

# MEDIATISING RESISTANCE TO CONTEMPORARY FASCISM ON YOUTUBE: VOICING DISSENT IN BRAZILIAN RAP

## MEDIAÇÃO DA RESISTÊNCIA AO FASCISMO CONTEMPORÂNEO NO YOUTUBE: EVOCANDO DISSIDÊNCIAS NO RAP BRASILEIRO

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, an on-going shift from more progressive political, social and cultural relations towards a more conservative turn around the world has been under way. A fascist political stance (STANLEY, 2018) has been noted in different parts of the globe and politicians have been able to gather followers dissatisfied with crumbling economies by usually making recourse to an “us versus them” discourse. Such dissatisfaction and bias have found fertile ground in social media platforms, e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp, and elevated the tensions around such issues to a level never before seen. In the 2018 presidential election in Brazil, similar tensions were fuelled by a candidate with an authoritarian, xenophobic and misogynistic discourse. More importantly, that authoritarian discourse did not go unchallenged and the same social media platforms were home for constant resistance to it such as, for instance, the movement #nothim, created by the Facebook group “Women United against Bolsonaro”, and the rap/hip hop movement in Brazil, which released protest songs and a manifesto called “Rap for Democracy” on YouTube. In this paper, we focus on one music video in particular, ‘*Primavera Fascista*’ (“Fascist Spring”) to present a multimodal analysis of how resistance to that candidate’s discourse was constructed. We look into visual, sound, musical and linguistic resources (KRESS, 2010; MACHIN, 2010). Drawing upon a view of language as performative (PENNYCOOK, 2004; 2007), we use the analytical constructs of entextualization (BAUMAN & BRIGGS, 1990) and indexicality (BLOMMAERT, 2005; 2010) to show that the rap song is an exhaustive discursive exercise of metapragmatic reflexivity on the performative effects of a number of fascist statements produced by the candidate.

**Keywords:** social fascism; social media resistance; Rap/Hip Hop.

### RESUMO

Nos últimos anos, uma mudança crescente nas relações políticas, sociais e culturais mais progressistas em direção a uma visão conservadora retrógrada está em andamento em boa parte do mundo. Uma postura política fascista (STANLEY, 2018) tem sido observada em

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diferentes partes do globo e diferentes políticos têm sido capazes de reunir seguidores insatisfeitos com economias em decadência nos seus países, geralmente recorrendo a um discurso do “nós contra eles”. Tal insatisfação encontrou terreno fértil em plataformas de mídia social como, por exemplo, Facebook e WhatsApp, e elevou as tensões em torno dessas questões a um nível jamais visto anteriormente. Na eleição presidencial de 2018 no Brasil, tensões semelhantes foram alimentadas por um candidato com um discurso autoritário, xenófobo e misógino. Mais importante, porém, esse discurso autoritário não deixou de ser contestado e as mesmas plataformas de mídia social foram palco de resistências a ele, como, por exemplo, o movimento #elenão, criado no Facebook pelo grupo “Mulheres Unidas contra o Bolsonaro”, e o movimento hip hop no Brasil, que lançou canções de protesto e um manifesto chamado “Rap pela Democracia” no YouTube. Neste artigo, selecionamos um videoclipe em particular, ‘Primavera Fascista’, para apresentar uma análise multimodal de como a resistência ao discurso daquele candidato foi construída, com foco nos recursos visuais, sonoros, musicais e linguísticos (KRESS, 2010; MACHIN, 2010) utilizados. Partindo de uma visão da linguagem como performativa (PENNYCOOK, 2004; 2007), usamos os construtos teórico-analíticos de entextualização (BAUMAN & BRIGGS, 1990) e indexicalidade (BLOMMAERT, 2005; 2010) para discutir como este rap é um intenso exercício discursivo de reflexividade metapragmática sobre os efeitos performativos de uma série de declarações fascistas produzidas pelo candidato.

**Palavras-chave:** fascismo social; resistência; mídias sociais; Rap/Hip Hop.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have increasingly become the forum for outspoken debates on political and social issues which have led to a climate of polarisation among many of its users. In Brazil, for instance, the 2018 presidential campaign has fuelled animosity among supporters of opposing candidates. The far-right discourse of one of them has helped to establish a clear divide between traditional, conservative ideas on gender and race issues, for instance, and more progressive ones defended by left-wing candidates.

In an attempt to counter those conservative and authoritarian ideas and discourse, different social groups manifested their support of diversity and democracy in society such as, for instance, the movement #elenão (#nothim) created by the Facebook group ‘Mulheres unidas contra Bolsonaro’ (Women United against Bolsonaro). The hip hop movement in Brazil was also one of those groups that challenged those ideas and discourse.

In the manifesto *Rap pela Democracia* (Rap for Democracy) published on YouTube on October, 18<sup>th</sup> 2018, many famous Brazilian rappers and DJs read that document recalling the roots of that translocal/global movement, its main achievements, and its stance in the defence of democracy in the country, as can be seen in the following transcribed excerpt: ‘... hip hop has always had a side. And these elections say a lot

about the basic values of our democracy. And we want to be able to demand proper attitude from the elected government. And to do so, it is necessary that democracy exists ...' (in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvOH6P0YNWE>, 18/10/2018; accessed in 24/06/2020, our English version of original in Portuguese)<sup>1</sup>

Alongside the manifesto seen above, different rappers have recorded rap songs with similar purposes. For instance, the rap song '*Disscansa em Paz*'<sup>2</sup> (Rest in Peace) by Diomedes Chinaski, and the rap song '*Lei Rua Neles*' (loosely translated as 'law Streets on Them') by the rappers *Coruja BC1*, *Akira Presidente*, *Black*, *Rod 3030* and *Don L*, have both presented their opposing views to the ideas of the far-right candidate<sup>3</sup>.

However, it was another rap song that called more attention. '*Primavera Fascista*' (Fascist Spring), a rap song strongly criticising the far-right candidate, his ideas, attitudes and behaviour, was released on YouTube on October, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, just five days before the run-off election. The song, critically acclaimed by the rap community (e.g., comments from Rio de Janeiro rappers Marcelo D2 and Black Alien, and reports from the specialised press, e.g. Vice magazine), received one hundred thousand views on the first two days after its release and has reached over four million views the following months.

Delivered within a very significant moment in the recent history of Brazilian political and social life, when conservative, authoritarian, racist and misogynistic discourses were being openly produced by the far-right candidate, the rap song '*Primavera Fascista*' (Fascist Spring) was an important effort to mobilise a counter-narrative to those discourses that amounted during the 2018 presidential election campaign in an attempt to convince undecided voters not to vote for that candidate.

With a striking number of views in a short period of time for that rap song, we have decided to select its music video for our analysis of the semiotic (visual,

1. '*... o hip hop sempre teve lado ... e essas eleições dizem muito a respeito dos valores básicos da nossa democracia. E queremos poder cobrar postura do governo que for eleito. Para isso, é necessário que exista democracia*'

2. '*Disscansa em paz*' is a wordplay with the word 'descansa' (rest) in Portuguese and a 'diss' track (a rap song that verbally insults someone) in hip hop. The title and the lyrics suggest the death of the candidate. '*Lei Rua Neles*' is a word play with a Brazilian law called '*Lei Rouanet*' which helps financing cultural projects and that was being contested by the right-wing candidate for supposedly being misused by artists who were granted financial support.

3. A seven-term congressman in the Brazilian Lower House (1991-2018), Jair Bolsonaro, has become better known for his inflammatory remarks than for his only two approved bills during that period. With a long history of bigotry, homophobia and racism, he has been described by The Intercept as 'the most misogynistic, hateful elected official in the democratic world' (In: <https://theintercept.com/2014/12/11/misogynistic-hateful-elected-official-democratic-world-brazils-jair-bolsonaro/>). Although he has won the election and is currently the president of the country, in this paper, we will be using the terms deputy and/or candidate since the rap song, our object of analysis, was written/performed while he held those former positions.

sound and linguistic) resources used by the MCs to oppose those discourses of discrimination and prejudice. Our main objective is, therefore, to investigate how resistance to contemporary fascism is constructed discursively on social media. As Leppänen & Westinen (2017, p. 9) put it, '[o]n YouTube, ... performances are disseminated for appreciative audiences who, in turn, take up what is being performed in discussions and debates...' <sup>4</sup> Thus, we are particularly interested in understanding the different semiotic resources used by the rappers to mobilise meaning effects which appear to be aimed at constructing dissent and a resistance discourse.

## 1. VOICING DISSENT IN HIP HOP

Emerging in the mid 70s in New York City, in the United States, the hip hop movement (encompassing break dancing, graffiti writing, DJing, MCing, and knowledge – the so-called fifth element) has become a worldwide cultural phenomenon on its own. The influence of that movement, and specially its music - rap, outside the United States has become unquestionable (MITCHELL, 2001; PENNYCOOK, 2007).

Hip hop and rap have been appropriated as a cultural form in many different countries (MITCHELL, 2001; ANDROUTSOPOULOS & SCHOLZ, 2003; ALIM, IBRAHIM, & PENNYCOOK, 2009). For instance, recent sociolinguistic research on rap and hip hop has been carried out in places as diverse as Finland (WESTINEN, 2017; LEPPÄNEN & WESTINEN, 2017), Japan (HELLAND, 2018), South Africa (MOSES, 2018; WILLIAMS, 2018), Mozambique (GUISSEMO, 2018), Morocco (SALOIS, 2018) France (SENGER, 2018) and Canada (CAMPBELL & STITSKI, 2018) to name a few. For Haupt, Williams, & Alim (2018, p. 9), some of those studies '... offer key examples of the different forms that hip hop activism may take and offer meaningful insights into debates about agency ...' They illustrate how different hip hop artists around the globe engage in discussions about social and political issues that affect their translocal communities.

In Brazil, rap and hip hop have also been the object of research in different areas of the social sciences, such as sociology, anthropology and linguistics. Earlier work investigated the emergence of hip hop in São Paulo (SILVA, 1998), its connection with educational practices (ANDRADE, 1999), and its importance as a socializing

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4. Although we acknowledge the significance of a discussion of the audience response/comments on YouTube to the rap song itself, in this paper, due to space constraints, we will focus our discussion on the music video only.

process (HERSCHMANN, 1997, 2000; DAYRELL, 2005). Also, different aspects of the relationship between hip hop and identity practices (WELLER, 2000; PARDUE, 2004; ROTH-GORDON, 2007, 2009, 2012; OLIVEIRA, 2007) as well as between hip hop pedagogy and literacy practices (PARDUE, 2007; SOUZA, 2011) were investigated. More recent work expands the horizons of investigation to focus on rap and transidiomaticity and transperformances (NASCIMENTO, 2013; MOITA LOPES, 2018; FABRICIO & MOITA LOPES, 2019), for instance. These studies provide an illustration of the importance of hip hop and rap as a cultural, social and discursive practice that has influenced many generations in Brazil as well as in different parts of the world. According to Moita Lopes (2018, p. 175), '[t]hrough the flows of globalization, rap has become a 'weapon' that marginalized people in diverse peripheries can make use of to confront exclusion processes.' Moreover, the appropriation of hip hop in different locations of the world has brought into the spotlight 'local' issues and contexts addressed by local artists in their 'translocal style communities' (ALIM, 2009a) merging and amplifying the discussions of the local and the global in hip hop culture.

Subjected to similar social, cultural, and historical conditions as their urban youth counterparts in the US, disenfranchised youth elsewhere have engaged with hip hop as a means of entertainment and empowerment, emphasising their connective marginalities (OSUMARE, 2001). Ross & Rivers (2018, p. 5) state that '[t]he idea of connective marginalities includes the full range of culture, class, historical oppression, and generational dissatisfaction, and rap music adopts this to a large degree in addressing local issues as well as extant global socio-political inequalities.' Such connection, thus, helps translocal urban youth minorities reflect upon and challenge social practices that are oppressive and discriminating. Ross & Rivers (2018, p. 3) further argue that the hip hop movement, and particularly rap music, have become '... a vehicle for expressions of dissatisfaction and dissent as a resistance practice ... [where] dissatisfaction is often articulated in less overt and emphatic terms than clearly articulated political dissent which can verge on moral outrage.' Notably, politically conscious rap groups such as Public Enemy in the United States and Racionais MC's in Brazil are two examples of artists who are outspoken in their dissent against the establishment and the social injustices in their communities.

Thus, since expressing dissatisfaction and dissent is a common core for many rap artists attentive to the social, political and historical ills that affect society, the recent political polarisations in Brazil have served rap artists with the leitmotif for protesting. As mentioned in the introduction, we have selected one specific rap music

video, 'Primavera Fascista' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi2WodtwW3k>), for our discussion of dissatisfaction and dissent in Brazilian rap due to its specific target and spacetime constraints: the far-right candidate and the 2018 Brazilian presidential election.

That rap song was produced by Pedro Tibery, the beatmaker, and rapped by seven MCs, *Bocaum*, *Leoni*, *Adikto*, *Axant*, *Mary Jane*, *VK* and *Dudu*, respectively. Some of these MCs are solo rappers and others take part in different rap groups, such as *Bocaum* from 'Subversivos MC's', *Mary Jane* from 'Melanina MC's', and *VK* from MAC (*Mentes além da compreensão*) Crew and they all come from the capital city of Vitória, in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. Well-known in the rap scene of that city and elsewhere in the country, those artists have started performing as early as 2000s, like *Adikto*, and 2010s such as *VK*, *Dudu*, *Mary Jane*, and *Bocaum*. Some of them, such as *VK*, *Dudu*, and *Adikto* have emerged in the hip hop scene in Vitória through freestyle rap battles. Others, like *Bocaum* and *Mary Jane*, started performing in rap groups.

The idea for the song was proposed by the producer and beatmaker, Pedro Tibery, who had produced the beats and sampled the audio files of the candidate's declarations in advance<sup>5</sup>. With that idea in mind, the producer then invited those MCs to write, and rap, their rhymes in response to those declarations. The end result is a collaborative work released by the label 'Setor Proibido' (Forbidden Sector) on YouTube on October, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

## 2. CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL FASCISM

The on-going shift in political, social and cultural relations towards a more conservative turn around the world has been under way for quite some time. In Brazil, similar changes have also taken place dragging the country into a seemingly permanent state of conflict, which started out with protests and demonstrations as early as 2007 up to 2015 (TAGAGIBA, TRINDADE & TEIXEIRA, 2015) fuelled

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5. <http://screamyell.com.br/site/2018/10/26/entrevista-bolsonaro-e-um-retrocesso-diz-setor-coletivo/>, accessed 19/11/2018

by the news of corruption scandals and the carwash operation<sup>6</sup> and followed by the impeachment<sup>7</sup> of former president, Dilma Roussef.

Such a conservative turn in social, cultural and political terms, where fear and control have found a fertile ground, alongside a fierce neoliberal agenda where the market economy prevails despite the need of social policies, has provoked an intensification of xenophobic, bigoted and hatred discourses.

On one hand, those in favour of a conservative and neoliberal agenda, in Brazil, have adhered to the ideas of the far-right candidate who promised to topple old politics, a symbol of corruption. However, the candidate, then a deputy in the Lower House for twenty-eight years (seven terms), conquered many of his followers not only with a discourse of change in politics but also with his misogynistic, homophobic and racist positioning (well-known by the general public in the country due to his outspoken attitudes even with fellow deputies, for instance) echoing the feelings of many who were afraid of unleashing them.

On the other, many have felt that democracy was at stake with the candidate's consistent disregard of institutions such as the Supreme Court and the Congress and recurrent attacks on the conduct of judges and fellow congressmen, amongst others. Such perception echoes Santos (2001, p. 186) when he states that '... [i]n our time, the danger is the rise of fascism as a societal regime. Unlike political fascism, societal fascism is pluralistic, coexists easily with the democratic state, and its privileged time-space, rather than being national, is both local and global.' Thus, the low-intensity democracy (SANTOS, 2016) the country was experiencing seemed to finally meet social fascism.

Such a bleak perspective over democracy and the spread of fascist practices is also pointed out by Stanley (2018). For him,

The dangers of fascist politics come from the particular way in which it dehumanizes segments of the population. By excluding these groups, it limits the capacity for empathy among other citizens, leading to the justification of inhumane treatment, from repression of freedom, mass imprisonment, and expulsion to, in extreme cases, mass extermination (Stanley, 2018, p.19)

Stanley (2018, p. 15) further argues that '... [t]he most telling symptom of fascist politics is division ... [it] distinguishes "us" from "them," appealing to

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6. A money laundering investigation which started in March 2014 and discovered that petrol stations and car washes were used by black market money dealers to launder profits. As the investigation unfolded, numerous people were charged, including Petrobras directors, business owners and politicians in a major corruption scandal.

7. One of the reasons for the impeachment of president Roussef was corruption scandals. Although she was not involved in corruption and was not charged in the car wash operation, many have felt she overlooked it, which helped trigger the impeaching process.

ethnic, religious, or racial distinctions, and using this division to shape ideology and, ultimately, policy.”

In that sense, the Brazilian presidential election campaign in 2018, as we have seen above, was a fertile ground for the far-right candidate to promote those politics of division with a well-crafted social media strategy (deliberate spread of falsehoods promoted by the candidate’s team on WhatsApp)<sup>8</sup>, which helped to install a polarization process where different multimodal texts such as fake news and memes were used to destabilize even further our low-intensity democracy. Thus, as we have seen in the introduction, different social groups have mobilised diverse resources to counter those performances and support democracy. We will look at those resources more closely in the analytical section further below.

### 3. THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In reference to Austin’s (1962) seminal book ‘How to do things with words’, Pennycook (2004, p. 10) recalls that the philosopher was concerned with ‘... [h]ow is it that language can function as a form of social activity, achieving different effects, causing people to act, bringing multiple reactions?’ Such concern, according to Pennycook (2004; 2007), problematized the Saussurean dichotomy *langue/parole* and the Chomskyan distinction *competence/performance*.

With a long and deep-seated influence in linguistic studies, those distinctions favoured the investigation of language as a system and ignored the actual use of language in social interaction. In recalling Austin’s concern, Pennycook (2007, p.13) suggests ‘... a need to focus on performance rather than competence (or better still, to do away with the distinction) since this focuses our attention on language use as a social and embodied act.’ Thus, for Pennycook (2007), focusing attention on the actual performance implies understanding that meanings and their effects are co-constructed by participants in the here and now of the interaction and are not a given that pre-exists before it.

In this view of language as performative, meanings and their effects also detach from an underlying notion of pure, denotational meaning to incorporate what Blommaert (2005, p.11) calls indexical meaning or ‘... social meaning, interpretive leads between what is said and the social occasion in which it is being produced.’ Furthermore, indexical meaning ‘... is what anchors language usage firmly into

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8. ‘WhatsApp fake News during Brazil election ‘favoured Bolsonaro’ in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/30/whatsapp-fake-news-brazil-election-favoured-jair-bolsonaro-analysis-suggests>

social and cultural patterns' (BLOMMAERT, 2005, p.12), that is, it allows a given linguistic sign to point to a socio-historical context or discourse. Thus, looking at which socio-historical discourses the MCs will be pointing to in the rap under analysis in this paper will be of crucial importance.

Another important analytical construct is entextualisation. For Bauman & Briggs (1990, p.73) entextualisation '... is the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit – a text – that can be lifted out of its interactional setting.' In this process of extraction, or taking it out of context (decontextualisation) and then placing it into another (recontextualisation) texts might be re-signified as many times as they are entextualised, carrying new meanings into new contexts.

Both analytical constructs, entextualization processes and indexical meanings, will be essential in our attempt to understand which different semiotic resources are deployed by the producer and the MCs, and how they work together, in the music video for the '*Primavera fascista*' rap song to construct dissent and a resistance discourse. For instance, by sampling different audios (and videos) of the candidate in the song, the producer and the MCs provide a new context for those samples which, in turn, bring about new meaning effects in that process. Those effects are reflected upon and dealt with in the rhymed responses the MCs creatively construct, allowing for the possibility of projecting new indexical meanings into the song. By metapragmatically reflecting (BLOMMAERT & RAMPTON, 2011) on what semiotic resources might be deployed to construct resistance, the artists make recourse to a complex of sound, visual and musical elements as well as creative use of language in what Coupland (2007) calls 'high performance'<sup>9</sup>.

In order to accomplish such task, we will thus conduct a multimodal analysis (KRESS, 2010) of the semiotic resources employed in the song. We will look at melodic patterns and rhythm (VAN LEEUWEN, 1999; MACHIN, 2010), video settings and lighting, as well as gaze, facial expressions and body movements (MACHIN, 2010; O'HALLORAN, TAN, SMITH & PODLASOV, 2011), and linguistic resources. Our attempt is thus to provide a comprehensive analysis of the music video since '... it is not only the lyrics and music but also the dress, the body, the attitude and the b-boys in the back, that give meaning to a hip-hop event.'

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9. For Coupland (2007, p. 146-147), high performance events (as opposed to mundane performance ones) are 'communicative focusing' events related to seven dimensions: form, meaning, situation, performer, relational, achievement and repertoire focusing. The interplay of those dimensions are involved in 'speakers *performing* speech' which showcases their metalinguistic awareness and 'the heightened *intensity* of performance events as a key characteristic'.

(PENNYCOOK, 2007, p.48). In the next section we present the analysis we have carried out with our data.

#### 4. PRIMAVERA FASCISTA: MEDIATISING RESISTANCE

The music video for the rap '*Primavera Fascista*' (Fascist Spring), as we have seen in the introduction, was released on YouTube in October, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, only five days before the Brazilian presidential run-off election. With the imminent victory of the far-right candidate, that rap song presented a fierce criticism to his ideas as an attempt to reverse the chances of him winning that election. As our analysis and discussion in this section will try to show, the whole rap song seems an exhaustive exercise of metapragmatic reflexivity (BLOMMAERT & RAMPTON, 2011) on the discursive effects of a number of biased declarations produced by the candidate during twenty-eight years (seven terms) as a Lower House deputy.

In an interview for the 'Scream & yell' website, the collective '*Setor Proibido*' (Forbidden Sector) reflectively discusses the title of the rap '*Primavera Fascista*' (Fascist Spring):

That term, 'spring', is normally used to talk about change, revival, the emergence of the 'new'. [...] the discourse the deputy uses to win over his electorate is exactly that one, of taking down the 'old politics' (of which he is part), of fighting corruption and the need for 'change'. What happens in this case is that the change he advocates is built on disrespect, on authoritarianism, and on prejudice. In fact, it is a step back and not new politics, as he wants people to believe.

(In: <http://screamyell.com.br/site/2018/10/26/entrevista-bolsonaro-e-um-retrocesso-diz-setor-coletivo/>, accessed 19/11/2018, our English version of original)<sup>10</sup>

By choosing the linguistic sign 'spring', the collective of rappers seem to make reference to the Arab spring movements in the Middle East in early 2011, when anti-government protests were parading and demonstrating against authoritarian regimes in the region, aiming at political change. However, by predicating that sign with the qualifier 'fascist', they index that possible change with what Stanley (2018) has called fascist politics and tactics of far-right politicians or what Santos (2001; 2016) calls a 'social fascism regime'. Such reflexivity and creativity shown by the MCs in writing that title resonates the discursive effects of the candidate's biased

10. Esse termo "*Primavera*" normalmente é utilizado para falar de mudança, renovação, surgimento do "novo". ... o discurso que o Dep. Bolsonaro utiliza para conquistar o eleitorado é exatamente esse, o de tirar a "velha política" (apesar dele mesmo ser essa velha política), o do combate à corrupção e o de necessidade de "mudança". Ocorre que neste caso, a mudança que é pregada por ele é construída na base do desrespeito, do autoritarismo, do preconceito. É na verdade um retrocesso e não uma nova política, como querem fazer a gente acreditar.

declarations and projects a (low-intensity) democratic society being governed by an authoritarian ruler.

Moreover, the rap song, according to the MCs on the same interview, was built on rhymed responses to some of the inflammatory comments the deputy has issued in different moments of his political career: ‘... [t]he idea was exactly to try and respond or counter-argue what has been said by the deputy right after the samples.’ (In: <http://screamyell.com.br/site/2018/10/26/entrevista-bolsonaro-e-um-retrocesso-diz-setor-coletivo/>, accessed 19/11/2018, our English version of original)<sup>11</sup>

Those declarations made by the candidate are thus re-entextualizations that have been sampled and can be heard in the introduction of the rap or between the verses rapped by the MCs. Each re-entextualized statement refers to specific topics the candidate was/is used to making comments about and reflects his stance towards sensitive social issues, and appear in the rap in the following order: a. dictatorship, authoritarianism, violence and fascism; b. homophobia; c. racism; d. misogyny; and e. authoritarianism.

The opening declarations (topic a. above) made by the deputy that are introduced in the beginning of the rap are as follows:

(1) Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Unfortunately, things will only change when a civil war kicks off and we do the work the [military] regime didn't. Killing some 30,000. Starting with FHC [former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso], we're not letting anyone go free, killing them. If some innocent people die, that's ok; (2) In memory of Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the dread of Dilma Rouseff.<sup>12</sup>

Re-entextualised together and functioning as the prologue to the actual rap, those declarations were made in two very distinct moments of his life as a politician. In (1), in his third term as deputy, he responds to a final question in an interview for a TV channel in May 1999, when the interviewer asks him if he would envision the country as a better place, by stating ‘... pardon me, but through voting [elections] you'll never change anything in this country. Nothing! Absolutely nothing...’, and in (2), in his seventh and last term, in April 2016, during president Dilma Rouseff's impeachment session in the Lower House, before voting *yes* to impeaching the president, the deputy paid tribute to Colonel Ustra, an officer who was the head

11. ‘... A ideia era justamente tentar responder ou contrapor o que tinha sido dito pelo Deputado na faixa antes do MC entrar ...’

12. *Nada, absolutamente nada. Você só vai mudar, infelizmente quando um dia nós partirmos para uma guerra civil aqui dentro e fazendo o trabalho que o regime ainda não fez, matando uns 30 mil. Começando com o FHC, vamos deixar pra fora não, matando. Se vai [sic] morrer alguns inocentes, tudo bem;* (2) *Pela memória do Coronel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, o pavor de Dilma Rouseff.*

of the Department of Information Operations in the Internal Defense Operations Center (*DOI/CODI*) during Brazil's military rule and accused of arresting and torturing more than five hundred Brazilians.

Although those comments were delivered within a 17-year gap, by re-textualizing them together in the beginning of the song the producer and the MC's orient viewers/listeners to a heightened emphasis on democratic disruption: through acknowledging that via democratic elections the country could not become a better place, suggesting the need of a civil war, and also through praising a torturer, the deputy makes an explicit reference to a dark period in Brazil's history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the 1964-1985 military dictatorship. Such re-textualization, thus, puts into perspective a desire of return, by the candidate and many of his followers, to an authoritarian regime.

As mentioned above, what follows after the re-textualised audio samples of the deputy's declarations in the rap song are the MC's rhymed responses to those comments. We will present our discussion of those responses through a multimodal analysis of the music video, looking into the visual, sound and linguistic/discursive resources that aim to counter-argue the candidate. In the table below, the main features of each semiotic resource utilized in the rap song in the first 01m:27s<sup>13</sup> (related to the first re-textualised audio sample) are shown in three separate columns and will be explored in two distinct sub-sections: visual and sound resources<sup>14</sup> and linguistic/discursive resources (the original lyrics for the two first verses are included in the appendix). This is done for descriptive and analytical purposes only since the strength of the rap song and its accompanying music video can only be fully understood as a whole semiotic enterprise<sup>15</sup>.

The whole rap song, however, is 09m:35s long. Two main filmic sequences make part of the narrative presented to the viewer. The first introduces a couple at home watching on TV the candidate being interviewed and/or making speeches. That sequence is presented again each time we hear a re-textualized sample of the candidate's declarations. The second sequence focuses on the MCs in three related scenes: a. as a whole crew/group before a graffitied backdrop, with the MCs rapping one at a time; b. each one of them rapping in a 'school' setting in front of a

13. Due to space constraints, the table presents only the first 01m:27s out of the 02:23s we will discuss in our paper.

14. For our analysis of the visual and sound resources we followed Van Leeuwen's (1999) and Machin's (2010) work as well as O'Halloran, Tan, Smith & Podlasov (2011). Other more encompassing methods, such as 'close reading', can be found in the literature in, for instance, Rantakallio's (2019) work on Finnish underground rap.

15. To watch the music video on YouTube go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi2WodtwW3k>

‘teacher’; and, c. each one of them rapping alone in that ‘school’ classroom. These filmic sequences occur alternately during the whole music video.

VISUAL RESOURCES <sup>16</sup>	SOUND RESOURCES	LINGUISTIC RESOURCES
0:00s Camera focuses on couple watching TV, shot from behind and showing the back of their heads; blurred TV image shows candidate being interviewed.	Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord	
0:04s Camera in ‘medium shot’: facing down the camera, MCs standing in front of a graffiti-covered wall; their moves and gestures characteristic of the hip hop/rap genre	Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord	
0:09s Title of rap song over the image of blurred TV in living room; Re-entextualised audio sample of deputy’s declarations	Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord	<b>Re-entextualized statements of former deputy/presidential candidate:</b> <i>“Nothing, absolutely nothing. Unfortunately, things will only change when ...</i>
0:15s Camera in ‘medium shot’: MCs standing behind MC <i>Bocaum</i> who is standing forward, moving around, nodding, and facing camera; Re-entextualised audio sample of deputy’s declarations	Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord	<i>... a civil war kicks off and we do the work that the [military] regime didn’t. Killing some 30,000. Starting with FHC [former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso] ...</i>
0:23s Camera in ‘shallow focus’: couple watching TV; Blurred TV image shows candidate being interviewed; Re-entextualised audio sample of deputy’s declarations	Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord	<i>... we’re not letting anyone go free, killing them. If some innocent people die, ...</i>

16. The categories for camera work were adapted from O’Halloran, Tan, Smith & Podlasov (2011) and the Multimodal Analysis Video (MMA Video) software (2013, Multimodal Analysis Company, in: <http://multimodal-analysis.com/products/multimodal-analysis-video/index.html>)

<p>0:26s Camera in 'medium shot': MCs standing behind MC <i>Bocaum</i> who is standing forward, moving around, nodding, and facing camera; Re-entextualised audio sample of deputy's declarations</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord</p>	<p>... <i>that's ok ...</i>"; "In memory of Colonel ...</p>
<p>0:29s Camera <i>dolly</i>ing (moving from right to left): couple watching TV and TV blurred image of deputy speaking in congress; Re-entextualised audio sample of deputy's declarations</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord</p>	<p>... <i>Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the dread of Dilma Roussef ...</i> "</p>
<p>0:37s Camera in 'medium shot': MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating.</p>	<p>Beat starts with heavy bass kick drums + Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord continues</p>	<p>Lyrics: 1 Idolising fascists, supporting torture 2 And the manipulated people want to put you in power 3 I am the civil war, ...</p>
<p>0:43s Camera in 'shallow focus': MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now sitting and rapping in front of a 'teacher' (blurred, seen from the back) in what seems to be a classroom. Focus in on the MC rapping while the other MCs are blurred and playing classmates.</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... I do not fear your dictatorship 4 And if someone has to die then you should die 5 You speak in the name of God, but you are evil 6 And your concept of family, ...</p>
<p>0:53s Camera in 'medium shot': MC <i>Bocaum</i> keeps on rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating.</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... is outdated 7 I'm Marielle and Master Moa 8 I came from the mud, cut like a diamond from Sierra Leone 9 I'm here, my blood boils in the verve of chaos 10 And the minority group I belong to has no bad [people]</p>

<p>1m:03s Camera in <i>'frontal view perspective'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now rapping while sitting in front of teacher's desk, on his own in what seems to be a classroom, facing the camera</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>11 You hate to see the bricklayer's son graduate 12 Because your father paid ten years of private tuition</p>
<p>1m:08s Camera in <i>'medium shot'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> keeps on rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>13 And you're still nothing, but you talk too much 14 I also fight for the past and for my ancestors 15 I despise homophobia, ...</p>
<p>1m:13s Camera in <i>'frontal view perspective'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now rapping while sitting in front of a teacher's desk, on his own in what seems to be a classroom, facing the camera</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... fascism and messiah 16 I'm small and with a stone ...</p>
<p>1m:16s Camera in <i>'medium shot'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> keeps on rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... I take down the Goliaths 17 You killed 30,000 ...</p>
<p>1m:18s Camera in <i>'frontal view perspective'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now rapping while sitting in front of a desk on his own in what seems to be a classroom</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... and some of them are mine 18 You are prophesying ...</p>
<p>1m:20s Camera in <i>'shallow focus'</i>: MC <i>Bocaum</i> is now sitting and rapping in front of a 'teacher' (blurred, seen from the back) in what seems to be a classroom. Focus is on the MC rapping while the other MCs are blurred and playing classmates.</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... vows just like Pharisees 19 That does not end with this come and go samsara 20 Your thoughts are...</p>

<p>1m:23s Camera in 'medium shot': MC <i>Bocaum</i> keeps on rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; MC <i>Bocaum</i> finishes his rap. The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>... dirtier than your own 'pau-de-arara' [a torture instrument/method]</p>
<p>1m:27s Camera in 'medium shot': MC <i>Leoni</i> comes in, changing positions with MC <i>Bocaum</i>, and rapping, with moves and gestures characteristic of hip hop/rap genre; The other MCs are standing behind him also moving and gesticulating</p>	<p>Synthesiser variation on a G minor chord on top of heavy bass kick drums beat</p>	<p>21 You want to taste my poison, then take it 22 Opening up minds without leaving room for them to close up again 23 You can have money, but if you are not educated 24 You're just another rich guy shitting on our culture. Really??</p>

#### 4.1 Visual and sound resources

The visual and sound resources described in the left and middle column in the table above present the filmic sequence of the first 01m:27s of the rap song and can be divided into two main parts: up to the first 00:36s of the music video, the scenes change from a couple watching television, filmed from the back, to the MCs standing in front of a graffiti-covered wall, making moves and gestures which are characteristic of the hip hop/rap genre. The characters played by the couple might be interpreted as possible voters in the then-upcoming election watching the prejudiced comments made by the far-right candidate on TV. In this first part, we can hear (and watch) the audio samples of the declarations made by the deputy while we watch the scenes mentioned above. The second part begins at 00:37s when the first two MCs (*Bocaum* and *Leoni*) start rapping and ends at 02m:23s.

What is important to notice in this introductory part of the video (00:00 – 00:36s) is that the blurred images on the TV that the couple is watching are from the exact (televised) moments when the deputy made his comments in 1999 and 2016<sup>17</sup>, respectively, which emphasises the candidate's long-standing appreciation of authoritarian regimes. By blurring the original footage, the filmic narrative focuses on the reactions the couple have while watching those specific moments. As we are not able to see the couple's faces, their hand and head movements

17. Original and/or adapted footage can be found on YouTube such as in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWOWsUiddhg>

(O'HALLORAN, TAN, SMITH & PODLASOV, 2011) might lead the viewers to interpret their possible anxiety while watching and listening to the deputy. More specifically, at 00:23s, we can see the man holding the back of his neck with his hand, a move that might be interpreted as someone observing a tense situation (see image 01 below).



Image 01. man holds the back of his neck

Likewise, in the next filmic sequence at 00:33-34s, when the camera films the woman, she shakes her head negatively while the deputy mentions '... the dread of Dilma Roussef.'<sup>18</sup> The image below freezes the moment when the two-second sequence starts.

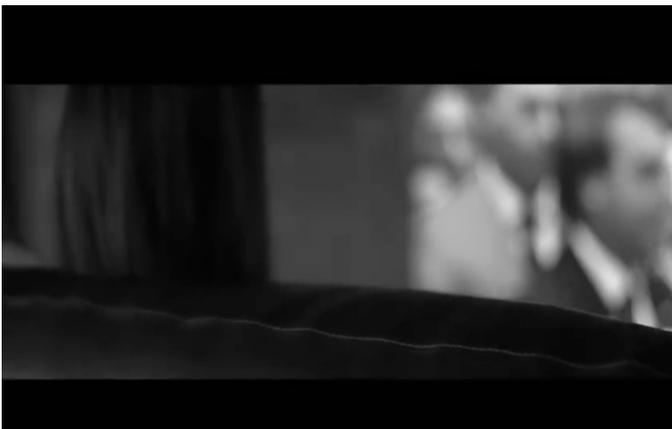


Image 02. still image of head shaking movement with the blurred image of deputy on TV

18. '...o pavor de Dilma Roussef'

Those two specific scenes seem to be indexing meanings (or discourses) about discomfort, tension, dissatisfaction and dissent (with the head shaking movement) where the characters played by the couple do not seem to agree with the comments. Moreover, another important aspect that can be observed in the music video (not captured in the black and white still images above) is the use of the colour red fulfilling the living/TV room where the couple is. As '[c]olour is also often used to communicate moods...' (Machin, 2010, p. 61), and the meanings of red ranging from passion and love to anger, warning and danger, the use of such lighting effect in the scenes involving the couple seems to index meanings (or discourses) about agitation and anger from their part, an affective response to what they have just heard and watched.

In addition to the lighting effects and body movements seen above, another very important element is the music. In this introductory part of the video (00:00 – 00:36s), we only have the sound of a synthesiser being played, more specifically, a slow and recurrent variation on a G minor chord. Minor notes and minor chords usually '... causes the music to sound 'minor', or 'sad' (VAN LEEUWEN, 1999, p. 40). Thus, that G minor chord variation also suggests a situation of anxiety and tension, therefore creating a dark and bleak atmosphere while the couple watches and listens to the re-entextualised declarations of the deputy.

In the second part of this video excerpt, beginning at 00:37s and ending at 02m:23s, the actual rap is performed by the first two MCs, *Bocaum* and *Leoni*, respectively, presenting to the viewers/listeners the first two verses of the rap song. The filmic sequence can be divided into three main scenes that are repeated interchangeably: 1. At 00:37s, MC *Bocaum* starts rapping, with his fellow MCs moving and gesticulating behind him, and having as the backdrop graffitied walls (including the 'escola de rima' - school of rhyme<sup>19</sup> - sign graffitied on it); 2. At 00:43s, the scene changes to what seems to be a 'classroom' where MC *Bocaum* is now rapping while sitting and facing a 'teacher' (seen from the back), with his fellow MCs sitting behind him (both the 'teacher' and the MCs are out of focus); and 3. At 01m:03s, the scene changes to MC *Bocaum* rapping while sitting in the same classroom, only that this time he is alone in the room.

The first scene reminds us of classic rap music videos where the main rapper and his crew are seen together (image 03 below) in a setting which includes various elements of hip hop, including graffiti. All seven MCs (including the only woman, MC *Mary Jane*) and their producer, *Tibery*, wear mainly loose black outfits, t-shirts

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19. The 'school of rhyme' graffitied sign makes reference to a project started by MC Adikto in a public school in Vitória, ES.

designed with rap references and black jeans trousers and/or shorts, and make moves and gestures which are characteristic of the rap music genre. Here, dress code, bodily movement, the graffitied walls, and the music are all semiotic resources that encompass the world of hip hop and, thus, can be read as affiliation (or translocally belonging to) to the 'Global Hip Hop Nation' (ALIM, 2009b).



Image 03. the seven MCs and the producer (to the girl's left)

In the image above, at 00:36s, just before MC *Bocaum* starts rapping, we can observe that gaze seems to be one of the main aspects to be highlighted: the foregrounded MC looks straight to the camera with a fierce, upset look, and is followed by his fellow MCs also giving a defiant look. This is emphasised by the camera angle where we can observe that the MCs at the back have their heads slightly tilted up and are looking down at the viewers/camera. According to Machin (2010, p. 42), '[w]hen we look up at a subject we tend to give them power, ...', that is, the viewer(s) is led to see the artist(s) as having the authority over the narrative, which seems to be the case in image 03 when they prepare to perform the rap. Thus, such combination of a defiant gaze and powerful posture seems already a strong response to the re-entextualised statements in the audio samples that introduce the rap.

Next in the filmic sequence, we can see now that MC *Bocaum* is rapping in what seems to be a 'classroom' (image 04 below), which can be connected to the '*escola de rima*' (school of rhyme) graffiti on the backdrop wall of the previous image. Such 'school' setting, however, presents a disruption of the commonsensical understanding of the 'teacher-student' relationship, that is, the 'student' here is the one who does the 'teaching', lecturing the 'teacher'. That disruption hands the authority over to the rappers/'students' who then control what they want to say to the 'teacher' with their rhymes. Moreover, this video setting also indexes

the fifth element in hip hop: ‘... [f]or Afrika BamBaataa and Zulu Nation, the crucial fifth element is *Knowledge*: knowledge and awareness through hip hop ...’ (PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 86). Thus, we might interpret that the whole complex of semiotic resources encompassed in the music video, a well-crafted connection between the images, settings, the music, the beats, body movements and gestures, facial expressions, and lyrical dexterity are put together so that the MCs are able to promote awareness and knowledge about the dangers of authoritarianism.



Image 04. MC *Bocaum* and the ‘teacher’

As mentioned earlier, in this scene the ‘students’ behind *Bocaum* are played by the other MCs and are out of focus. Likewise, the ‘teacher’ is also out of focus, thus giving prominence to the MC that is rapping, the only one whose image is sharp. Also important in this sequence, however, is that the viewers are led to infer that the ‘teacher’ character might represent the deputy being confronted in a face-to-face situation. This is emphasised by the lines (3-4)<sup>20</sup> the MC raps to the character’s face: ‘I do not fear your dictatorship/And if someone has to die, then you should die/You speak in the name of God, but you are evil ...’<sup>21</sup> which responds directly to the praise the deputy makes to the military regime and his argument that it did not kill enough people. Such rebuttal of his comments also indexes a religious discourse: the deputy has always invoked God as the guide of his attitudes and behaviour; however, the rapper points out that what he praises (torture and killings) are actual acts of evil, that is, acts that are repelled by Christian dogmas.

Further, the next scene (image 05 below) shows the MC sitting alone in the ‘classroom’ and rapping. Instead of having a character in the scene as the addressee

20. Numbered lines of our English version of the lyrics in the table and in Portuguese in the appendix.

21. ‘eu não temo a sua ditadura/é se alguém tem que morrer, então que morra você/Cês falam em nome de Deus, mas são diabo ...’

of his rhymes, it is possible to infer that the rapper is addressing the deputy's followers. This seems stressed in the following lines (11-12) 'you hate to see the bricklayer's son graduate/because your father paid ten years of private tuition...' <sup>22</sup> where 'you' and 'your father' might refer to an elitist middle class who despises the working class, indexed by the predicate 'bricklayer's son'.



Image 05. MC *Bocaum* on his own

By looking down to the camera (and the viewers) the rapper highlights once again his authority over the narrative and the topics he is discussing. Moreover, the angry, frowned face image we see further helps to stress his dissent with those who empathise with the deputy's discourse. And his fist smashing the desk emphasises even more his indignation being let out. Those still images presented above (3, 4 and 5) help to illustrate how the dissatisfaction and dissent performed by the rapper(s) might be visually perceived through their gaze, body/hand movements and facial expressions.

In terms of sound and music resources, after the introductory part when we only hear the synthesiser, at 00:37s the actual rap beats start. The beats produced by *Tibery* have a slow tempo and a heavy sub-bass kick drum which contrasts to the fast rhymes of both MC *Bocaum* and MC *Leoni*. Such combination seems perfect to create the mood of the rap and of the music video in general since heavy beats index a dark and ominous atmosphere and the fast flow put forward by the MCs seem to index meanings about indignation, anger and defiance.

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22. 'tem ódio em ver o filho do pedreiro se formar/porque seu pai pagou 10 anos de facul particular ...'

These resources successfully add up to other visual ones (setting, lighting), as well as the linguistic resources the rappers deploy to create the atmosphere of repulsion to what they hear and see from the deputy. In the next section, we look more closely at the linguistic resources.

## 4.2 Linguistic resources

As we have seen earlier, MC *Bocaum* and MC *Leoni* rhyme in response to the first two re-textualised audio samples in the beginning of the song which refer to topic (a) seen above (dictatorship, authoritarianism, violence and fascism), where the deputy asserts that: 1. only with a civil war things would change in the country, which would kill people, including innocent ones, something, he remarks, the (military) regime did not do; and 2. during president Dilma Rouseff's impeachment session in the Lower House, the deputy paid homage to a torturer.

In line 1, 'Idolising fascists, supporting torture...' <sup>23</sup> the rapper emphasises that the deputy/presidential candidate openly supports torture and fascist behaviour, since the colonel mentioned by him in the audio sample was well-known for the use of violence during the Brazilian dictatorship regime. By making reference to the deputy's praise of a torturer, the rapper situates the listener in that historical moment in the country (the regime lasted from 1964 to 1985), when democracy was suspended and human rights were hardly respected, which helps to index practices that are common in those regimes such as persecution, torture and the killings of those who dared to go against that authoritarian government, as was the case of former president Rouseff who was tortured at that time. Such reference seems significant in its attempt to reinforce what the return to an authoritarian government might encompass, pointing out the dangers of subscribing to the ideas that the deputy openly supported.

In the next lines (2-20), the rapper defies the ideas of the candidate in what seems an exercise of contrasting positions, of 'us versus them', by using the personal pronouns 'you/they' and 'I' and adjective pronouns 'your(s)' and 'my/ours'. In that way, he is able to create a series of opposing patterns: on one hand, we find included 'fascist', 'evil', 'manipulated people', 'bad [people]', and 'dirtier thoughts', to predicate the candidate and his followers, and/or his/their attitudes and ideas; on the other, origin and group belonging index discourses about resistance projected by social and geographical references as in 'I came from the mud' <sup>24</sup>, line 8, and 'the

23. 'Idolatrando fascista, apoiando a tortura...'

24. 'Eu vim da lama'

minority group I belong to'<sup>25</sup>, line 10, which indexes meanings about minority groups representing the ones who are in a constant fight for their rights and equality, and also defending democracy.

Such pattern also indexes discourses about violence and hatred, on one hand, and discourses about minorities who struggle to defend their constitutional rights, on the other. Moreover, referencing two specific people, Marielle and Mestre Moa (line 7), who became well-known nationally and internationally after they were murdered, makes that opposing pattern explicit and very significant. The first, Marielle Franco, a Rio de Janeiro councillor and outspoken human rights campaigner was executed after a car ambush in March 2018, most probably due to her active work in condemning police brutality and illegal 'militias' in Rio de Janeiro's '*favelas*'. Mestre Moa do Katendê, an antiracist activist/educator and capoeira master in Salvador, Bahia, was stabbed to death after declaring not to have voted for the far-right candidate in October 2018. More relevant, perhaps, than indexing discourses about the extreme outcome of social fascism, 'extermination' (STANLEY, 2018, p. 19), those two cultural references, Marielle and Moa, actually index belonging to the same minority group, facing the same hardships and fighting the same battles, encompassing a collective resistance of those who are stigmatised and marginalised.

Furthermore, by indexing discourses about the family and religion in lines 5 and 6, 'You speak in the name of God, but you are evil/and your concept of family is outdated'<sup>26</sup>, the rapper questions how the candidate (and his followers) perceive those discourses, since his belief in the traditional patriarchal family does not recognise any other type of family assemblages (single-parent families, same-sex families, etc.), reinforcing and promoting discrimination and prejudice against the latter possibilities. Such a stance also places the rapper in the position of resisting discrimination and prejudice, which is indexed by the signs '*fight*' and '*despise*', in lines 14-16: 'I also fight for the past and for my ancestors/I despise homophobia, fascism and messiah/I'm small and with a stone I take down the Goliath'<sup>27</sup>. In this last line, fight and resistance are indexed with reference to a biblical passage<sup>28</sup>, David and Goliath, a reference that seems to have the intention to inspire minority groups, such as the black and the LGBTQI+ communities, that the Goliath who promotes racist, homophobic, and fascist discourses can be defeated.

25. '*a minoria que eu sou*'

26. '*cês falam em nome de Deus, mas são diabo/e o seu conceito de família anda atrasado*'

27. '*Eu também luto pro passado e pros meus ancestrais/tenho aversão à homofobia, fascismo e messias/eu sou pequeno e na pedrada eu derrubo os Golias*'

28. Old testament (I Sam. 17:48-51)

By presenting opposing discourses in this first verse, that is, discourses that support and praise authoritarian/fascist practices, such as torture, against discourses that resist every practice of discrimination and prejudice, MC *Bocaum* mobilises important performative effects on his listeners: to engage them reflexively on the consequences of electing such a candidate.

The second verse, rapped by MC *Leoni*, starts by addressing followers of the candidate with one of the main elements of rap and hip hop: knowledge. In lines 21-24, 'You want to taste my poison, then take it/opening up minds without leaving room for them to close up again/you can have money, but if you're not educated/ You're just another rich guy shitting on our culture. Really?'<sup>29</sup>, the poison the MC wants them to taste, his rhymes/poetry, will open up their minds and enable them to become better informed. By indexing what hip hop culture stands for, the MC suggests that some citizens might be well-off but are ignorant and disrespectful towards the hip hop movement while, in fact, it is an educational and liberating force for many minority groups. This is reinforced in line 33 when the rapper states 'give Brazil to hip hop that we'll solve the problem'<sup>30</sup>, once again emphasising the power of hip hop culture.

In lines 25 and 26 (also 27-28 and 34-35), 'The police car holds me because they think I'm a suspect/torture is what they do to me in the alleyways'<sup>31</sup>, MC *Leoni* indexes a long history of police violence in the country, a side-effect of the structural racism that is persistent and pervasive in Brazilian society. The use of stop and search by police, that most of the time finds one is a suspect on the grounds of race, frequently ends up in insulting, physical violence and oftentimes death perpetrated by policemen. By presenting a racial and spatial reference, the MC reinforces that blacks are the ones who are already tortured in the alleyways of the many '*favelas*' in the country in line 28: '4 o'clock in the morning and the police is insulting one more black'<sup>32</sup>. Thus, voting for someone who sympathises with such practices should be unacceptable, as the MC indicates by asking in lines 29-30: 'Fuck, are you racists, are you fascists?/Or are you eating shit to vote for this hyena?'<sup>33</sup>. Such confrontational stance seems one of the strategies employed by MC *Leoni* to show his indignation.

29. 'querem provar do meu veneno, então segura/ arregaçando mentes sem dar margem pra sutura/cê pode ter dinheiro, mas se não tiver leitura/é só mais um cara rico cagando em nossa cultura. Cê jura?'

30. 'dá o Brasil pro hip hop que nós resolve o problema'

31. '... a viatura me enquadra porque eu sou suspeito/tortura é o que fazem comigo dentro dos becos '

32. 'quatro horas da manhã e a polícia injuriando mais um preto'

33. 'Porra, cês são racistas, cês são fascistas/ou cês tão comendo merda pra votar nessa biena?'

That strategy can be observed again in lines 36-39 where the issue of racism is brought into discussion. When the rapper inquires the deputy by asking ‘you say that black people are no good for procreating anymore?’<sup>34</sup>, he re-entextualises another audio sample which appears later in the rap (fourth verse at 04m:39s) when the deputy, after a visit to a *quilombo* [a settlement founded by the descendants of runaway slaves], stated<sup>35</sup> that ‘the lightest afrodescendant there weighed seven *arrobas* [measure of weight – one *arroba* equals 15kg]. He doesn’t do anything. I don’t think he’s even good for procreating anymore.’<sup>36</sup>

Such re-entextualisation clearly reinforces the fascist politics of dehumanizing the other (Stanley, 2018) which is highlighted with his use of the term *arroba* as a measure of weight that is used for weighing cattle. While not explicitly stigmatizing the person with an animal term (the deputy actually uses afrodescendant to refer to one of the members of the *quilombo*), using *arroba* seems to imply ‘... inhumane treatment, ...’ (Stanley, 20018, p.19). The rapper, on the other hand, demands respect, ‘respect my origins, my wife and the son I had with her’<sup>37</sup> (line 37), more specifically, respect for his afrodescendant origins, contradicting and confronting the claim made by the deputy.

In the last line of his rap, MC *Leoni* ends his rhymes by calling him a ‘sucker’: ‘but you’re more of a sucker/sucking the government dry for over 28 years’<sup>38</sup>. With that confrontational stance, the rapper indexes his seven terms as a Lower House deputy, a period when he saw only two of his 170 proposed bills be approved by the Chamber. That reference seems to emphasise the contrast with one of his promises during his electoral campaign, that he would take down the ‘old politics’ and make it anew. With that stance, the rapper suggests that he is actually presenting an empty promise.

As our analysis above showed, the music video for the ‘*Primavera Fascista*’ (Fascist Spring) rap song can be considered one important example of resistance discourse against contemporary fascism available on social media (YouTube). The wide range of semiotic resources that are utilized by the rappers to present their dissatisfaction, dissent and resistance towards one specific candidate illustrates that importance. In the next section, we present our final considerations on our previous

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34. ‘*fala que preto não procria?*’

35. That statement was made in a Jewish community club, Hebraica, in Rio de Janeiro, on April 3rd 2017, while campaigning for election.

36. ‘*O afrodescendente mais leve lá pesava sete arrobas. Não fazem nada. Eu acho que nem pra procriar ele serve mais.*’

37. ‘*respeite as minhas origens, minha mulher e o filho que eu tive com ela*’

38. ‘*tá mais pra mamador/mamando em nossa teta há mais de 28 anos*’

discussion and the relevance of a strong critical stance in times of increasing social fascism.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this paper we have attempted to describe and discuss how resistance to contemporary fascism is multimodally constructed. For our analysis, we have selected the rap music video *'Primavera Fascista'*, which was released on YouTube within a very significant spacetime constraint: the 2018 Brazilian presidential elections. In order to carry out our investigation, we drew upon the analytical constructs of indexicality (BLOMMAERT, 2010), and entextualization (BAUMAN & BRIGGS, 1990) to illustrate how resistance, dissatisfaction and dissent is performed by the rappers using a complex range of semiotic resources. We have focused not only in the linguistic resources used by the MCs but also on the visual and sound resources so as to have a more comprehensive understanding of that particular cultural artefact.

In terms of linguistic resources, the rappers employ direct forms of reference to voice their dissatisfaction and dissent. That seems clear through their extensive use of the binary 'us versus them'. They successfully use 'us' to construct a deep sense of belonging through cultural, social and geographical references capable of encompassing a collective of minority groups which includes cultural references such as Marielle Franco and Master Moa, the bricklayer's son, and the black community who lives in the different *'favelas'* in the country. On the other hand, 'them', which seems to include the candidate, his followers, elite groups and the police, are directly confronted and predicated as racists and fascists, evil-doers who are violent and dehumanize the others.

Another important cultural reference that is employed by the rappers to reinforce belonging and identity is the hip hop movement. Through the emphasis on its fifth element, knowledge, present in the 'school' setting of the video and in the rhymes that are intended to open up people's minds, hip hop and rap make people aware of social issues and behaviours that affect a wide range of stigmatized minority groups. Thus, the rappers foreground hip hop to attain empowerment in the fight against discrimination and prejudice, violence and social fascism.

Although less prominent than the references pointed out above, other social institutions are indexed by the rappers and become their target of dissatisfaction and dissent. Religion and the patriarchal family, used endlessly by the far-right

politician to support his authoritarian ideas, are references that are criticised and deemed responsible for perpetuating division and an unjust society.

In terms of visual and sound resources, the producer and the MCs were also successful in showcasing their dissatisfaction and dissent through the video and the music. As we have seen in the previous section, the setting and lighting as well as the music helped to create the dark, bleak atmosphere in the video. Those resources helped to provoke anxiety, discomfort and anger. The slow tempo and heavy beats and the fast flow of the rappers seemed to match perfectly to allow them let their indignation out. That is reinforced with the gaze and body movements that they portray throughout the rap. As a whole, those resources are crucial in presenting dissatisfaction and dissent and ultimately resistance to authoritarian discourses.

Moreover, we might argue that the rap song '*Primavera Fascista*' ultimately questions the increasing dangers of a low-intensity democracy (Santos, 2016). It rejects those conservative and traditional ideas and beliefs anchored on the praise of the family, the homeland and God<sup>39</sup> that reveal the desire of consolidating such fascist ideas and beliefs in society by those now in power. It rejects the increasing contempt for socially disadvantaged and economically deprived minority groups in Brazilian society. On the other hand, it brings into the spotlight those at the margins who give voice to the voiceless and fight exclusionary processes. Politically conscious rap songs like this one are more than ever needed to destabilise the 'periphery-center' dichotomy which is defined '... by relations of exploitation / economic injustice and symbolic domination, enacted by the center in reference to the periphery' (MOITA LOPES & BAYNHAM, 2017, p. vi). Those rappers, then, become the agents of resistance in times of a crumbling democracy.

In sum, we hope that our discussion of dissent and resistance in that rap song and its music video on YouTube can help contribute to contemporary research in sociolinguistics. Those at the margins performatively (PENNYCOOK, 2004; 2007) construct new meanings. Their 'high-performance' (COUPLAND, 2007) use of language and its interplay with other semiotic resources are mixed and sampled with great dexterity. Dominating the mic, the language and rhyme, they open up new possibilities for social critique.

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39. 'God, homeland and the family' was the motto of the 'Ação Integralista Brasileira', a fascist and anti-communist movement founded in 1932 in São Paulo, Brazil, which has resurfaced after the now-president used it to launch a new political party (not yet approved by the electoral justice), 'Alliance for Brazil', in 2019. (<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/12/com-lemas-copiado-por-bolsonaro-integralismo-tem-raro-acervo-preservado-no-rs.shtml>)

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## APPENDIX

### Primavera Fascista<sup>40</sup>

#### Setor Proibido

[Bocaum]

- 1 Idolatrando fascista, apoiando a tortura
- 2 E o povo manipulado quer te por no poder
- 3 Eu sou a guerra civil, não temo sua ditadura
- 4 E se alguém tem que morrer, então que morra você
- 5 Cês falam em nome de Deus, mas são diabo
- 6 E o seu conceito de família, anda atrasado
- 7 Sou Marielle e Mestre Moa
- 8 Eu vim da lama lapidado, pique diamante de Serra Leoa
- 9 Eu tô aqui, meu sangue ferve na verve do caos
- 10 É a minoria que eu sou, não faz parte dos maus
- 11 Tem ódio em ver o filho do pedreiro se formar
- 12 Porque seu pai pagou 10 anos de facul particular
- 13 E você segue sendo nada, mas fala demais
- 14 Eu também luto pro passado e pros meus ancestrais
- 15 Tenho aversão à homofobia, fascismo e messias
- 16 Eu sou pequeno e na pedrada eu derrubo os Golias
- 17 Vocês mataram 30 mil e alguns deles são meus
- 18 Cês tão profetizando votos igual fariseus
- 19 Que não acaba com esse vai e vem samsara
- 20 É os pensamentos tão mais sujos que seu próprio pau de arara

[Leoni]

- 21 Querem provar do meu veneno então segura
- 22 Arregaçando mentes sem dar margem pra sutura
- 23 Cê pode ter dinheiro, mas se não tiver leitura
- 24 E só mais um cara rico cagando em nossa cultura, cê jura??
- 25 Que a viatura me enquadra porque eu sou suspeito
- 26 Tortura é o que fazem comigo dentro dos becos

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40. We have included here in the appendix only the first two original verses which are analysed in the paper. The remaining verses can be found in the following link: <https://www.lettras.mus.br/setor-proibido/primavera-fascista/>

- 27 A essa altura é o diabo no divã
- 28 Quatro horas da manhã e a polícia injuriando mais um preto
- 29 Porra cês são racistas, cês são fascistas??
- 30 Ou cês tão comendo merda pra votar nessa hyena??
- 31 Pau no cu do ibope
- 32 Foda-se a bope
- 33 Dá o Brasil pro hip hop que nós resolve o problema
- 34 Os mesmos buchas que votaram no boçal
- 35 Nunca passaram mal na mão dos verme na favela
- 36 Fala que preto não procria?
- 37 Respeite as minhas origens, minha mulher e o filho que eu tive com ela
- 38 Cê num entende de economia (não, não)
- 39 Só racismo e xenofobia
- 40 Fechadão com ator pornô, Rita Lee te caguetou
- 41 Que num passado bem recente curtia pederastia
- 42 Vai acabar com a regalia?
- 43 Mano, que que você tá falando?
- 44 Sua marra é de ditador
- 45 Tá mais pra mamador
- 46 Mamando em nossa teta há mais de 28 anos

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