonardo DiCaprio also shared the post. The American actors retweeted the content and highlighted the importance of mobilizing Brazilians, sharing the *Central do Barulhinho*⁵ website.

Launched in May 2022, the campaign—carried out in partnership with Mídia Ninja, the National Student Union (*União Nacional dos Estudantes*, UNE), and the Brazilian Union of Secondary School Students (*União Brasileira dos Estudantes Secundaristas*, UBES)—brought together over 100 pop culture fandoms in Brazil. Called #FandomsPeloVoto, the action aimed to encourage 16- to 18-year-olds to obtain a voter registration card and be eligible to vote in the 2022 elections. The deadline to apply for their first card was May 4. The material produced and shared by fans on Twitter, Telegram, and Instagram included tutorials, infographics, and informational videos about obtaining the document. The accounts also published imagery of celebrities encouraging new voter registration and establishing a correlation between the fictional universe and the importance of voter registration.

This mobilization did not occur by chance. It was part of a context of reaction to the rise of far-right leaders, parties, and movements that have disrupted the norms of party competition and threatened democracy itself (Fukushim & Ferraz, 2021).

[...] The rise of the far right constitutes yet another movement—one that began with the advancement of neoliberal hegemony—toward the complete destruction of the civilizational and democratic conquests of the post-World War II era. The defense of a (neo)liberal and conservative agenda encourages individualism and has led to political polarization and a reaction—sometimes violent—against those calling for a more plural and democratic world. (Fukushim & Ferraz, 2021, p. 5)

The election of leaders like Donald Trump in 2016 in the United States, as well as the rise of far-right parties in countries such as France, Hungary, and Germany, are consequences of the combination of populist

⁵ Available at: <<https://www.olhaobarulhinho.com/>>. Accessed on: Sep 24, 2022.

rhetoric and authoritarian values, resulting in a policy of exclusion, “thereby championing intolerance, racism, homophobia, misogyny and xenophobia. They thus legitimize hate speech and, at the extreme, the death of those who should be excluded, i.e., groups considered to be minorities” (Fukushim & Ferraz, 2021, p. 5). In Brazil, the primary representative of far-right politics is Jair Bolsonaro, who became president in 2019. Before that, he was a federal deputy for the state of Rio de Janeiro between 1991 and 2018 and ascended to the highest office in the country using a rhetoric that encourages violence against progressive ideals. His election is not to be seen isolatedly: Over the past decade, in the legislature, in the State Assemblies, the National Congress, and the Senate, Brazil has conceded space to politicians who are gun owners, religious, or have ultraconservative discourse. After four years of an administration that dismantled environmental policies, drained resources from education and health, persecuted minorities, and continually denied the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 general elections represent a moment in which political participation could be decisive for upholding democracy.

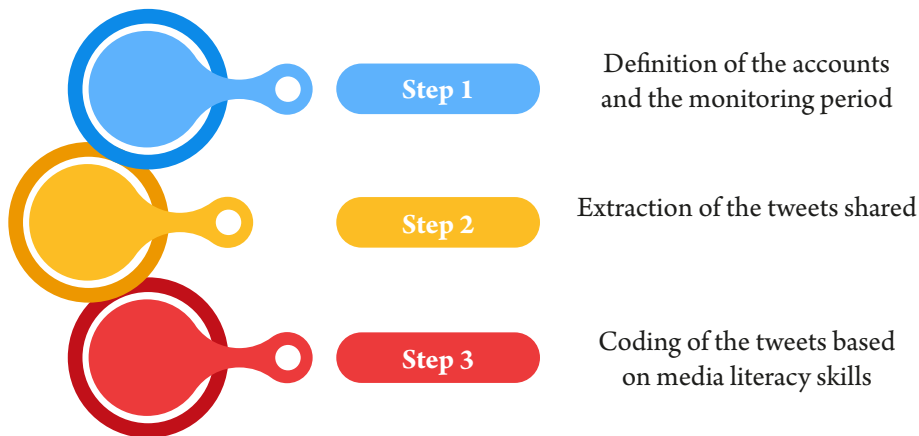
Methodology

To analyze the media literacy skills proposed by Mihailidis (2014), which are at work in the content shared by fans on Twitter during the *#FandomsPeloVoto* campaign, we adopted the data monitoring, extraction, and coding approach developed by the Observatório da Qualidade no Audiovisual (Borges & Sigiliano, 2022). However, before describing the three steps that comprise this protocol, it is important to explain the choice of Twitter as a platform for data collection (Figure 2)

#FandomsPeloVoto included 125 fandoms across many different segments, such as pop music (Ariana Grande, Harry Styles, Beyoncé, etc.), cinema (*The Batman*, *Black Widow*, *Avengers*, etc.), and TV/streaming (*Brooklyn 99*, *Love, Victor*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, etc.). The fan communities were organized in groups on Telegram and accounts on Instagram and Twitter. The microblogging platform had the most participants, totaling 110 accounts. At the same time, there were 15 groups on Telegram managed by fandoms that were part of the action and only six accounts on Instagram.

In this respect, in addition to most fans being concentrated on that social media platform, Twitter also had a data decentralization and recentralization model that facilitated data extraction at the time. The business model and the application programming interface (API) governance policy of Telegram and Instagram only allow us partial access to user-generated information. The restrictions of these platforms stand in contrast to the easy access to Twitter's API, even considering the tensions that interfere with this process (D'Andrea, 2020; Karsdorp *et al.*, 2021; Mckinney, 2018; Russell; Klassen, 2019).

Figure 2. Methodological Approach to Data Monitoring, Extraction, and Coding



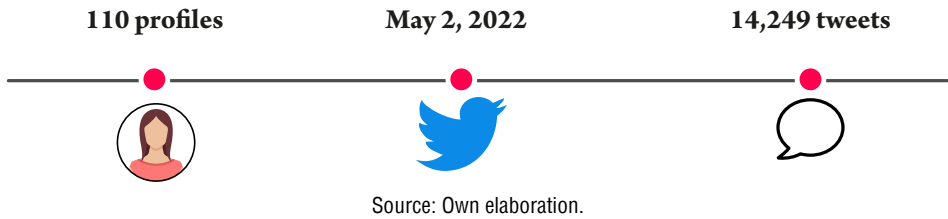
Source: Own elaboration.

In the first step, we defined the profiles, keywords, and timeframe to be monitored. Based on information published by Mídia Ninja, the monitoring included Twitter profiles managed by fandoms that declared their support for the campaign, totaling 110 accounts. Accordingly, the fans' posts that were monitored were published on May 2, 2022, during the campaign period.

Subsequently, data extraction was performed using Python, and we also used modules such as NLTK, Jupyter, Twint, and SpaCy and the Pandas and Nest_asyncio libraries to assist in filtering, visualizing, and exporting the data (Dos Santos, 2019). In the third and final step, with the

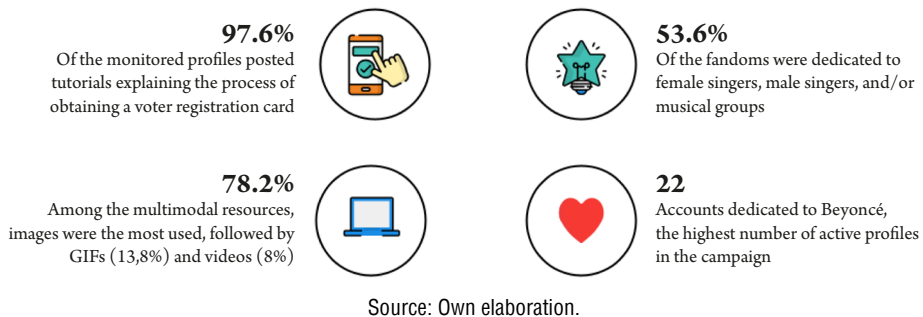
help of the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti, the 14,249 tweets collected were coded according to the media literacy skills defined by Mihailidis (2014) (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Systematization of the Analysis Sample



Of the 110 monitored profiles, 53.6 % were dedicated to female singers, male singers, or musical groups. Despite being Brazilian fans, only five fandom pages for national artists were observed: Pablllo Vittar, Anitta, Iza, Gloria Groove, and Duda Beat. Among the profiles on the music scene, Beyoncé was the artist with the most mobilized fandoms in #FandomsfortheVote, with 22 identified accounts. In the context of film and TV, we highlight the prominence of the Marvel franchise; the 15 profiles related to Stan Lee’s fictional universe covered both characters and actors and actresses, such as Elizabeth Olsen and Benedict Cumberbatch (Figure 4)

Figure 4. General Data on the Profiles Participating in #FandomsfortheVote



In addition to adopting engagement and dissemination strategies related to Twitter’s informational architecture, such as the textual limitation of 280 characters and the use of hashtags for quick tweet identification in the

uninterrupted flow of the timeline, about 78.8 % of the profiles participating in #FandomsfortheVote posted images in response to campaign themes. Other multimodal resources were also identified, with 13.8 % of accounts sharing GIFs and only 8 % sharing videos. In order to instruct interactors, 97.6 % of the profiles created and published tutorials detailing the step-by-step process of obtaining a voter ID.

Overall, the tweets drew attention to the mobilization of young people against the far-right government in Brazil and correlated civic participation with the respective contexts of fandoms. Intertextual references were based on excerpts from songs and fictional narratives, among other contexts related to fan groups. When analyzing the data, we identified examples of the skills proposed by Mihailidis (2014), as shown below.

Findings

Some examples of the research results according to the analysis of fan production related to Mihailidis's (2014) media literacy five skills—curation, creation, critical understanding, participation, and collaboration—are discussed below.

Curation

According to Mihailidis (2014), the skill of curation is related to the ability to organize, filter, select, and systematize content. The author emphasizes that the volume of information and the instantaneousness of social media make this skill even more crucial in contemporary times. These aspects can be observed in the tutorials published by the fandoms: the images included step-by-step instructions for applying for a voter registration card in a didactic way, similar to the fans' repertoire. Thus, The users selected relevant information to the process and systematized it for the public using a friendly aesthetic—for example, the tweets posted by Beyoncé Access (@beyonceaccess) (Figure 5). The thread comprised nine posts that used different multimodal resources, such as images and emojis. The posts contained screenshots of the TSE website interface and described the process of applying for the document; it was also possible to access a FAQ section with critical questions about the voting day.

Figure 5. Thread Systematizing the Primary Information for a Voter Registration Card Application



Source: Twitter (2022)

The tweets shared by Beyoncé Access referenced the career of the US singer Beyoncé, reinforcing her fans' shared repertoire. Thus, by using expressions such as “*Vamos entrar em formação*” (“Let’s get in formation”), which alludes to the chorus of the song *Formation*, the account elicited the immediate identification of the audience, amplifying its ability to be spread on the timeline.

The skill of curation, proposed by Mihailidis (2014), is also at work in posts that correlated the fictional universes of series and movies with the importance of obtaining a voter registration card to be eligible to vote in the 2022 elections. In other words, fans selected parts of the narrative that had some connection with the civic engagement of young people when they registered to vote. For example, the account (@b99bra), managed by the fandom of the US series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (Fox, 2013–2018; NBC, 2019–2021), shared a plot sequence to mobilize the audience. In the scene, Raymond Holt (Andre Braugher) tells Rosa Diaz (Stephanie Beatriz) that the character should be proud of herself because she did the right thing during a difficult moment. Although the narrative context of the show is different, fans

re-signified the scene when they adopted it as part of the engagement actions for *#FandomsPeloVoto*, establishing a correlation with the current political situation and the importance of young people registering on the TSE website. The selection of extracts from fictional universes was observed in many fandoms, but narratives that already exhibited—even minimally—a parallel with the discussion of sociopolitical issues generated more engagement among users, for example, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Hulu, 2017–present) and *The Hunger Games* saga.

Creation

For Mihailidis (2014), creation includes the ability to produce, remix, share, and adapt content on online platforms. The author notes that this development does not necessarily need to have the content at its source. In other words, this skill's guiding points are the mixture, collage, and remix typical to a convergent environment. Mihailidis (2014) argues that creation aids in the critical development of the audience, which begins to recognize different genres, formats, and media strategies. Based on this context, the very creation of the *#FandomsPeloVoto* campaign activates critical and creative skills in the production of content for different platforms, considering the specificities of the informational architectures as well as the multimodal resources adopted in the posts (images, GIFs, videos, emojis, etc.).

Using an eye-catching color palette and stickers, the action's visual identity engaged with the target audience and stood out in the uninterrupted flow of the Twitter timeline. Based on the visual identity of the campaign, the accounts managed by the fandoms adapted the artwork to target their followers and their engagement strategies, for example, the post by the account Army Help The Planet (@ARMY_HTP), which combined the specific indexing (*#ArmyPeloVoto*) (*#ArmyfortheVote*) adopted by K-pop fans and asked users to hit the goal of 2,000 tweets with the hashtags of the action (Figure 6). The artwork also included an image of a voter registration card, in which the “voter name,” “date of birth,” “signature,” “registration number,” “section,” “zone,” “municipality/UF,” and “date of issue” fields had been personalized.

Figure 6. The Campaign’s Visual Identity Reinforcing the Use of Colors and Stickers. Some Fandoms Personalized the Artwork Posted on Twitter



Source: Twitter (2022)

The creation skill can also be observed in the imagery posted by the accounts participating in *#FandomsPeloVoto*. One example is a GIF posted by the account *Bridgerton Brasil* (@BridgertonBR), which re-signified a scene from the series *Bridgerton* (Netflix, 2020–present). Fans inserted new captions, using a scene featuring the character Eloise Bridgerton (Claudia Jessie), bringing the plot’s context closer to the action’s objective. In the GIF, the inquisitive and rebellious Eloise says: “Vários adolescentes ainda não tiraram o título de eleitor e isso é trágico! Mas eu já corri para tirar o meu,

é claro!” [“Many adolescents have not yet obtained their voter registration card, and this is tragic! But I already rushed out to get mine, of course!”] In this respect, by introducing new interpretative layers to the canon, the fandom’s creation skill ranged from a technical understanding of editing digital formats to expanding *Bridgerton*’s fictional universe by inserting the plot into other contexts.

Critical Understanding

According to Mihailidis (2014), critical understanding is related to the ability to analyze content, identifying and distinguishing different formats and genres based on their similarities and specificities. This skill can be observed in the elements adopted by the fandoms in the actions on Twitter.

The resources used by the participants are in line with some characteristics of the informational architecture of the microblogging platform; for example, the use of a general hashtag with the full name of the campaign, as well as a specific hashtag targeted at the shared repertoire of a particular group of fans. By adopting the indexing, the fandoms enabled the conversation generated by the action to be spread and unified, contributing directly to the hashtags reaching Trending Topics. The specific indexing, which varied according to the fandom, also reinforced the communities’ sense of belonging, leading to the identification of the followers and participation in *#FandomsPeloVoto*. The multimodal content was also part of the tweets posted by the monitored accounts, in this respect, as they used GIFs, images, videos, and emojis and were not limited only to textual language, causing the posts to stand out in the uninterrupted flow of the timeline.

Another strategy adopted by the fans was quizzes because it is a social network based on the formation of asymmetrical connections, i.e., not based on pre-existing bonds, the users could respond to one another’s posts without necessarily following each other. Thus, by posting a question related to an artist’s career or the fictional universe of a narrative, the accounts encouraged fan conversation around a topic, increasing the number of tweets posted during the action. By adopting some characteristics of Twitter’s informational architecture, the fandoms demonstrate an understanding of

aspects related to the materiality of the social network, going beyond content production and engagement strategies.

The ability to distinguish media formats and explore different languages is also at work in producing memes. In the images, guided by humor and irony, fandoms reflected on the current political situation and the importance of different communities coming together for the *#FandomsPeloVoto* action. Famous in the pop culture realm, fans of the singers Anitta and Ludmilla have already been involved in several feuds. The rivalry between the fandoms is a recurrent topic at award shows, in battles over the rankings on music streaming services, the number of music video views on YouTube, etc. However, in *#FandomsPeloVoto*, the accounts dedicated to the artists posted a meme: The image showed that despite the constant competition between the fanbases, the fandoms were united in mobilizing young people. Other memes also stressed that despite their differences, it was essential for fans to come together to defeat President Jair Bolsonaro in the 2022 elections. By joking about the rivalry of the fanbases, the fandoms re-signified popular fan culture practices, setting aside the feuds to fight for the citizen participation of young people. Here, it is possible to see the partisan nature of the action, which calls for unity against the threat of the far right, represented by Bolsonaro (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Fandoms Emphasizing the Importance of Communities Coming Together for the *#FandomsPeloVoto* Mobilization



Source: Twitter (2022)

There were also memes produced during *#FandomsPeloVoto* that declared support for the candidacy of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Jair Bolsonaro's main competitor in the 2022 elections. The tweets used images of celebrities and characters wearing red, the color of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*. PT). They inserted the logo with the name "Lula," as if the idols were campaigning for the candidate. The photos used in the imagery typically already have elements (background, the position of the artists, etc.) that facilitate the creation of the meme. For example, the account (@katydailybrasil) managed by fans of the singer Katy Perry used a GIF in which the artist is wearing a red blazer to create a meme supporting Lula. In the meme, the fandom inserted fictitious captions in support of the presidential candidate that approximate the singer's lip movements in the original GIF and the PT logo.

Participation

Following Mihailidis (2014), participation is guided by the ability to comment on, edit, and disseminate posts on different online platforms (forums, social media, etc.). The author argues that users should circulate plural and dynamic information and content. In addition to the *#FandomsPeloVoto* action itself being based on a collective mobilization involving the participation of 110 fandoms from different realms of pop culture, the skill discussed by Mihailidis (2014) is at work in the tweets of fans based on posts from accounts managed by the fandoms. In this context, the public conversation ranged from messages of support to users who had applied for their voter registration card to tips on bypassing bugs on the TSE portal. Due to the large number of simultaneous visits, the TSE website was down for several minutes, but when fans shared that they were having trouble accessing it, they quickly received support from accounts that were part of the campaign. The tweets offered shortcuts to circumvent the traffic, tips on filling out the registration form more quickly, and information on other issues related to the voter registration card, such as change of address and absentee voting.

The fandoms also highlighted information about the presidential candidates' proposals, stressing the importance of informing young people before deciding whom to vote for. The posts had links to the candi-

dates' websites and data about COVID-19, criticizing the measures taken by President Jair Bolsonaro during the pandemic that killed more than 685,000 Brazilians.

Collaboration

Finally, based on Mihailidis (2014), collaboration involves jointly producing content in which each user contributes to the whole in some way. The author notes that the skill is directly linked to cooperation and coordinated, collective effort in a network. Although the accounts that participated in *#FandomsPeloVoto* were dedicated to a specific artist or fictional universe, they created collaborative actions to engage more users, not limited to their respective followers. To this end, the pages retweeted content from other fandoms, bolstering the spread on the timeline. Collaboration can also be observed in engagement strategies that encourage posting tweets with the same indexing (general or specific). In this context, the accounts set goals of between 2,000 and 5,000 tweets within a short period. The collective effort of the fans resulted in the hashtags appearing in Trending Topics in Brazil during the campaign.

Final Considerations

The *#FandomsPeloVoto* campaign reinforces critical and creative abilities through mobilizations around sociopolitical causes. The affective and intellectual relationship of the users thus serves as a starting point, encouraging debate on issues related to the importance of voter registration and voting in the 2022 elections as part of a movement that ultimately sought to increase the participation of young people and, above all, to halt the rise of the far right in Brazil. The strategies adopted by the 110 accounts that participated in the action encompassed different formats and languages, responding to the media repertoire of the fans.

The media literacy skills proposed by Mihailidis (2014) are at work not only in the objectives of *#FandomsPeloVoto* but also in the correlation between the fictional universes of the narratives and, most importantly, in the multimodal resources used by fans. Through the fanbase, the accounts activated elements familiar to the users, reinforcing the audience's sense of

community and belonging. The tweets included tutorials with the central questions, memes that joked about standard practices within fan culture, and videos re-signifying the canon.

However, despite the significance of *#FandomsPeloVoto* and the campaign's support among young people, very few accounts continued to raise awareness and debate about political participation between the period when the campaign was carried out and September 2022. Thus, even though the action mobilized many fans to apply for a voter registration card and generated buzz on Twitter, the collective organization of the fandoms was isolated and targeted at the voter registration deadline.

Finally, *#FandomsPeloVoto* shows the commitment of fans to democracy. In addition to helping organize the campaign and promoting the exchange of information, the tweets were created based on a deep knowledge of not only the target audience but also the details of the voter registration process and engagement strategies in the digital environment. In this context, the activism of fandoms is not merely a simple transposition of fan culture practices into the realm of political participation but also encompasses the critical interpretation of the sociopolitical issues that are part of the action and the creative production of posts on Twitter. Notably, the action has aspects of political resistance, as one of its primary objectives is the removal of President Jair Bolsonaro, leader of the far right in Brazil, from power.

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