WHY DO WOMEN VOTE FOR FAR RIGHT-WING CANDIDATES?

THE CASE OF THE 2018 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN BRAZIL

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned *Maria Paula Russo Riva*, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract: This thesis investigates the motivations behind the female share of the electorate to vote for the far-right illiberal candidate Jair Bolsonaro during the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil. Research thus far has largely focused on the support for the far-right being majority-male, which belies support given by millions of women to the radical right. This thesis contends that only an isolated assessment of female voters and its sociodemographic subgroups allows for a better understanding of why women choose a candidate with anti-gender rhetoric. Analysis from CESOP 2018 data questions previous literature that associates evangelism as a significant predictor of far-right voting across the Brazilian population, as the results are not robust to confirm its impact among female voters. More importantly, this thesis demonstrates that social media usage and participation in online political groups influenced voting for Bolsonaro, and that this influence is significantly stronger among evangelical women compared to other religious affiliations. These findings raise awareness of patterns of social media usage influencing voting behaviour, and future research could explore the role of social media not merely as a mediator, but as a possible driver for the electoral success of illiberal candidates.

Key words: gender voting behaviour, far-right support, Brazil, religion, social media

1 Introduction

Despite vocalizing racist, homophobic and sexist messages on several occasions (Setzler 2020), the illiberal populist far-right candidate Jair Messias Bolsonaro won the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil with the majority of women's vote (Nicolau 2020). Bolsonaro's victory was surprising to scholars on many levels, who since then have been trying to understand the general motives behind his appeal to 57,797,847 voters (Superior Electoral Court 2018). After all, he ran with little funding, media coverage, and name recognition (Fuks et al. 2020), and without the support of a strong, nation-wide party organization (Ribeiro and Borges 2019). Research thus far has focused on structural explanations and the rejection-based component of the political establishment by voters, which led to millions of women's motivations for this far-right candidate being largely left unconsidered.

The three main structural factors most commonly associated with the emergence of a radical right politician in Brazil are economic crisis, political instability, and crime rates (Payne and Santos 2020). Since 2014/2015, the country has been scarred by a severe economic recession, followed by the implementation of austerity measures to reduce public spending (Payne and Santos 2020). In addition, general feelings of dissatisfaction grew among Brazilians towards mainstream political parties – especially against the Workers' Party (PT), which occupied the presidency from 2003-2016 –, after a major criminal investigation disclosed widespread corruption scandals, clientelism and graft involving traditional elites (Fuks et. al 2020; Mungiu-Pippidi 2020; Rennó 2020; Duque and Smith 2019). Also, Brazil is among many infant democracies from the "third wave of democratization" (Huntington 1991) whose government lacks strong institutions and sufficient apparatus to tackle persisting levels of criminal violence and organized crime (Foa 2021; Hunter and Power 2019; Fukuyama 2015). Therefore, Bolsonaro's surging

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electoral appeal is believed to derive from his portrayed image as a strong leader and a political outsider, committed to coming down hard on crime and corruption amidst a period of severe economic contraction (Foa 2021; Almeida and Guarnieri 2020; Setzler 2020).

A further significant factor that is claimed to have allowed Bolsonaro to become a hopeful contender in the 2018 presidential race was the usage of social media platforms to disseminate disinformation (Lupu et al. 2020). Facebook, and more specifically the messaging app WhatsApp, were both used by Bolsonaro's supporters to spread right-wing fake news to discredit the electoral opponent Fernando Haddad from the Workers' Party (Guess and Lyons 2020; Lupu et al. 2020; Avelar 2019). As disclosed by the Brazilian national newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, companies publicly associated with Bolsonaro were responsible for mass-delivering fake news through WhatsApp right before the second round of the elections (Mello 2018). It would be indeed expected that WhatsApp might be fruitful to sow disinformation, given its widespread use by nearly 120 out of 210 million residents in the country. Moreover, through closed group messaging in encrypted form supporters can mobilize and disseminate political ideas privately (Caetano et. al. 2019; Resende et. al. 2019). Therefore, fake news dissemination through social media, alongside with political instability, economic crisis, and fragile institutional apparatus, is suggested to have facilitated the rise of an authoritarian populist leader in Brazil.

A third set of explanation stresses, however, that Bolsonaro's conservative rhetoric on the need to preserve traditional family compositions and moral values resonated with the political moment among certain demographics (Rennó 2020). In a country with long and prevailing history of sexism (or "*machismo*") (Harrington 2015) and high levels of religiosity (Santos and Moddelmog 2019b), Bolsonaro connected public outcries to

combat crime and corruption with the potential threat posed by LGBTQI+ and feminist movements to the "*citizens of good will*" (Payne and Santos 2020). In this respect, several anti-LGBTQI+ and anti-feminist fake news stories reached the more conservative share of the electorate during the presidential campaign, especially evangelicals, via social media (Smith and Lloyd 2018; Barragán 2018). This alleged political strategy of microtargeting evangelical religious groups was proven very successful for Bolsonaro, as evangelism was found to be one of the strongest predictors of vote choice in 2018 (Layton et. al. 2021; Setzler 2020). Moreover, while in previous presidential elections gender had been a minor determinant of vote choice in Brazil (Nicolau 2020; Nadeau et al. 2017), Bolsonaro's controversial stances are argued to have appealed more to men than women (Amaral 2020). This shows that there is a stereotype associated with far-right support in Brazil as male and evangelical, to whom Bolsonaro's conservativism seem to have resonated accordingly.

Despite the role women played for the electoral success of Bolsonaro, previous studies fell short in explaining the exact reasons behind the support for this radical right candidate. The common assumption that still prevails is that Bolsonaro's misogynist, racist and homophobic widely known stances (Assis and Ogando 2018) caused abhorrence to the female electorate altogether. In fact, the polls showed that 53% of women's valid votes were for Bolsonaro (Nicolau 2020, p. 687). Therefore, what factors drove women to the far-right, supporting a candidate in the 2018 Brazilian presidential elections with a long record of offending women?

The paucity of research on women's support for the far-right is not restricted to Brazil, as women are rarely featured in depictions of far-right voting (Allen and Goodman 2021; Setzler and Yanus 2018). Instead, a considerable amount of literature establishes that women from varied locations are increasingly taking more liberal political stances

compared to men, among many reasons, because of secularism and higher participation in the paid workforce (e.g. Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Inglehart and Norris 2000). Furthermore, scholarship also argues that conservative women are less inclined than men to translate extreme positions into far-right support, even when they concur with its ideology, due to their distinct economic and sociocultural attitudes, as well as higher levels of religiosity leading to firmer attachment with Christian Democratic or conservative parties (e.g. Allen and Goodman 2021; Hansen 2019; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). As a result, analyses on the gendered dimensions of far right-wing parties' surge are mostly focused on the number of male supporters which significantly and consistently outnumber women in consolidated democratic societies from Europe and North America (Harteveld et al. 2019; Harteveld and Ivarsflaten 2018; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Gidengil et al. 2005; Givens 2004). This lack of research on the specific motivations of women to vote for far-right parties indicates the necessity of focusing exclusively on female voters, without using male voters as the sole comparative frame of reference.

Apart from generally focusing on the gender gap in the electoral support for the far-right, most studies are limited to European and North American post-industrial societies. While this line of work often predicts far-right voting based on economic and cultural grievances against immigration (Allen and Goodman 2021), and to a lesser extent on the maintenance of law and order (Gidengil et al. 2005), several country-specific circumstances deserve to be considered when investigating female vote in Brazil. These range from the distinct socioeconomic features and the absence of immigratory flows as a pressing political concern, to the "weakly institutionalized" party system existing in the country (Mainwaring 1999). Moreover, the sharp increase in the number of evangelicals and the heightened ties of these religious groups with Bolsonaro (Santos and Moddelmog 2019b, p. 201) deviates from the ongoing secularization process that usually accounts for

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leftist vote among women in European countries (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014). The rise of right-wing extremism in Brazil therefore cannot be interpreted from the perspective of cultural resentment against immigrants, but rather as a cultural backlash against progressive value change (Inglehart and Norris 2017), a phenomenon that, according to Rennó (2020), Bolsonaro clearly embodies. To the best of my knowledge, no research has assessed if perceptions of declining socioeconomic status followed by the economic recession, and if the cultural backlash theory from Inglehart and Norris (2017), are applicable to Bolsonaro's female supporters.

Taking a deductive approach, this work sets out to examine the sociodemographic characteristics and individual attitudes of female far-right supporters that contributed to the victory of Bolsonaro in the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil. In the pages that follow, it will be investigated if evangelical religion influenced female voting for Bolsonaro. Building on existing insights from the literature, evangelical women tend to conceive topics related to gender and sexuality as particularly threatening to their faith compared to other religious groups (Smith 2019). As such, it is expected that evangelical women have a greater likelihood of adversely perceiving the advance of the LGBTQI+ and feminist's agenda and thus translating these fears into support for Bolsonaro.

As one of the structural factors accounted for Bolsonaro's victory, the analysis also examines the role of social media usage among the female share of the electorate. Considering that there is an ongoing claim that evangelicals were the target group of conservative fake news stories (Setzler 2020), this work includes within its scope an investigation of evangelism as a mediating factor driving support for Bolsonaro among those who relied on Facebook and WhatsApp as source of political information and participated in online political groups organized inside these platforms. Finally, based on the left-behind archetype of far-right supporters in Europe, this thesis investigates if

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female workforce participation in precarious conditions accounts for far-right emergence in Brazil (Mayer 2013). Since there is a stereotypical association between evangelical women and poor socioeconomic conditions leading to Bolsonaro's victory (Guerini 2019), this thesis also includes in the analysis a hypothesis related to the stronger effect of precarization and thus economic resentment among evangelical women.

To test these expectations, this thesis relies on survey data from the 2018 Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas ("CESOP-UNICAMP") employing multivariate logistic models with observations solely involving women respondents. The results show that neither evangelism, occupation nor conservativism were significant predictors of far-right voting among women. However, social media usage indeed influenced voting for Bolsonaro, and its effects are even greater among evangelical women. The robustness check included in the appendix confirms that WhatsApp in particular was an important factor driving a far-right surge in Brazil among women.

These findings provide important evidence of the variation in female voter's profiles and motives, as populist far-right leaders continue to increasingly capture votes across several developing countries and elsewhere (Foa 2021). First of all, they reveal that further attempts to grasp women's motivations for far-right support are crucial in Brazil in light of considerable sociodemographic changes. Second, they raise awareness to the possibility that in a country where partisanship has usually been a weak predictor of voters' attitudes (Mainwaring 1999), far-right candidates might adapt their rhetoric to allure voters via social media thus enhancing volatility and polarization to the political landscape. Differently from European countries where radical right appeals have mostly not been very effective in drawing support from religious women (Arzheimer and Carter 2006), in Brazil the combination of a highly fragmented party system (Mainwaring 1999)

with strengthened Evangelical caucus in numbers and political influence (Santos and Moddelmog 2019a), signals that far-right candidates will continue to emerge and vocalize offensively against minorities as means to expand the electorate. And for this purpose, social media platforms have proven to be essential.

The thesis is divided into five parts. The first part begins by laying out a brief review of the relevant literature on gender voting behaviour for the left and for the far-right. From the general theoretical framework of voting behaviour in Brazil and the literature on church influence in vote choice, the second part presents the hypotheses to be tested. The third part is concerned with the methodology used for this study, followed by the findings of the analysis. The fifth part concludes the thesis with a summary of the main findings, its limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Women's voting behaviour

Even though gender is not traditionally viewed as a primary electoral cleavage as class and region, it can still influence the electoral base of party politics (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). A considerable amount of literature has approached voting behaviour from a gender perspective and found that on the one hand women are increasingly presenting more leftist vote choice than men (referred to as *modern gender gap*) (e.g. Inglehart and Norris 2003) due to structural, situational and attitudinal/cultural changes. On the other hand, conservative female voters have lower likelihood of voting for radical right parties than men, yet the reasons for both far-right support and rejection among women still remain largely unclear (Spierings and Zaslove 2017). To unravel far-right emergence in Brazil from a gender perspective, this section is dedicated to considering each of these strands of literature in turn, followed by the scarce literature on specific predictors of far-right vote choice among women.

Data from several sources has confirmed that women in many post-industrial societies have been shifting to the left of men (Koeppl-Turyna 2020; Corbetta and Cavazza 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2000, 2003). During the 1950s/1960s, women voting was characterized by its stronger ties with conservative parties, and this *traditional gender gap* was attributed to higher longevity and religiosity, and lower participation in the labour market (Lipset 1960). However, modernization, secularization, and general decomposition of traditional cleavages contributed to female right-wing party dealignment by the end of the 1970s. Since then, women are progressively displaying more leftist issue preferences and being more supportive of feminist topics, government spending, redistribution and welfare policies at higher rates than the male electorate (e.g. Shorrocks 2018; Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Campbell 2012; Finseraas et al. 2012;

Alvarez and McCaffery 2003; Gidengil et al. 2003; Howell and Day 2000; Studlar et al. 1998; Jelen et al. 1994).

There are several competing explanations for women's movement towards the leftist spectrum. Earlier studies often associated gender with intrinsic biological traits. Differently from men, women would vote for the left due to a distinctive moral perspective that stresses responsibility and caring (Conover 1988; Gidengil 1995; Welch and Hibbing 1992). These essentialist expositions, however, overlook that the gender gap in voting behaviour has evolved alongside structural societal changes, such as declining differences in educational attainments and religiosity between men and women (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Mason and Galbreath 1992).

The erosion of the traditional gender gap has also been justified by female entrance in the paid workforce through the causal mechanism of greater exposure to broader influences outside the household environment, notably trade unions and other female co-workers (Giger 2009; Togeby 1994). Employment is argued not only to enable richer social networking, but to promote social inclusion and propitiate greater autonomy to women, as opposed to confinement to household tasks within the family environment (Corbetta and Cavazza 2008).

Secularization and the consequential decline in church attendance account as well for the modern gender gap (De Vaus and McAllister 1989; Mayer and Smith 1985). Decreased religious worship affects women's political orientation by reducing identification with religious authorities (Corbetta and Cavazza 2008). Emmenegger and Manow (2014) offer an alternative explanatory theory for the impact of religion on female vote choice through the causal path of party system. According to the authors, women dealignment is likely to emerge later in countries with strong religious cleavages because of left parties' aggressive anticlericalism (i.e. Southern Europe). However, in countries

where such an electoral base is not present, female voters might still lack the incentive to vote for the left if leftist parties fail to develop policies able to mitigate labour market inequalities with women's entrance in the paid workforce (Emmenegger and Manow 2014).

Additional structural factors identified by the literature for more leftist vote choice are women's greater reliance on welfare policies (Manza and Brooks 1998) and increasing educational levels. In relation to the former, as women entered the paid workforce, they started to continuously endorse welfare state policies to attempt to mitigate the consequences of unequal treatment and gendered division of labour (Emmenegger and Manow 2014; Manza and Brooks 1998). Wage gap, direct and indirect discrimination, and fewer promotion prospects are some examples of systemic barriers faced by women in the workplace which made them embrace more liberal views on their part. Regarding the latter factor, there has been an increase in women's educational attainment worldwide over the past decades (UNESCO 2021). Not only does higher university attendance improve women's chances of economic and political autonomy (Duncan 2017; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004), but the academic environment also favours greater exposure to democratic principles and political tolerance translating into more acceptance of innovation and minorities (Corbetta and Cavazza 2008). Therefore, considering that women with higher educational attainments are usually more liberal, the more college educated women get, the greater the likelihood of supporting left-wing parties (Norrander and Wilcox 2008).

Apart from structural changes, situation factors related to changed family structures throughout the last decades can also clarify the erosion of the traditional gender gap in Western Europe (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Inglehart and Norris 2003). According to this literature, on the one hand, marriage and

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maternity tend to lead to lower egalitarian attitudes among women due to greater propensity of economic and psychological dependence on men (Baxter and Kayne 1995). On the other hand, as divorce encourages women to pursue opportunities outside the traditional division of family labour, obstacles in the labour market, as mentioned, foster support towards more liberal policies (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

Finally, a number of studies has suggested the importance of cultural and attitudinal factors, particularly the growth of feminist consciousness as a determinant of leftist party identification among women. This is associated with left-wing parties having higher propensity of being sympathetic to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights and legal protection for LGBTQI+ minorities, which are in accordance with the feminist policy agenda (e.g. Kaufmann 2002). Furthermore, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that because feelings of belonging, self-expression, and quality of life, termed as post-materialist values, are more prevalent among women over economic and physical security, this contributes to changes in party preferences. These findings are still controversial though, with some studies confirming that transformations in cultural values from materialism to postmaterialism have impacted more women than men (e.g. Vanderleeuw et al. 2011; Brewster and Padavic 2000; Knutsen 1990), while others negate any such specific gender difference (e.g. Hayes et al. 2000).

At the same time that some women are moving away from conservativism, others remain loyal to right-wing parties while refraining from shifting to more ideologically extreme positions. In fact, literature on gender voting behaviour has confirmed that men support far-right parties at higher rates than women (e.g. Immerzeel et al. 2015; Betz 1994). Extreme right voters in Europe have been generally defined as a mixture of anti-elite populism, authoritarianism, and "nativism", meaning that only native-born are entitled to inhabit the country (Muddle 2007). Some articles ascribe the distinguishing

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trait of these voters to the rejection of immigrants and foreigners (Rydgren 2013; Ivarsflaten 2008; Arzheimer and Carter 2006), while others link it to an adverse reaction against progressive value change over the past few decades (Inglehart and Norris 2017). Several explanations are considered to justify this greater prevalence of male supporters.

The first explanation, related to the socioeconomic and occupational status, refers to men in Western societies being overly represented in manual jobs, particularly among blue-collar sectors (Coffé 2018; Rippeyoung 2007; Studlar et al. 1998). As these male workers have on average lower levels of education, status, and income, they usually are more vulnerable to the rapid changes brought by globalization and modernization (Kriesi et al. 2008) and thus more susceptible to unemployment and precarization. Support for far-right parties stems from feelings of economic resentment from these "globalization losers", who link their economic hardship and the perceived need to compete over limited public resources with immigrants and untrusty political elites (Golder 2016; Rydgren 2013; Arzheimer 2006; Givens 2004). Conversely, as women normally perform non-manual clerical and service works, especially in the public sector, they would supposedly be shielded from the marginalizing occupational impacts of globalization (Coffé 2018). Moreover, for not perceiving immigration as a threat as blue-collar working men often do, anti-immigration rhetoric from far-right parties is generally not appealing to the female electorate (Immerzeel et al. 2015).

However, analyses of this kind carry various limitations (Coffé 2018). One significant weakness of these approaches is that women are believed to hold more benign migrant attitudes because they face less competition in the labour market compared to men, a claim that lacks adequate empirical support (Spierings and Zaslove 2017). Arguments related to higher job security of the service sector compared to blue collar work also lacks research confirmation (Mayer 2013). Even though it is true that the

service sector is overly composed by female workers in Europe (Pérez 2012 – European Parliament), the working conditions have greatly deteriorated since most studies were conducted (Mayer 2013). Consequently, it is very plausible to assume that women affected by precarization in the service sector are now part of the "globalization losers" (Mayer 2013). This hypothesis has recently been confirmed by Allen and Goodman (2021), who demonstrated that service, sales, and clerical work is likely to predict vote for far-right parties among women over technical work and over blue-collar and trade work – as it is for men.

The second explanation for gender differences found in far-right support refers to distinct authoritarian attitudes towards immigration and law and order (Coffee 2013; Gidengil et al. 2005). This strand of work expects men to be more xenophobic, and more attracted by the belief that misconducts should be severely punished by the authorities (Mudde 2007). Mayer (2013) challenges this widely held view by arguing that women are neither less inclined towards law-and-order claims, nor do they necessarily maintain more favourable pro-immigration attitudes in comparison to men. In fact, research has shown that in some contexts women are actually more in favour of restrictive immigratory policies, despite still refraining from voting for the radical right (Harteveld et al. 2015). This puzzle can be better understood through the lens of motivational differences between genders in avoiding prejudice. Because women arguably attribute greater importance to interpersonal relations, they have higher incentives to self-restrain prejudice during social interactions and internalize social norms contrary to parties' discriminatory rhetoric. Gidengil et al. 2005). One further possibility to account for this contradiction is that women might not only share higher levels of empathy - an admittedly overly essentialist biological argument -, but they could also be more prone to oppose prejudicial stances as a historically oppressed group (Harteveld and Ivarsflaten 2018). One further possibility

is that women might be more averse to exclusionary or stricter policies as a result of the feminine socialization process which stresses caring and nurturing tasks (Coffé 2018).

The third explanation for the far-right gender gap amounts to the importance of the cultural environment. Women are believed to be more resistant to far-right appeals because of the greater likelihood of attending church more frequently than men (Betz 1994). By getting religiously involved with church, women are encouraged to remain loyal to the traditional right due to the pre-existing strong ties between the Catholic Church and Christian democratic parties in many European countries (Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Women are also believed to not shift to more extreme positions as Christian churches often condemn xenophobic messages from far-right parties for being dissonant with the egalitarian message of the Evangels (Mayer 2013). However, and similar to previous arguments, these findings remain controversial. With far-right parties increasingly emphasizing religious divides between Christianism and Islamism, their rhetoric might be able to co-opt orthodox believers who perceive Muslim religion as threatening regardless of their pronounced religiosity (Immerzeel et al 2015).

From this extensive body of work, it is possible to notice that studies either focused on explaining an unfolding pattern of women presenting more leftist vote choices than men, or paid attention to the gendered aspect of far-right support seeking to understand why far-right parties draw votes most intensively from men in Europe, United States and Canada. Both literatures on modern gender gap and gender gap in far-right electoral support have therefore not been able to fully explain what motivates women to support far-right candidates. Moreover, the scholarship on voting determinants specifically focused on women still remain incipient and its findings will be briefly addressed henceforth.

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The first set of explanations for female far-right support relies on occupational traits and the enhancement of precarization in past years of the service sector, which largely employs women. Based on the possibility of 'left-behind' female workers from the service proletariat, as a consequence of globalization and modernization, Allen and Goodman (2021) suggest a relationship between service, sales, and clerical work among women and far-right vote choice over technical, blue-collar and trade work.

The second explanation draws on unique attitudinal characteristics of far-right women, as their core values tend to substantively differ from the ones held by left-wing women. In this sense, the former might be more likely than the latter to oppose feminist stances that contest traditional gender roles and to reject claims for greater political representation of women (Shames et al. 2020; Celis and Childs 2014). Similar to this approach, Setzler and Yanus (2018) demonstrated that, in relation to Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election in the United States, being more sexist and racist increased the probability of being pro-Trump. Unsurprisingly, being a female Republican also increased the odds of women supporting Trump. However, the role of moral conservativism for female far-right support is still controversial. In the European context, women tend to support far-right parties more when they refrain from appealing to traditional morality and display less discriminatory positions towards LGBTQI+ minorities (Allen and Goodman 2021).

Finally, a third set of explanations investigates demographic variation in support for Trump and found that being white predicted stronger opposition to the Democratic party among women voters (Junn and Masuoka 2019).

In all studies reviewed in this part, the findings provide valuable but insufficient insights to explain female support for far-right candidates. Moreover, from the literature review raises a few questions which require addressing. First, are the general patterns

found on modern gender gap and gender gap in populist radical right voting scholarship generalizable to contexts outside the developed world? Second, is it possible from this work to understand who are the women who supported Bolsonaro? Third, what are the issue positions that motivated these women to support his candidacy? Or, are there other factors – perhaps occupational or demographic – involved as well? The section bellow deals with some of these open queries focusing on voting behaviour in Brazil.

2.2   Voting behaviour in Brazil

As indicated previously, research on gender gap in voting has been mostly restricted to studies in European and North American countries. As such, several aspects pertaining radical right vote choice might not reflect the reality outside post-industrial societies (Morgan 2015; Inglehart and Norris 2003). In this sense, the case study of the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil presents several particularities that differ to Europe and other developed countries, especially regarding gender voting behaviour, attitudinal bases of support for far-right parties and sociodemographic composition.

First, until 2018 researchers had not identified a specific gender voting pattern in Brazil (Amaral 2020; Nicolau 2020). However, the stereotypical association portrayed in the literature between far-right candidates and male supporters (Harteveld et al., 2019; Harteveld and Ivarsflaten, 2018; Givens, 2004) emerged in 2018 across the Brazilian electorate, with men being more likely to have voted for Bolsonaro than women (Amaral 2020). Gender identities seem to have shaped responses to Bolsonaro's candidacy among women as well through the rejection of Bolsonaro's stances on issues such as lifting restrictions on gun possession (Layton et al. 2021). Still, differently from Europe and the United States where votes for far-right candidates often revolve around 40% among women (Allen and Goodman 2021, p. 135; CAWP 2017), among the valid votes female

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far-right support exceeded the opposition in Brazil. Some authors attribute the poll figures to Bolsonaro's political opponent not being able to successfully grasp and reflect the preferences of the female electorate (Amarante et al. 2018), which is certainly an insufficient explanation to account for the far-right shift among women.

Second, whereas the most predictive attitude for far-right support in Europe is immigration, this is not a pressing concern in Brazilian politics. During the 2018 presidential elections, apart from rejection to mainstream politics, the core issues that drove support for Bolsonaro were harsher punishment to crime and corruption, together with a reaction against feminist movements and LGBTQI+ rights (Rennó 2020). In relation to the latter topic, Bolsonaro sustains his antigay and antifeminist stances on religion-based arguments, which resonates with what Inglehart and Norris (2017) refer to as cultural backlash. The progressive policies that were implemented in previous governments in favour of LBGTQI+ communities and women triggered a negative response especially among religious groups which in turn translated into support for a candidate with authoritarian values. In the context of a deeply religious country, the combination of declining income, job insecurity and significant unemployment rates after an economic crisis struck in 2014 seem to have contributed to a generalized feeling of resentment against progressivism based on the perception of erosion of traditional family values (Rennó 2020). Therefore, since one of the motivations to vote for Bolsonaro was cultural backlash against progressive cultural change, and not immigration like previous studies have considered, the main argument accounting for far-right voting in Europe deserves to be adapted to the Brazilian context (Rennó 2020).

Third, studies on far-right voting conducted in Europe often include in the analysis countries with rooted religious cleavages (i.e. Southern Europe) and Christian religiosity (e.g. Dargent 2019; Allen 2017; Arzheimer and Carter 2009). In Brazil, however,

religiosity had not translated into significant political support for a presidential candidate until 2018 (Amaral 2020). One of the fundamental reasons accounted for the lack of support from religious groups to specific candidates and parties in Brazil is the low levels of partisan attachments stemming from the extreme fragmentation of the party system (Samuels and Zucco 2018). Furthermore, while the number of Catholics decrease, the number of evangelicals is sharply rising (Santos and Moddelmog 2019b). Evangelicals, who now comprise more than 30% of the Brazilian population, have more extremist and conservative views, and are more politically active in Parliament than Catholics (Santos and Moddelmog 2019a). Moreover, evangelical congregants tend to be more devoted than Catholics (Smith 2019) and motivate voting choices based on firmly held religious beliefs (Boas and Smith 2019). Ultimately, this means that in Brazil evangelicals are more susceptible to far-right appeal when it encompasses a conservative rhetoric compared to Catholic voters in Western European countries, where loyalty to Christian Democratic parties has thus far prevented voters from moving towards more ideologically extremist parties (Arzheimer and Carter 2009). Unsurprisingly, research has found that being evangelical increased the odds of voting for Bolsonaro (e.g. Layton et al. 2021; Amaral 2020).

Therefore, the key question that remains is the motivations that specifically drove women support in favour of a far-right candidate in Brazil. Even though there is a pattern across the Brazilian population of evangelism associated with far-right support, and some newspaper articles have indicated the importance of poor evangelical women for the electoral outcome (Guerini 2019), it is still unclear whether evangelism was also a significant predictor of voting behaviour among women who supported Bolsonaro. The specific mechanisms and positions that supposedly underpinned women's vote choice in general, and evangelical women in particular, are not fully understood, especially if

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considered Bolsonaro's aggressive rhetoric against women (Amaral 2020). Building on these insights and bringing some features from Brazilian party politics and voting behaviour, this thesis develops a richer profile of female far-right support based on the case study of the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil.

3 Theory

Brazil's democracy is still at its early stages after more than two decades of military dictatorship (1964-1985). Since democratization and the reintroduction of party competition in the constitution enacted in 1988, studies have referred to Brazil as an example of extreme party-system fragmentation and weakness in political representation. Political institutions in the country often promote individualism of candidates above party interests, which in turn undermines the role of parties as agents of political representation (Mainwaring 1999). This can be illustrated by the large number of political parties currently in parliament: 24 in the lower house (Câmara dos Deputados) and 16 in the upper house (Senado Federal). Ultimately, partisan identification is assumed to have little effect on political behaviour in the country (Nadeau 2017).

This conventional wisdom was recently challenged by Samuels and Zucco (2018), who maintain that although nonpartisan voters normally rely on candidate's qualities and performance in office to form political preferences, the rejection component of disliked parties – in particular, the Worker's Party (PT), whose candidates occupied the presidential chair from 2003 to 2016 –, reveals a more comprehensive picture of voting behaviour in Brazil. In essence, while partisanship is perceived as weak, this facet of negative partisanship has been found to be an important component of vote choice in Brazil. Disaffection towards mainstream political parties was exacerbated by the criminal investigation termed as *Lava Jato*, which exposed widespread corruption in Brazilian politics. Combined with the economic downturn starting from 2014 onwards, a general feeling of resentment against traditional politics spread across the population, which in turn is suggested to have boosted the numbers of far-right supporters during the 2018 presidential elections (Amaral 2020; Fuks et al. 2020; Rennó 2020).

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One further crucial feature about voting behaviour in Brazil is that, in contrast to Western Europe or North American consolidated democracies, party politics is not traditionally rooted in deep social cleavages. Despite historically being a Catholic nation with high ratings of religiosity, religious groups were rarely able to organize themselves as a group and successfully translate their demands into voting for a certain presidential candidate (Mainwaring 1999). Reasons for the absence of political mobilization and identification among Brazilian religious voters are that presidential candidates were basically believed to be Catholics (Santos and Moddelmog 2019b), and that the country's fragmented party system resulted in a nearly zero correlation between partisanship and religion (Smith 2019).

However, Bolsonaro's victory appears to have introduced a new pattern of voting among the religious population (Layton et al. 2021). This follows from one fundamental shift in religious affiliation regarding the pronounced increase of evangelicals since the end of the twentieth century (see figure 1).
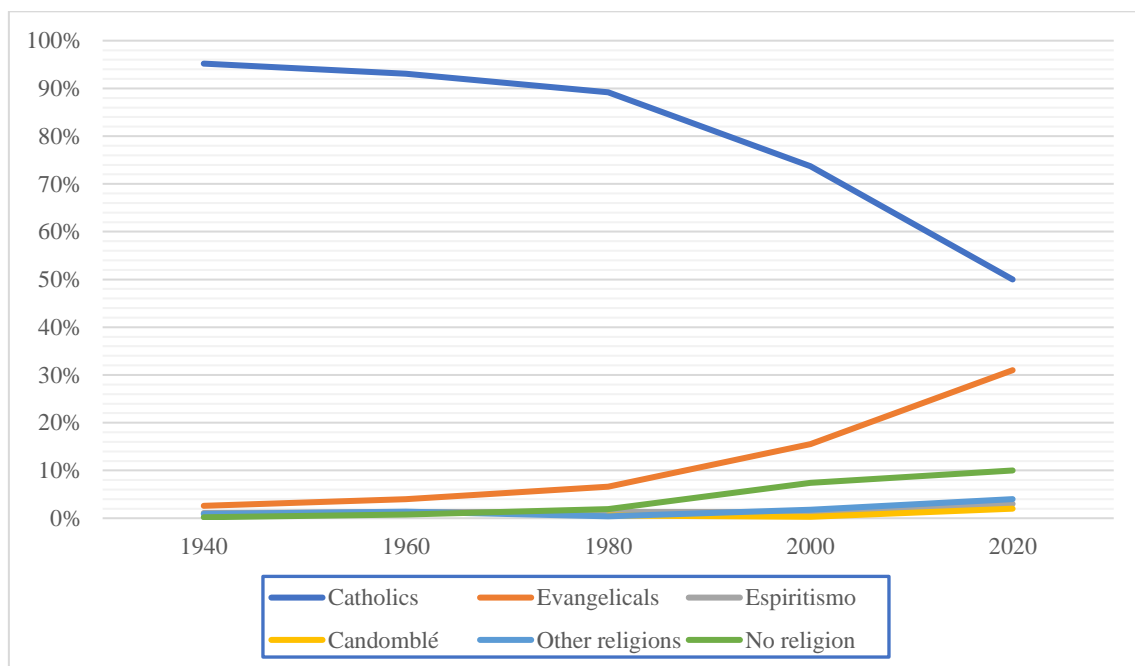
Figure 1: Brazilian religious landscape and recent demographic shift (1940-2020)

Sources: Santos and Moddelmog (2019b) and survey from *Data Folha* (December/2019) (G1 2021)

Figure 1 above shows the sharp increase in the number of people who identify with Evangelical beliefs, up from 6.6% in 1980 to 31% in 2020 (G1 2021; Souza 2013), whilst the number of Catholics has been continuously declining. If this present trend continues, evangelicals are expected to soon become the most politically important religious group in Brazil (Smith 2019). Christian evangelicalism encompasses a highly diverse religious group, including Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals (Smith 2019). Despite their heterogeneity, for the purposes of this thesis the terms "evangelical" and "evangelicalism" will be used in their broadest sense to refer to all of these affiliations due to their shared beliefs and values.

After these general background considerations, based on the literature review and previous studies on voting behaviour in Brazil, this thesis moves on to the sociodemographic, attitudinal, occupational, and social media usage factors that are expected to have contributed to the electoral outcome of the 2018 presidential election in Brazil among female voters.

3.1 Sociodemographic:

The levels of religiosity among women in Brazil are fairly significant. As figure 2 below shows, almost 92% of Brazilian women declared having some religious affiliation in 2018:
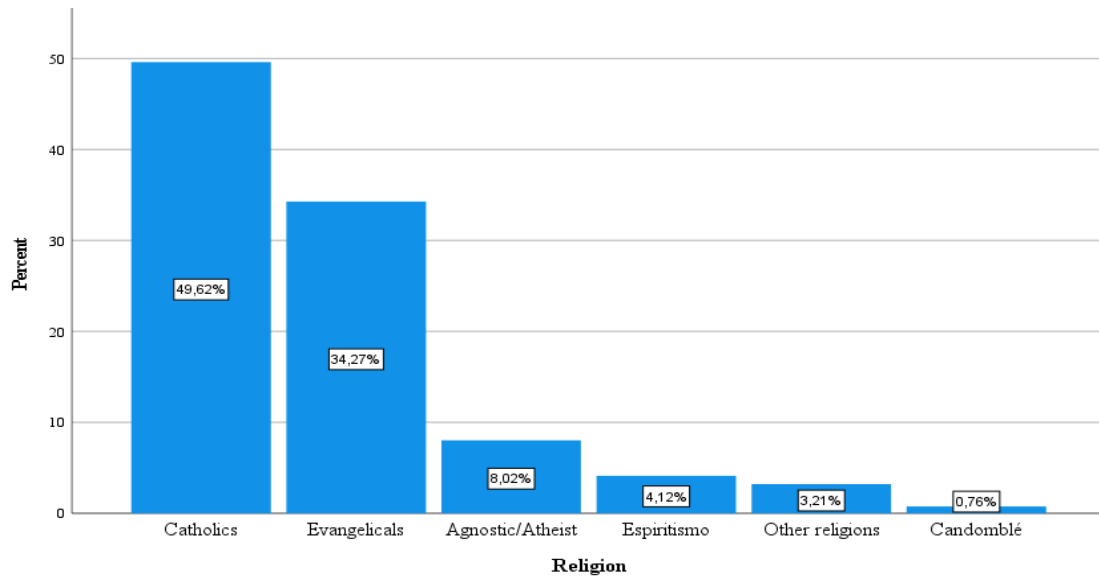
Figure 2: Religiosity among women in Brazil (2018)
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas (CESOP 2018)

As mentioned before, while the number of Catholics decrease, the number of evangelicals in Brazil has been rapidly rising in the past decades (Smith 2019). To justify this sociodemographic phenomenon, several explanations have been proposed. First, the institutional framework of the Catholic church is argued to have overly rigid rules and hierarchy, which hampers changes in its internal norms and dogmas often necessary to accompany societal developments. This structural inflexibility seem to have resulted in young and impoverished sectors of the Brazilian population failing to connect with the values promoted by the Catholic church and thus seeking alternative sources of religiosity to fill in the spiritual gap (Queiroz 2019). Second, numerous religious organizations were able to quickly spread across the country in poorer and rural areas due to the fact that opening an evangelical church is nearly a bureaucracy free process (Queiroz 2019). Furthermore, compared to Catholicism, the discursive approach of evangelical churches is more appealing to congregants: more pragmatic, more focused on mundane problems, more sensitive to the congregants' financial needs, and relies more on the promise of

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bringing divine prosperity to the present life (Queiroz 2019). Meanwhile, daily distress is reasoned not by social inequalities or structural issues but by the absence of individual motivation (Queiroz 2019). Finally, because evangelical churches are closer to the community, they play an important social role to families who live under precarious conditions by providing material and spiritual comfort (Queiroz 2019).

Evangelical churches share some similarities in terms of beliefs often leaning towards conservativism. On average, they promote traditional family values with clearly established gender roles and reject secularism (Bohn 2004), while encouraging congregants to act as missionaries spreading the word of God (Freston 2008). Evangelicals also tend to hold firmer religious beliefs measured by higher levels of church attendance (Raymond 2018). Figure 3 shows that 70% of evangelical women attend religious worship at least once a week, which is far superior to other religious groups.
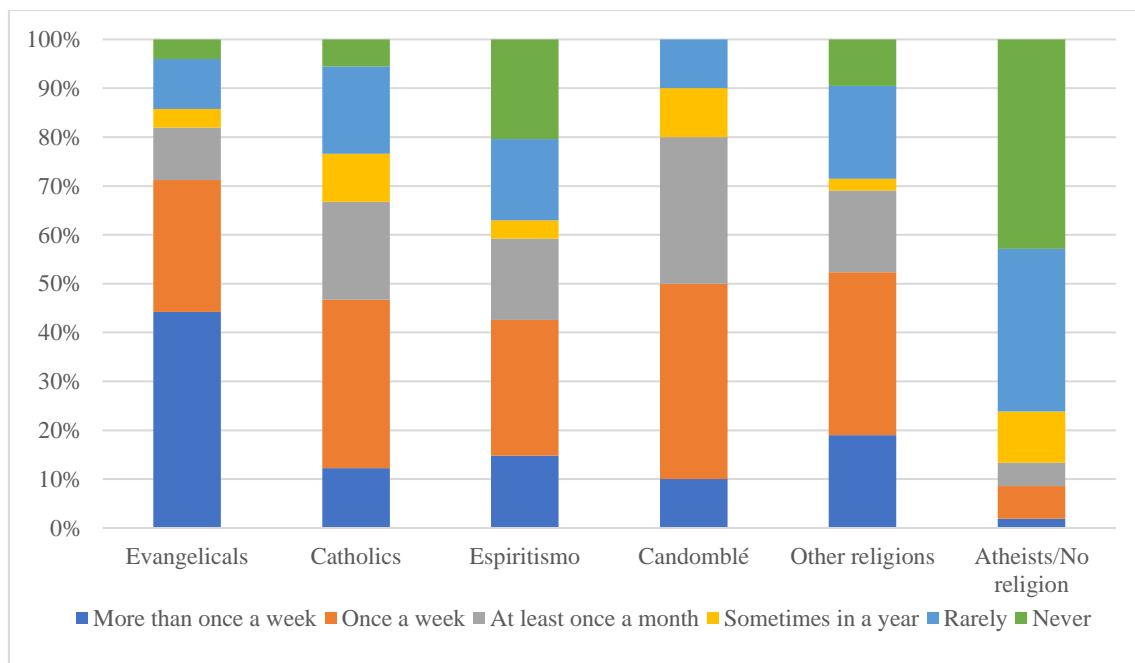
Figure 3: Frequency of church attendance across religious groups among women (2018)
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas (CESOP 2018)

During the 2018 electoral campaign, several members of the evangelical clergy publicly manifested support for Bolsonaro due to his vocalized positioning as the defender of "moral values": he opposes abortion, same-sex marriages, and advocates against school curriculum teaching sex education and gender identity - pejoratively referred to as "gender ideology" (Borges 2018). This alignment of views with the ones from evangelical churches seem to have resonated well within the evangelical community, as several studies demonstrate that evangelical religious affiliation substantially increased support for Bolsonaro (e.g. Layton et al. 2021; Amaral 2020; Setzler 2020).

Following findings associating evangelism to support for Bolsonaro, there are strong reasons to expect that religiosity is an important sociodemographic factor predicting vote choice among women. Scholarship has shown that voters have greater chance of voting for candidates who share their beliefs and religious traits (Raymond 2018). Moreover, numerous research has demonstrated that evangelicals tend to make political decisions based on their religious premises (Boas and Smith 2019; Smiderle and Mesquita 2016). Meanwhile, evangelical churches have developed specific plans to promote their candidates (Santos and Moddelmog 2019b; Lacerda 2017), which suggests that higher rates of worship attendance among evangelicals and thus stronger congregational networks built inside church walls increase the likelihood of voting for candidates endorsed by the clergy (Smith 2019) as was the case for Bolsonaro (Arias 2018). Combined, these arguments lead to the first hypothesis related to a sociodemographic component:

Hypothesis 1: *Evangelical women have a higher probability to vote for Bolsonaro than non-Evangelical women.*

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3.2 Attitudinal:

Based on the theory of cultural backlash against progressive change (Inglehart and Norris 2017), the emergence of far-right extremism in Brazil has been attributed to a reaction from sectors of the population who oppose progressive policies implemented by previous governments (Rennó 2020). During the Workers' Party presidency (2003-2016), several rights and protections were guaranteed to minorities, such as legalization of same-sex civil unions, legalization of abortion for anencephalic embryos (Smith 2019), and the implementation of racial quotas in universities to increase enrolment of black and brown students (Vidigal 2018). Critical to abortion, LGBTQI+ rights, and racial quota, Bolsonaro managed to gather support from conservative voters who object to redistribution and identity-based policies (Rennó 2020). According to Bolsonaro, by protecting gay and reproductive rights, previous governments endangered morality and national order (Biroli and Caminotti 2020), while violating meritocratic values with the imposition of affirmative actions.

There is still no consensus amongst authors as to the impact of Bolsonaro's controversial views. On the one hand, Setzler (2020) argues that even though many Brazilians who voted for Bolsonaro might share his beliefs, these issues played a minor role to the electoral outcome compared to ideology and the rejection of the Worker's Party. However, this study did not have a gender perspective focus, which means that ideology and negative partisanship might not fully represent the underlying motives among women who voted for Bolsonaro. Meanwhile, Rennó (2020) maintains that social and moral issues such as LGBTQI+ right, abortion, and racial quota assumed central role in explaining vote choice in 2018.

Based on the cultural backlash approach, it is expected that far-right women are, on average, more conservative than non-supporters. For their greater chances of opposing socially inclusive policies (Rennó 2020), Bolsonaro's rhetoric and position taking possibly resonated better with internal issue preferences of this sector of the population. This leads to the first attitudinal hypothesis to be assessed:

Hypothesis 2.A: *Higher levels of conservativism against perceived value change should increase voting probability for Bolsonaro among women.*

In addition, there is evidence to suggest increased conservativism among evangelical women compared to other religious groups. First, evangelicals have a greater likelihood of opposing abortion and same-sex marriage than other religious affiliations, and such stances have been substantiating voting decisions (Smith 2019). As argued by Smith (2019, p. 104), "abortion and homosexuality are the two most important issues cleaving the electorate by religion". She claims that this is not because evangelicals are necessarily more intolerant than other religious groups, but rather that conservatism fostered within evangelical churches worsen prior authoritarian tendencies among believers against out-groups, who are perceived as sinners and threats to core religious values. In other words, the sacred discursive rhetoric which portraits LGBTQI+ and gender rights as dualistic and manicheistic issues exacerbates religious in-group affective polarization (Smith 2019). By conveying notions of good versus evil, evangelicals generally conceive gender and sexuality as deeply divisive conceptual issues, leading evangelical voters to hold more extreme and conservative views regarding abortion and same-sex marriage than other religious groups.

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In relation to abortion, even though both Catholics and evangelicals hold inflexible stances against termination of pregnancy, Smith (2019) found that Catholics are substantially more liberal than evangelicals. Statistical analysis of LatinoBarometro surveys reveals that while in 2012 and 2014 religious' differences in opinion on whether abortion should be permitted when the women's health is in danger were not significant, this gap widely expanded in 2017, and Smith (2019) concludes that this results from higher conservatism among evangelicals. In relation to same-sex marriage, differences of opinion between evangelicals and Catholics are even more pronounced. On average, while Catholics tend to have neutral views in this matter, evangelicals strongly disagree with the right of homosexuals engaging in civil unions (Smith 2019).

Moreover, since evangelical churches often frame socioeconomic hardship not as structural or systemic issues, but as a spiritual battle against evil where deserved blessings are to be achieved mostly through individual faith, it is expected that evangelicals have greater likelihood of opposing affirmative action's policies such as racial quotas. This derives from the fact that the main argument to corroborate the implementation of racial quotas is to mitigate socioeconomic inequalities among the black population by democratizing access to higher education institutions (Kirakosyan 2014). Therefore, evangelicals should be more prone to portraying affirmative actions as "unjust" or "unworthy" based on the theological belief that difficulties can be surpassed with personal effort.

It is therefore expected that opposition of abortion and same-sex marriage, combined with the meritocratic theological underpinning of evangelical churches, foster higher levels of conservativism among evangelical women. The alignment of these views with Bolsonaro's stances possibly drove evangelical women to the far-right in the 2018

presidential race against policies implemented by the previous administration. This leads to the formulation of one further attitudinal hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2.B: *Conservativism against perceived value change has a much stronger effect in supporting Bolsonaro among evangelical women compared to other religious affiliations.*

3.3   Social media usage:

Differently from real-world interactions where people are forced to deal with diversity, social media fosters the emergence of online spaces through which individuals politically aligned are more likely to find each other (Halberstam and Knight 2016). This tendency of likeminded people to form ties (known as *homophily*) has been tackled by early social psychological research, which argues that people feel positively gratified when faced with information that accords with their own opinions (McPherson et al. 2001). Conversely, people feel pressured to conform and thus more stressed when exposed to disagreement (Colleoni et al. 2014). From individuals' willingness to reduce cognitive dissonance follows that homogenous groups will be formed with people who share similar views (Colleoni et al. 2014).

In terms of political discussions, homophily clusters individuals by their homogenous political attitudes which often leads to higher levels of in-group political polarization (Stroud 2010). This creates what the literature refers to as "echo chamber effect": as individuals tend to limit exposure to opposing views, their own pre-existing political views are exacerbated (Bail et al. 2018). In this respect, several articles show that echo chambers are formed in groups of political discussion in social media platforms which in turn increases political polarization (e.g. Colleoni et al. 2014). These findings

are controversial though, with some studies either negating social media's association with political polarization (Barberá et al. 2015) or stating that echo chambers only affect a small share of the population (Dubois and Blank 2018). Despite this lack of consensus on the causal mechanisms associating social media to political polarization, most research thus far has focused on Twitter (Bozdag 2020; Kearney 2019; Colleoni 2014), neglecting that different social media platforms might have distinct effects on political polarization depending on the public or private character of the conversations.

When WhatsApp users debate political views, this will likely exacerbate political homophily due to the absence of exposure to diverging opinion in closed, direct, and encrypted messages. In this sense, after conducting cross-platform analysis recent work by Bozdag (2020) suggests that WhatsApp is mainly used to keep contact with closer ties, and that political views are often shared among more homogeneous groups. On the other hand, Twitter is used by more politically engaged and partisan users, while Facebook is more prevalent among those willing to engage in cross-cutting discussions (Bozdag 2020). This view was recently challenged by Martin et al. (2021), who invoke that WhatsApp could cultivate less homophily (compared to Twitter for instance). The underlying reasoning for this claim is that public social media platforms such as Twitter allow users to choose who they follow, differently from WhatsApp interactions that connect family and co-workers with whom people must engage with regardless of homophily concerns (Martin et al. 2021). One major drawback of this argument is that even though contact with dissimilar others occurs via WhatsApp direct messaging, the interactions might not necessarily involve sharing political views.

Turning to the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil, social media platforms possibly ensured Bolsonaro's victory through fake news spreading (Lupu et al. 2020). According to study from Avaaz conducted before the elections on Facebook and Twitter, 98.21% of

Bolsonaro's voters were exposed to one or more fake news stories during the presidential campaign, and 89.77% believed that the content was true (Pasquini 2018). Although not encompassed in Avaaz's report, WhatsApp in particular was purportedly used to diffuse disinformation (Benites 2018; Nemer 2018), with articles having disclosed that Bolsonaro's supporters were responsible for distributing disinformation to illegally obtained telephone lists (Mello 2018).

The implications of social media usage are far from trivial, as WhatsApp has proven itself to be a "black box of viral disinformation" for numerous reasons (Wang 2018). First, WhatsApp enables sending private and encrypted messages to large groups whereby a sense of community is fostered within its members (Church and Oliveira 2013). Second, these groups for political discussion and mobilization in WhatsApp are more likely to be homogeneously formed due to the limited number of participants, which accounts for higher disinformation diffusion (Del Vicario et al. 2016). Third, given that studies have confirmed that people are more prone in relying on information when it comes from someone trustworthy rather than by the source (Ciampaglia et al. 2018), and that WhatsApp allows contact with closer and more intimate members of the community, this also suggests the app's potential for fake news spreading.

There are undisputed difficulties of studying fake news spreading through WhatsApp, which partially explains the scarce research with this specific platform. Yet work conducted thus far confirms that Brazilians have been using WhatsApp to receive political information (Resende et al. 2019). It has also been found that based on how participants are affected by the messages received in WhatsApp groups, disinformation tends to last longer, spread to more users, and have a deeper effect when it comes from groups for political discussion than other non-political groups (Caetano et. al. 2019).

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Considering that fake news spreading *(i)* occurred to a large extent through Facebook and WhatsApp in Brazil during the 2018 presidential elections; and *(ii)* happens more frequently within groups with more likeminded opinion-based individuals through confirmation-biased cognitive selective exposure, the hypotheses to be tested herein are the following:

Hypothesis 3.A: *Women voters who use Facebook and WhatsApp as the main source of political information have higher probability of voting for Bolsonaro.*

Hypothesis 3.B: *Women who participate in online groups for political discussion have higher probability of voting for Bolsonaro.*

In relation to the religious component of Bolsonaro's electorate, there are some indicators to suggest that fake news stories had a stronger impact on evangelical women compared to other religious affiliations which resulted in support for a far-right candidate. The first indicator refers to the usage of fake news campaigns targeting micro-segmented voters (Evangelista and Bruno 2019). In this respect, Setzler (2020) claims that the presidential campaign in 2018 specifically targeted evangelical voters in order to secure their support.

The second indicator relates to the very content of fake news. Among the five fake news most spread during the electoral period, one referred to Bolsonaro's political adversary as the former Ministry of Education having developed public policies to "sexualize children" and "teach gender ideology in Brazilian primary schools". Other disinformation widely spread in social media stated that the opposition was in favour of incest and communism, while a third one sustained that Bolsonaro's political adversary would legalize paedophilia if elected (Barragán 2018). As mentioned before, given that

sexuality and gender are core positioning issues for evangelical voters, it would be expected that fake news stories ascribing paedophilia legalization and gender ideology to the opposition candidate to resonate more intensely among evangelical women in comparison to other female voters. These fake news with morality-base content are more likely to provide consonant or pro-attitudinal information already aligned with evangelical voter's pre-existing values and preferences.

The third indicator corroborating a stronger effect among evangelical women associates evangelism with higher church attendance. In this sense, research has shown that social media usage only creates echo chamber effects among individuals who also engage in homogenous offline networks (Vaccari et al. 2016). This is exactly the case of religious individuals who normally attend the same church and develop personal relationships based on their shared religiosity and world views. Beyond how fake news appealed to evangelical voters individually due to their content, as stated by Stark and Bainbridge (1996), "religiosity is first and foremost a group property" (p. 72). Higher levels of mass attendance among evangelicals suggest not only that they are more devoted followers than Catholics (Smith 2019), but that social networks are more likely to be built inside religious institutions. This homogeneity of social networking among evangelicals, whose ties are mostly built from shared religiosity and values, might foster the formation of online echo chambers already existing in offline interactions thus reinforcing the effects of consonant social media messages.

Following the literature of socio-structural approach of voting behaviour (e.g. Goldberg 2014), communication with other congregants in evangelical churches who might have been exposed to the same fake news could have reinforced individual attitudes in the 2018 presidential elections. This is because, even though not all evangelical congregants consumed fake news, direct contact with other people who have done might

help them forming opinions comparable to direct consumers of fake news. Considering that evangelicals have been claimed to have been micro-targeted with fake news, that the content of these fake news appealed to conservativism (and therefore provided information consonant with voters' issue preferences), and that higher levels of church attendance increases the odds of social networking with other individuals with shared personal characteristics and religious values, it is expected that evangelical religion conditions a stronger effect of social media usage among women in supporting Bolsonaro:

Hypothesis 4.A: *Evangelism conditions stronger effects of social media usage among women in supporting Bolsonaro as compared to other religious affiliations.*

Hypothesis 4.B: *Evangelism conditions a stronger effect of participating in online groups for political discussion among women in supporting Bolsonaro as compared to other religious affiliations.*

3.4 Socioeconomic/Occupational:

As shown in the previous chapter, occupational factors can also influence far-right voting among those less educated employed in low skilled and precarious jobs. Especially when leftist parties do not ensure enough social protection to attenuate gender labour market segregation, wage disparities and inequalities, women might be more easily drawn by the appeals of far-right candidates who promise to solve economic imbalances which mainstream parties have failed to address. In the case of Brazil, the labour market structure suggests that economic grievances could be an important component for women having chosen Bolsonaro in 2018.

A prevailing feature of the Latin American labour market structure is informality (Basto-Aguirre et al. 2020). In Brazil, the rates of informal workers are close to 41% (Barros 2021). The notion of informality derives from the legal framework, according to which informal work consists of employees whose contracts have not been ratified by the Ministry of Labour (Amadeo et. al. 2000). This can only happen after employers sign their labour booklets, writing down information about wages, hiring and firing dates, among other details (Noronha 2005). The literature encompasses several distinct professional categories within the same concept, ranging from self-employment and working in small firm, to labour contracts which do not abide by the labour legislation (Soares 2004). Some evidence associates the high rates of informality in the country to increased labour costs and overly rigid labour laws, as registered workers are entitled to several wage and non-wage benefits (Soares 2004). As a result, informality largely approximates to an unregulated source of self-employment in which the costs and incentives for employers are higher than maintaining an informal working contract (Amadeo et al. 2000). It is worth highlighting though that in cases where employers should legally have registered the employees' work card and chose not to, hypothetical sanctions, when enforced, are only applied to the employers.

In times of increasing unemployment rates, workers normally recur to informality as labour alternative, either in the form of self-employment or working without registered labour booklets. In both situations, social protection entitlement is not certified via employment status (Costa et al. 2011), which translates into informal workers generally not being legally able to benefit from pensions, maternity leave, unemployment or private health insurances (Observatório das Desigualdades 2020). Consequently, not only do informal workers often retire at later age (which is when they are eligible for non-

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contributory pension) (Sorsa et al. 2020), but they often receive lower wages compared to formal workers (Observatório das Desigualdades 2020).

Combined with limited social protection coverage and lower wages, the informal sector in Brazil largely allocates low-skilled workers often working in precarious conditions such as street vendors, Uber, and other apps drivers, with 70% of them lacking secondary education (Roxana 2012). Together, all of these features particular to informal employment relations leave them more vulnerable to economic shocks due to the lack of social protection, which in turn aggravates social vulnerability.

From mid-2014 onward, Brazil experienced a period of severe economic crisis which significantly rose unemployment rates (Rennó 2020): while by the end of 2014, there were 6.5 million women unemployed, by the first trimester of 2018 these figures had more than doubled (see figure 4).
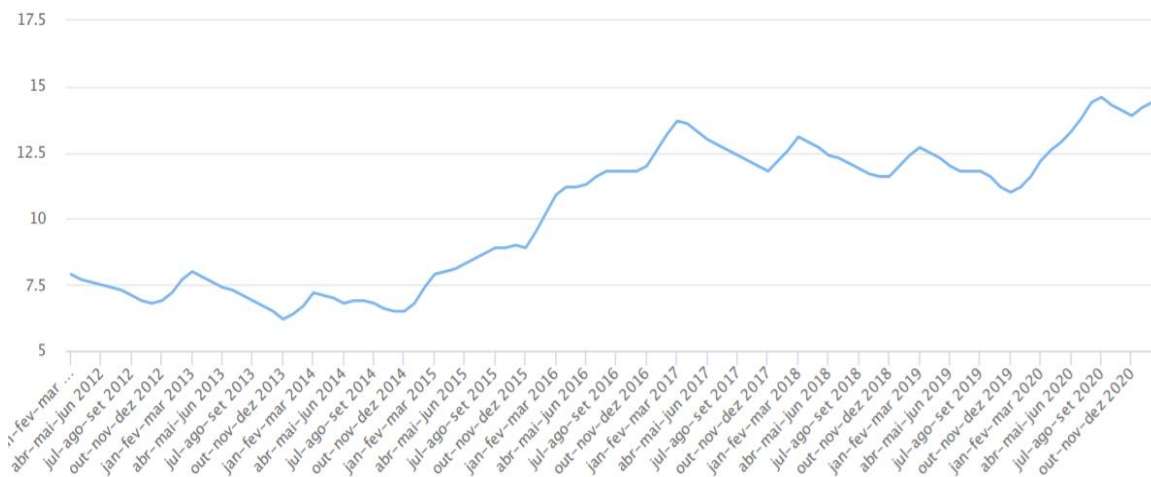
Figure 4: Female average unemployment rate in Brazil – in millions (2012-2021)
Source: "IBGE - PNAD Contínua mensal" (2012-2021)

As would be expected in light of persisting unemployment rates, during the year of the presidential election the number of informal workers reached its highest peak since 2012 (Peret 2019). Amidst this context of economic deprivation, social groups might start

competing over limited resources and blame outgroups for their socioeconomic problems, fostering discrimination, prejudice (Golder 2016) and political polarization (Funke et al. 2015). In Brazil, the consequences of the economic crisis were mostly attributed to the Worker's Party, which occupied the presidency until 2016 (Rennó 2020).

With this in mind, women were especially impacted by the economic crisis in Brazil. One of the reasons is the persisting gender wage gap, as women on average earn 23% less than men (Canineu and Carvalho 2018). Another explanation for women's particular vulnerability is that they are more likely to work fewer hours due to household chores and the sexual division of labour (IBGE 2018). In comparison to men, women are overly represented in low-paid sectors with less professional prestige (Nascimento 2014), such as primary schooling teaching (84%), call centre (72.2%), domestic (95%) and cleaning works (74.9%) (IBGE 2018). Despite representing the majority among those with university degree, women are also more likely to be uneducated (IBGE 2018), a tendency that also translates into lower salaries and more vulnerability.

Not only do women earn less, but they are also more likely to be unemployed (IBGE 2018) and work part-time (OECD/ILO 2019). They also tend to be overly represented in the most vulnerable segments of the informal economy, such as domestic work (OECD/ILO 2019). In relation specifically to informality, the absence of formal labour contracts leaves female workers particularly vulnerable, as without the availability of minimum social pensions they are financially unsupported in case of pregnancy, accident, or disease. This vulnerability is aggravated in households where women are the primary breadwinner, which in Brazil amounts to nearly 40% of domiciles (Fontoura and Rezende 2020).

Therefore, it is possible to infer that at the individual level, economic grievances propelled feelings of resentment against the party of Bolsonaro's political opponent (The

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Worker's Party). During his presidential campaign, Bolsonaro invoked on several occasions the opposition party's responsibility for the economic turmoil, while positioning himself as a politician distant from the traditional political machinery (Rennó 2020). Given that informal working relations reflect more precarious conditions and lower wages, the following hypothesis expects that the aggravation of socioeconomic conditions resulting from informality mediated the rejection of the Workers' Party, resulting into more votes for Bolsonaro among women.

Hypothesis 5.A: *Women employed informally have greater probability of voting for Bolsonaro.*

According to the sociologist Marcos Coimbra, poor evangelical women's voting were decisive for the victory of Bolsonaro (Guerini 2019). Considering that income certainly derives from employment conditions, there is some evidence to suggest that evangelical women were particularly affected by economic grievances led by informality and precarization. In essence, it is believed that higher levels of church attendance enable networking among women with similar educational background, facing similar financial and professional struggles, thus fostering collectively a resentment against mainstream parties perceived as responsible for their declining social status.

A considerable amount of literature has already associated evangelism with precarious socioeconomic conditions (Bohn 2004; Almeida and Monteiro 2001). As aforementioned, socioeconomic condition is precisely one of the reasons that contributed to the dramatic rise in the number of evangelicals, as the evangelical churches provide spiritual and material assistance to impoverished city dwellers (Queiroz 2019). Brazil is a singular case in this regard, as evangelism is more popular among marginalized sectors

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of society compared to other countries where congregants are usually those starting to break out of poverty (Pena 2012). In Brazilian urban poor areas, where the community has limited opportunities and the state often denies them basic human rights, evangelism is a path chosen for many to cope with social stresses from daily lives (Chesnut and Kingsbury 2019). Evangelism, therefore, provides to the most socioeconomically vulnerable individuals a sense of collective identity, where many seek in spirited services succour to surmount struggles. And during evangelical religious masses, congregants going through similar financial and social struggles are able to share amongst themselves and with the clergy their difficulties and seek comfort.

In addition to being poor on average, given that evangelical women normally have lower educational levels compared to other religious affiliations (see figure 5), they have a greater likelihood in being employed in low-skilled informal work. As figure 5 shows, evangelical women are the majority among the uneducated, but the minority among those with university degree.
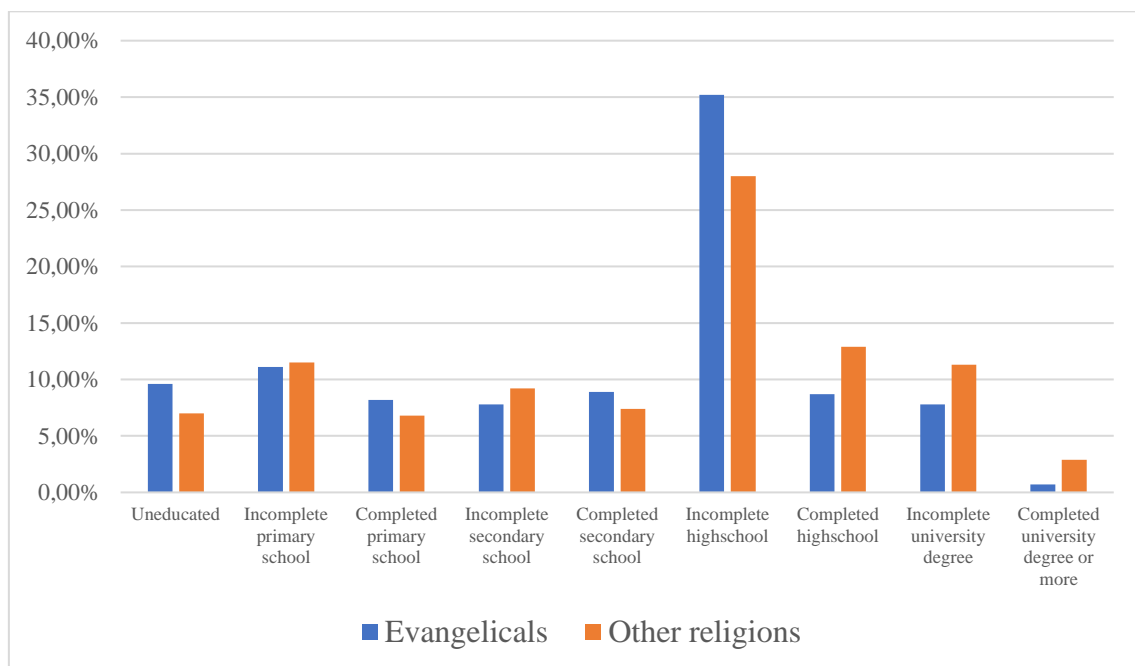
Figure 5: Educational levels among women divided by religious affiliation (2018)
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas (CESOP 2018)

From this socioeconomic and educational pattern of evangelical women, vote choice for Bolsonaro might have been driven by socioeconomic conditions resulting from informal occupational structures, which translated into rejection of the Workers' Party. The cultural backlash argument might not account alone for the support of evangelical women to the far-right, but also the economic grievance component among these women who mainstream parties are perceived to have failed to assist. Lower levels of educational attainments combined with precarious social economic conditions suggests that an occupational factor might be in place leading evangelical to vote for a radical right candidate.

Moreover, it is expected that higher levels of worship attendance enable evangelical women to develop social ties with other women enduring the same financial struggles. From this, feelings of resentment against mainstream politics are collectively fostered inside church walls, with the support of the evangelical clergy which largely favoured Bolsonaro's candidacy (Arias 2018). In essence, the echo chamber phenomenon mentioned in the previous hypotheses, which has been argued to increase in-group polarization online, might also be responsible for propelling feelings of discontent among evangelical women employed in precarious jobs, and facing similar conditions of financial hardship. This collective feeling of resentment, in turn, is believed to have been especially encouraged by the evangelical clergy's support to Bolsonaro. This leads to the final occupational hypothesis to be tested:

Hypothesis 5.B: *Informal working relations among evangelical women has a much stronger effect in supporting Bolsonaro compared to other religious affiliations.*

4 Research Design

The hypotheses from this study are tested using multivariate logistic models with survey data from the Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas (CESOP – UNICAMP), collected in November 2018, from a representative sample of 1,316 women. This dataset includes a variety of questions on demographics, issue positions, and attitudes which have been used in previous studies investigating the 2018 electoral outcome in Brazil (e.g. Amaral 2020; Fuks et al. 2020). This dataset has some clear advantages, not only because the surveys were conducted right after the second round of the election thus being able to capture with more precision the political momentum, but the sample size of women respondents provides ample variation to allow statistical inferences. Furthermore, its unique questionnaire design provides measures of issue positions related to the cultural backlash hypothesis, together with numerous questions involving patterns of social media usage, both of which are related to some of the hypotheses assessed herein.

In order to evaluate support for the far-right candidate Bolsonaro, the key-dependent variable used in the analysis is vote choice during the second round of the 2018 presidential elections. This variable is coded as a dummy, in order to permit contrast between women who voted for Bolsonaro from those who either voted for the opposition, did not respond, or cast out null or blank votes.

The independent variables included in the models fall into four categories: demographics, conservative attitudes, social media usage, and occupation. To measure support for Bolsonaro among evangelical women in comparison to other religious affiliations, church membership is coded as a dummy variable, using other religious groups as reference. Frequency of church attendance is also included in the models as a

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dummy variable, to differentiate women who attend religious masses at least once a week – and thus are more likely to hold firmer religious beliefs – from those who do not.

The attitudinal hypotheses related to the cultural backlash phenomenon embodied by Bolsonaro (Rennó 2020) are measured by the respondents' satisfaction with the current levels of access to rights by women and minorities such as blacks, indigenous, and LGBTQI+ communities. This question captures distinct dimensions of conservatism delineated in the theoretical section, and it is expected that female far-right supporters would be more prone to opposing granting further rights to these minority groups. This variable is measured by a 10-point scale response, ranging from 'complete dissatisfaction' to 'complete satisfaction' with the legal protection afforded to minorities.

Since social media usage was argued to have contributed to far-right support in Brazil, in particular platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, two survey questions are used to capture the influence of these two media vehicles to the electoral results: "which of these social media platforms do you use to get informed about politics?" and if respondents participate in WhatsApp and/or Facebook groups to discuss political subjects. Both measurements were converted into dummy variables to enable comparisons between women who predominantly use WhatsApp/Facebook for the purposes of gathering political information (1st question), or political mobilization and debates (2nd question), from the ones who either recur to other social media platforms, do not get informed about politics, or do not use any social media.

Lastly, the hypotheses involving socioeconomic grievances motivated by occupational features are assessed by the standard question included in several surveys about the interviewee's professional situation. The answers included, among other options, formal work (as with registered labour booklet), informal work (as without registered labour booklet), self-employment, housework, studying, and unemployment.

Considering that the theoretical expectations involve an association between precarization and far-right voting, and that labour market informality – translated by self-employment and non-registered labour booklet - is a proxy for more precarious working conditions in Brazil, the analysis included a dummy variable for occupation using other professional situations as the reference category.

The models control for the usual suspects: age, family income, race, educational level, ideology (measured by left-right self-placement in the ideological spectrum), and political interest. Since partisanship is considered traditionally weak among Brazilian voters, this component is assessed through a question involving proximity to any political party.

The model also includes some context-specific controls: whether respondents benefit from governmental cash transfer programs, rejection of the Workers' Party (or negative partisanship), and the perceived effects of corruption and criminality. First, being a beneficiary of governmental cash transfer programs (called *Bolsa Família*) decisively affected vote choice in previous elections in Brazil (Rennó 2020), and in 2018 being a *Bolsa Familia* recipient should induce greater support for Bolsonaro's opposition candidate. Second, several studies have shown that flourishing resentment against the Workers' Party partly underpinned the emergence of a radical right candidate in Brazil (Amaral 2020; Fuks et al. 2020), translating into those who disliked the Workers' Party being more favourable to the candidacy of Bolsonaro. Issue position on crime rates is also controlled in the models, as voters who feel more insecure about criminality are more likely to be drawn to Bolsonaro's promises to impose harsher punishment against transgressors of the law. In addition, the effect of corruption is captured by including a variable that indicates if corruption is perceived by the respondent as a serious problem in Brazilian politics. As argued by Rennó (2020), positions on corruption should not be

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excluded from models willing to explain vote choice in Brazil, as it has been a significant factor influencing previous elections (Corrêa 2015; Rennó 2007). Voters who believe that corruption is a serious issue should be more likely to support Bolsonaro based on the candidate's antisystem position that mainstream parties are maculated by corruption.

Moreover, positions on whether the criminal investigation *Lava Jato* was effective in combatting corruption are included, together with authoritarian tendencies. While *Lava Jato* is argued by some to have exposed severe endemic corruption, others refute it by invoking that the criminal operation was biased towards the Workers' Party that it and contributed to the "criminalization of politics" (Genro 2017). Considering that Bolsonaro portrayed himself as an outsider not tainted by traditional politics, his electorate is more likely to reject the latter opinions and concur with the former. Finally, authoritarian tendencies is also controlled in the models with a question of whether the respondent supports the imposition of a dictatorship in certain situations. It is expected that authoritarian voters should vote more for the right (Cohen et al. 2018), especially considering that Bolsonaro shared ambivalent opinions about democracy several times during his political trajectory (Setzler 2020).

A last set of controls comprises variables linked to the conditions for a populist vote that could translate into support for Bolsonaro (Rennó 2020). The variables trust in political parties and satisfaction with democracy capture overall feelings towards the political system, whereas those with antisystem perspective and dissatisfaction with the regime would have a greater likelihood of supporting Bolsonaro as an outsider. Table 01 presents the descriptive statistics of all the variables included in the models. As the robust check provided in the appendix uses data from LatinoBarometro with a survey question of vote choice during the 1st round of the presidential elections, this variable is included both in the first model (without interactions) and the table below.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics with all the variables included in the models (CESOP dataset)*

	Min/Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Missing	1st quart.	3rd quart.
DV:							
Vote Choice (1st round)	0-1	0.2857	0.45193	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Vote Choice (2nd round)	0-1	0.3640	0.48133	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
IV:							
Evangelical religion	0-1	0.3412	0.47429	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Frequency of church attendance	0-1	0.5175	0.049988	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Conservativism	0-10	3.0105	3.10773	1,244	72	0.0000	5.0000
Social media usage	0-1	0.5220	0.49970	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Whatsapp/Facebook group	0-1	0.1003	0.30052	1,316	0	0.0000	0.0000
Occupation	0-1	0.2880	0.45300	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
CONTROLS:							
Age	1-7	4.1900	1.56008	1,316	0	3.0000	5.0000
Family income*	0-1	0.4217	0.49402	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Region*	1-5	2.8921	1.00670	1,316	0	2.0000	3.0000
Race*	1-4	1.8123	0.95314	1,316	0	1.0000	2.0000
Education	1-9	5.0320	2.16465	1,316	0	3.0000	6.0000
Left-Right self-placement	0-10	6.4598	3.48543	957	359	5.0000	10.000
Political interest	1-4	2.0046	0.92972	1,299	17	1.0000	2.0000
Perception economy	1-5	1.9322	1.09427	1,283	33	1.0000	3.0000
Perception criminality	0-10	1.9085	2.69730	1,316	0	0.0000	3.0000
Perception corruption	1-4	3.8490	0.44932	1,305	11	4.0000	4.0000
***Bolsa Familia* beneficiary**	0-1	0.3617	0.48068	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Satisfaction with democracy	1-5	1.8129	0.95347	1,272	44	1.0000	2.0000
Partisanship	0-1	0.1375	0.34455	1,316	0	0.0000	0.0000
Rejection of the Workers' Party	0-1	0.5935	0.49137	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Trust political parties	1-4	1.6307	0.78401	1,259	57	1.0000	2.0000
Lava Jato	0-1	0.5319	0.49917	1,316	0	0.0000	1.0000
Authoritarianism	0-1	0.1368	0:34374	1,316	0	0.0000	0:0000

*Correlation matrix with the variables included in the model is in the appendix

5   Results

Table 2 reports the results from voting analysis of the first and second rounds of the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil after running logistic regression models using dataset from the Public Opinion Research Centre of the University of Campinas ("CESOP-UNICAMP"). The models include 880 observations and explain approximately 22% of the variance in women's vote choice. Models 1 and 2 assess voting behaviour in the first and second rounds of the presidential elections among women. Models 3, 4, 5 and 6 include interactions between church attendance, conservativism, social media usage and participation in WhatsApp and Facebook groups of political discussion, and occupation with evangelical religion in turn. Afterwards, model 7 encompasses all the interactions at once.

Neither model 1 nor 2 comport to the theoretical expectations of the sociodemographic evangelical religious hypothesis of far-right support among women. Controlling for various factors, the findings suggest that the odds of evangelical women voting for Bolsonaro in the first[1] and second rounds of the presidential elections increase by 26.1% and 31.9%, yet the results are not statistically significant. One of the reasons to explain these surprising results is that while in the first-round evangelical female voting could have dispersed across thirteen other contenders running the presidential race, in the second round what was possibly conducive towards far-right vote was not evangelical religion *per se* but rather church attendance, regardless of religious affiliation. As shown in model 2, higher worship attendance increases the odds of voting for Bolsonaro by 38.6% ($p < 0.1$), and model 3, which includes an interaction between evangelical religion

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[1] In relation to the first round of the presidential elections, it is worth highlighting that the robustness check indicates that the odds of evangelical women voting for Bolsonaro increased by 53% ($p < 0.1$). Possible explanations for these diverging results are provided in the appendix.

and church attendance, confirms that this pattern is not exclusive to evangelical women. Therefore, data analysis was not able to find evidence in support of hypothesis 1.

Models 1 and 2 also did not provide evidence in support for the attitudinal hypothesis associating further conservativism among women who voted for Bolsonaro (hypotheses 2.A) [2]. Model 4 includes an interaction between this variable and evangelical religion, and the results again are not able to reject the null hypothesis that conservativism did not influence vote choice for Bolsonaro (hypotheses 2.B). One explanation for these results is that the way that the question was framed, encompassing several large subgroups (black, LGBTQI+, women, and other minorities), might have concealed any specific prejudicial stance or intolerance that women respondents could have in relation to one of the categories mentioned.

Table 2: Logistic regression models

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Vote (1st round)	Vote (2nd round)	Vote (2nd round)	Vote (2nd round)	Vote (2nd round)	Vote (2nd round)	Vote (2nd round)
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:							
Evangelical religion (ref. others)	1.261	1.319	1.216	1.406	1.045	1.406	1.069
	(0.234)	(0.236)	(0.345)	(0.346)	(0.290)	(0.300)	(0.451)
Church attendance (ref. non-frequent)	1.302	1.386*	1.327	1.388*	1.359*	1.385*	1.276
	(0.236)	(0.238)	(0.277)	(0.238)	(0.234)	(0.238)	(0.266)
Conservativism	0.976	0.965	0.964	0.972	0.961	0.963	0.969
	(0.0305)	(0.0287)	(0.0287)	(0.0352)	(0.0288)	(0.0287)	(0.0352)
Social media usage (ref. others)	1.667***	1.614***	1.614***	1.615***	1.555**	1.617***	1.559**
	(0.312)	(0.283)	(0.283)	(0.284)	(0.333)	(0.284)	(0.334)
WhatsApp/Fb groups (ref. No)	2.113***	2.357***	2.343***	2.368***	1.518	2.368***	1.511
	(0.575)	(0.625)	(0.622)	(0.628)	(0.501)	(0.629)	(0.501)
Occupation (ref. others)	1.382*	1.249	1.250	1.242	1.247	1.352	1.344
	(0.260)	(0.225)	(0.225)	(0.224)	(0.225)	(0.311)	(0.308)
INTERACTIONS:							
Evangelical##Church attendance			1.143				1.218
			(0.412)				(0.444)
Evangelical##Conservativism				0.979			0.974
				(0.0561)			(0.0568)

[2] Here again, the robustness check provided in the appendix indicates that greater levels of approval of same-sex marriage reduced by 6.4% the odds of voting for Bolsonaro ($p < 0.05$), which is in accordance with findings from Setzler (2020). As mentioned, the author argues that these issues related to Bolsonaro's controversial views played a minor role to the electoral outcome.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Evangelical##Social media usage						1.163	1.163
						(0.408)	(0.410)
Evangelical##Whatsapp/Fb groups						3.573**	3.640**
						(1.978)	(2.023)
Evangelical ##Occupation						0.816	0.810
						(0.300)	(0.301)
CONTROLS:							
Age	1.052	1.145**	1.144**	1.145**	1.157**	1.145**	1.155**
	(0.0668)	(0.0690)	(0.0690)	(0.0689)	(0.0702)	(0.0690)	(0.0702)
Family income	1.256	0.900	0.898	0.898	0.891	0.894	0.880
	(0.232)	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.156)	(0.157)	(0.155)
Region (ref. North region)							
North-east region	0.337***	0.326***	0.325***	0.325***	0.326***	0.326***	0.325***
	(0.109)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)
South-east region	0.457***	0.475**	0.473***	0.475**	0.477**	0.480**	0.477**
	(0.136)	(0.138)	(0.137)	(0.138)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)
South region	0.543*	0.544*	0.540*	0.544*	0.544*	0.553*	0.547*
	(0.196)	(0.190)	(0.189)	(0.190)	(0.191)	(0.194)	(0.193)
Central-east region	0.480*	0.464*	0.466*	0.465*	0.461*	0.464*	0.463*
	(0.198)	(0.189)	(0.190)	(0.189)	(0.188)	(0.189)	(0.189)
Race (ref. brown)							
White	0.977	0.863	0.867	0.859	0.870	0.855	0.863
	(0.208)	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.176)	(0.178)	(0.176)	(0.178)
Black	0.592*	0.712	0.710	0.714	0.693	0.706	0.689
	(0.174)	(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.186)	(0.182)	(0.184)	(0.181)
Others	1.172	0.939	0.944	0.937	0.927	0.935	0.927
	(0.399)	(0.303)	(0.306)	(0.302)	(0.300)	(0.302)	(0.301)
Educational level	0.890**	0.952	0.952	0.952	0.956	0.950	0.955
	(0.0434)	(0.0438)	(0.0438)	(0.0438)	(0.0440)	(0.0438)	(0.0441)
Left-right self-placement	1.167***	1.167***	1.168***	1.168***	1.166***	1.167***	1.167***
	(0.0330)	(0.0307)	(0.0308)	(0.0307)	(0.0308)	(0.0307)	(0.0310)
Political interest	1.146	1.103	1.102	1.105	1.106	1.101	1.104
	(0.112)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.103)
Perception economy	1.074	1.233***	1.232***	1.233***	1.231***	1.232***	1.232***
	(0.0866)	(0.0953)	(0.0952)	(0.0953)	(0.0955)	(0.0952)	(0.0954)
Perception criminality	1.074**	1.069**	1.070**	1.068**	1.067**	1.069**	1.066*
	(0.0365)	(0.0349)	(0.0349)	(0.0350)	(0.0349)	(0.0349)	(0.0350)
Perception corruption	0.713*	0.822	0.822	0.821	0.824	0.822	0.823
	(0.136)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.150)	(0.149)	(0.150)
***Bolsa Familia* beneficiary** (ref. No)	0.743	0.783	0.783	0.781	0.786	0.786	0.785
	(0.151)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.150)	(0.150)	(0.150)
Satisfaction with democracy	1.040	1.058	1.061	1.058	1.058	1.056	1.063
	(0.0937)	(0.0922)	(0.0930)	(0.0923)	(0.0925)	(0.0921)	(0.0933)
Partisanship (ref. Yes)	1.340	1.045	1.048	1.045	1.036	1.046	1.039
	(0.338)	(0.251)	(0.252)	(0.251)	(0.251)	(0.252)	(0.253)
Rejection Workers' Party (ref. No)	6.349***	5.065***	5.070***	5.069***	4.966***	5.078***	4.987***
	(1.454)	(1.002)	(1.004)	(1.003)	(0.985)	(1.005)	(0.991)
Trust political parties	0.868	0.950	0.949	0.953	0.952	0.954	0.958
	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.105)	(0.107)
***Lava Jato* effective** (ref. No)	1.696***	1.542**	1.538**	1.546**	1.519**	1.542**	1.519**
	(0.309)	(0.262)	(0.262)	(0.263)	(0.259)	(0.262)	(0.260)
Authoritarianism (ref. No)	1.556*	1.228	1.232	1.231	1.271	1.221	1.276
	(0.365)	(0.283)	(0.284)	(0.284)	(0.294)	(0.282)	(0.297)
Constant	0.110**	0.0594***	0.0604***	0.0576***	0.0625***	0.0588***	0.0613***
	(0.103)	(0.0539)	(0.0550)	(0.0526)	(0.0571)	(0.0535)	(0.0565)
Observations	880	880	880	880	880	880	880

All the coefficients in the table have been exponentiated (Odd Ratios)

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Robustness check in the appendix with dataset from LatinoBarometro

In relation to the hypotheses on social media usage, model 1 and 2 reveal that women who use WhatsApp and Facebook as sources of political information and participate in online groups to discuss political subjects have higher probability of voting for Bolsonaro. Among women who got political information mostly through WhatsApp and Facebook, the odds of voting for Bolsonaro increase by 66.7% during the first round, and 61.4% during the second round of the 2018 presidential elections ($p < 0.01$). Moreover, the odds of voting for Bolsonaro increase by 111% during the first round, and 136% during the second round, among women who participate in WhatsApp and Facebook political groups ($p < 0.01$). This confirms that WhatsApp and Facebook were significant predictive factors of the 2018 electoral outcome in Brazil among the female electorate, as theoretically expected in hypothesis 3.A and 3.B. It is also interesting to notice that participation in these platforms' political groups had a more significant role for far-right voting during the second round of the presidential elections, which corresponds to the timeframe when fake news dissemination supportive of Bolsonaro became more prevalent (Mello 2018).

To assess if evangelism conditions the effect of social media (hypothesis 4.A and 4.B), model 5 includes interactions between WhatsApp and Facebook usage as sources of political information and participation in these platforms' political groups with evangelism. The interaction between evangelical religion and WhatsApp/Facebook usage as sources of political information provides positive, but not statistically significant results. In relation to participation in online groups for political discussion in WhatsApp and Facebook, evangelism has no impact on voting for Bolsonaro among women who do

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not participate in these online groups – both evangelic and women with other religious affiliations have similar probabilities of voting for Bolsonaro, around 37% (see blue line in figure 6). In contrast, evangelism had a significant effect for the electoral support of Bolsonaro among those who participated in WhatsApp and Facebook group: here evangelical women have 68% probability of voting for Bolsonaro, while other religions have about 38% probability (see red line in figure 6).

Figure 6 also reveals that participation in online groups of political discussion had a substantive impact on the probability of voting for Bolsonaro for both evangelicals and non-evangelicals. Participation in online political groups increases the probability of voting for Bolsonaro from 38% to 68% among evangelicals. Figure 6 shows a similar, albeit much weaker, pattern for other religious groups. Here, the probability of voting for Bolsonaro increases from 35.7% to 43% with participation in online political groups.
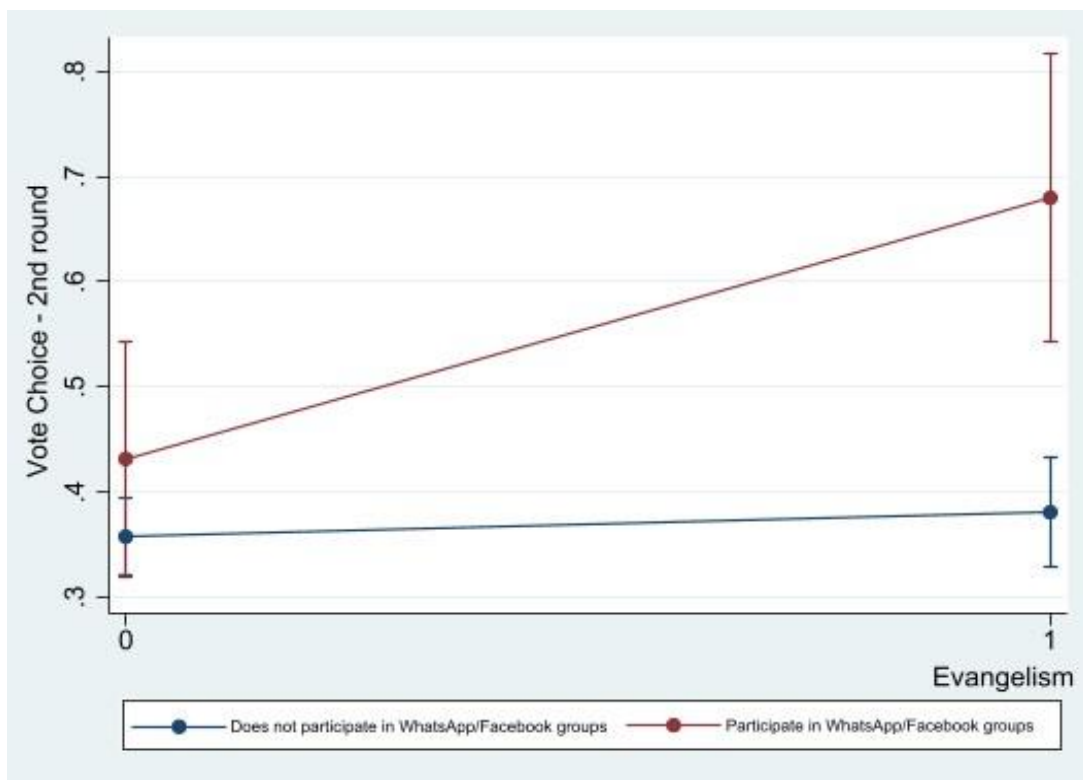
Figure 6: Predicted probability of participation in WhatsApp/Facebook political groups among different religious groups

Source: Developed by the author

Finally, models 1 and 2 do not provide evidence in support for hypothesis 5.A which expected an impact of informal occupational structures in far-right support among women. Similarly, model 6, which includes an interaction between occupation and evangelical religion, was not able to provide support for hypothesis 5.B. The interaction term between occupation and evangelism is negative, albeit not statistically significant. This lack of support suggests that women voters do not translate their perceptions of declining social status based on precarization of working conditions to the ballot boxes in Brazil. Instead, following patterns of previous presidential elections (Baker and Greene 2015), it could be the case that perceptions of the country's economic situation influence voting choice rather than occupation. However, differently from the pattern found in Europe of economic grievances driving far-right support, the odds of voting for Bolsonaro increase by 23% among those who assessed better the economy ($p < 0.01$). This interesting diverging finding from mainstream far-right voting behaviour literature surely warrants further investigation.

To conclude this section, some general patterns of female voting behaviour in 2018 are worth highlighting. First, models 1 and 2 reveal significant regional differences in vote choice among women. In particular, compared to the northern region, the north-east region shows sharp decrease in the chances of supporting Bolsonaro. This is possibly due to the region's firmer commitment to the Worker's Party, which implemented cash transfer programs during previous presidential terms benefiting a large section of the local population (Daïeff 2016). Second, the analysis support previous research: ideology and rejection to the Worker's Party significantly and positively affected support for Bolsonaro (Amaral 2020; Fuks et al. 2020; Setzler 2020; Samuel and Zucco 2018). Third, in line

with prior studies on the modern gender gap (e.g. Norrander and Wilcox 2008), higher levels of education in Brazil decreased the odds of far-right approval among women during the 1st round (p < 0.05). Moreover, believing that the *Lava Jato* operation is an effective tool to fight corruption significantly increased the odds of supporting Bolsonaro during both rounds of the presidential election. Perceptions on criminality rates also increased the odds of support Bolsonaro, albeit not as significantly. Lastly, an interesting finding emerges from model 1 in relation to the respondent's opinion if democracy is always a superior political regime to dictatorships. Women who replied that in some situations military rulings are acceptable had 55.6% higher chances of far-right support during the first round (p < 0.1), while for the second round the relationship remains positive but not statistically significant.

6 Conclusion

Popular accounts of the 2018 presidential contest in Brazil emphasize that Bolsonaro was elected primarily because he mobilized previously disillusioned voters who resented the Workers' Party amidst a deeply polarized race (Hunter and Power 2019). According to most analyses, his core supporters shared many demographic characteristics, including identifying with evangelical Christianity and being male (Layton et. al. 2021; Amaral 2020), while suggesting that Bolsonaro was not able to secure women's vote due to his hostile attitudes towards gender and racial equality. As shown, these assessments were wrong, given that the majority of valid votes from women were cast for Bolsonaro (Nicolau 2020). This raised the question regarding the motivations of female voters to choose a candidate with well-documented history of demeaning comments against women.

Bolsonaro's victory therefore provides important insights into the limitations of explaining political behaviour of Brazilian women without including a gender perspective. While previous studies maintained that the support from the evangelical community contributed to the electoral outcome, this thesis identifies that actually evangelism might not be a strong predictor of far-right vote among women, even though women who attend church more frequently, irrespective of religious affiliation, had a greater probability of voting for Bolsonaro. Further research could explore if evangelism predicted far-right support solely among men and investigate how church worship influenced far-right voting in Brazil.

The majority of studies on gender voting behaviour considers gender as a simplistic binary category where female voting behaviour is contrasted to that of male. As argued, not only do features predicting far-right support might differ between men and women, but also within each gender subgroup there are several sociodemographic aspects worth

analysing without using men as a baseline category. Therefore, a considerable amount of research on far right voting behaviour need to be done including within its scope a gender perspective focusing solely on women, a share of the electorate who have hitherto been largely overlooked by earlier research. As rightfully pointed out by Allen and Goodman (2021, p. 148), "it is essential that comparative approaches to voting behaviour push beyond simplistic narratives of far-right supporters as simply jack rooted radicals or ´angry men´".

Moreover, far-right research often draws from the reality of consolidated democracies, whose contexts might not always be suitable to fully comprehend far-right emergence elsewhere. While anti-immigrant attitudes are significant predictors of far-right support in several developed countries, distinct forms of conservatism are worth pursuing to encompass other contexts. Inglehart and Norris (2017) claim that a reaction against progressive cultural change in recent decades fomented the rise of right-wing extremism worldwide. In Latin American countries such as Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil included, this cultural backlash is represented by reactions against further LGBTQI+ and reproductive rights, which are now constantly under dispute in political debates (Rennó 2020; Corredor 2019). Strikingly, the analysis shows that the more conservative female electorate in Brazil is no more likely to vote for Bolsonaro than the more liberal one. This finding suggests that, differently from European countries (Allen and Goodman 2021), these divisive issues raised by extremist candidates might not be deemed salient for vote choice among Brazilian women.

Above all, this paper provides evidence of the crucial importance of the echo chamber phenomenon on social media applied to voting behaviour. Social media usage as source of political information, and participation in online groups for political discussion in platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, significantly predicted far-right

support among women in Brazil. This, coupled with the finding that evangelical women who participated in these online political groups had a much greater chance to support Bolsonaro in comparison to other religious groups, suggests that not all evangelical women were influenced by far-right rhetoric. However, those who got politically engaged in social media's platforms were able to better mobilize support and share political ideas favourable to Bolsonaro, while possibly being more susceptible to disinformation. Since the study was limited by its observational approach, it is not possible to determine if it were the fake news stories or further political participation in far-right online groups that led to stronger support for Bolsonaro. Nevertheless, these findings draw attention to the significance of future research addressing the role of social media platforms in voting behaviour not merely as a mediator, but as a possible propeller for the emergence of illiberal candidates. Ultimately, it is possible that in the future fake news dissemination through social media within certain sectors of the population could even lead to changes in women's overall resistance to vote for the far-right ceasing to exist. This, in turn, could contribute the emergence of new candidates with deeply illiberal inclinations, as Bolsonaro has (Power and Hunter 2019).

Finally, the results from the paper unsettle even further dominant narratives about support for far-right parties and candidates motivated by economic grievances. Existing literature paints a picture of morally conservative and authoritarian older men in blue-collar occupations who are receptive to far-right rhetoric due to their self-perception of declining status. However, this occupational trait is not present in Brazil, at least not among the female electorate. In fact, very little is known about the socioeconomic profile of voters who back far-right candidates in Latin America. Further research might investigate if the theoretical underpinning of "globalization losers" invoked for Western European far-right voters, mostly affected by precarization and unemployment, is

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applicable to the male electorate in Brazil, or even to the female electorate in other countries outside the developed world.

This thesis is a scholarship step forward towards further understanding female far-right voting behaviour. The question of why some women decide to support far-right candidates gave us some answers. Discovering that social media had an independent influence on voters' preference for a far-right candidate in Brazil supports a comprehensive model that recognizes the complexity of voting behaviour in an era of online political engagement and misinformation diffusion. In addition, by acknowledging that certain identity traits – such as evangelical religiosity – contributed to far-right voting, it does not necessarily mean that the same pattern holds specifically for the female share of the electorate, and it does not translate into evangelical women concurring with Bolsonaro's controversial stances. However, it would still be beneficial to the literature on electoral behaviour that future research develops a more comprehensive theory on the relevance of church attendance to far-right success. This is certainly true for Brazil, a deeply religious country where the far-right movement that culminated in the victory of Bolsonaro seems to be in the country for the long haul.

7   Appendix

7.1   Correlation Matrix CESOP Dataset

Table 3: Correlation matrix (CESOP)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	1																						
2	0.109**	1																					
3	0.138***	0.239***	1																				
4	-0.0150	-0.0571	0.0345	1																			
5	0.118***	0.0397	-0.0256	-0.0555	1																		
6	0.0891**	0.0173	-0.0415	-0.0117	0.143***	1																	
7	0.0388	0.0721*	0.0314	-0.00431	0.000379	-0.00543	1																
8	0.0701*	-0.0291	0.168***	0.0501	-0.240***	-0.137***	-0.0229	1															
9	-0.0814*	0.0386	0.0227	0.017	-0.0704*	-0.0715*	0.0215	0.0542	1														
10	-0.0560	-0.0314	-0.0314	0.0153	-0.0180	0.0100	0.0162	0.0387	0.00632	1													
11	0.0457	-0.00953	0.0302	0.0225	-0.0342	0.0151	-0.0956***	0.0773*	-0.151***	0.0588	1												
12	0.0346	-0.0703*	-0.0862***	-0.0559	0.221***	0.158***	0.0136	-0.297***	-0.265***	-0.0634	0.0505	1											
13	0.235***	0.0167	0.0796***	0.129***	0.0563	0.00748	-0.0119	0.0573	0.0461	-0.00391	-0.0219	-0.0787*	1										
14	0.0726*	-0.0607	-0.00896	0.0178	0.0956***	0.251***	-0.00252	0.00360	-0.0896***	-0.0247	0.0479	0.208***	0.00655	1									
15	0.0453	-0.0444	0.0242	0.310***	-0.0635	-0.0406	-0.0363	-0.0406	-0.0326	-0.0242	0.0853*	-0.0831*	0.0288	-0.0257	1								
16	0.0163	-0.0552	-0.0381	-0.0387	0.0392	0.0160	0.0498	0.00547	-0.0388	-0.0239	0.00905	0.0910**	0.0640	0.0846*	-0.134***	1							
17	-0.142***	0.0369	-0.0626	0.0645	-0.00924	-0.0305	0.0474	-0.178***	0.269***	0.0152	-0.201***	-0.219***	0.0268	-0.116***	0.0575	-0.0618	1						
18	0.0938***	-0.0143	0.0654	0.126***	-0.0271	0.0273	-0.0493	0.0310	-0.00339	-0.0463	0.0499	0.0363	0.0923***	0.133***	0.177***	-0.0324	-0.0246	1					
19	-0.0375	-0.0204	0.000951	0.0156	0.0409	0.160***	-0.0113	0.0676*	0.000554	-0.0310	0.00159	-0.00721	0.0102	0.197***	-0.0321	0.0358	0.000619	-0.0209	1				
20	0.359***	0.108**	0.0901**	-0.118***	0.0463	-0.0311	0.0330	0.00868	-0.159***	-0.0803*	0.126***	0.149***	0.0673*	0.0335	-0.0508	0.100**	-0.227***	0.0558	-0.173***	1			
21	0.153***	-0.0108	0.0266	0.0744*	0.0621	0.0141	-0.00432	-0.0105	-0.0605	-0.0501	0.0877***	0.118***	0.126***	0.0619	0.0550	0.0622	-0.0657*	0.112***	-0.0733*	0.130***	1		
22	-0.0225	-0.0522	0.0548	0.204***	-0.00503	0.0201	0.0320	0.0728*	0.0517	-0.000801	0.00604	-0.102**	0.0624	0.101**	0.199***	-0.0559	0.0897**	0.112***	0.118***	-0.133***	0.0253	1	
23	0.0872*	0.109**	-0.0211	0.0153	0.0683*	0.0954***	0.0231	-0.0589	0.00564	-0.0101	0.0115	0.0390	0.0877***	-0.0227	-0.0368	0.0330	0.00388	-0.0323	-0.0161	0.0819*	-0.0231	-0.0484	1

t statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

***** Variables in the table listed from 1-23:

1: Vote choice (2nd round)
2: Evangelical religion
3: Church attendance
4: Conservatism
5: Social media usage
6: WhatsApp/Facebook political groups
7: Occupation
8: Age

9: Income
10: Race
11: Region
12: Education
13: Left-Right placement
14: Political interest
15: Perception criminality
16: Perception corruption

17: *Bolsa Família* beneficiary
18: Satisfaction with democracy
19: Partisanship
20: Rejection Workers' Party
21: *Lava Jato* effective
22: Trust political parties
23: Authoritarianism

7.2 Questions from the survey datasets

Table 4: Questions from CESOP Dataset

	Questions	Coding reference
DEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Vote Choice (1st round)	"Who did you vote for president in the first round of the presidential election?"	"1" – Bolsonaro "0" – Other candidates
Vote Choice (2nd round)	"Who did you vote for president in the second round of the presidential election?"	"1" – Bolsonaro "0" – Other answers
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Evangelical religion	"Please tell me which of these is your religion. If you do not find it on this list, you can tell me directly which religion is yours."	"1" – Evangelical "0" – Other religions
Frequency of church attendance	"Without considering baptisms and weddings, how often do you go to mass or religious worship?"	"1" – at least once a week "0" – others
Conservativism	"I will mention some policies and I would like you to use this scale to tell me how satisfied you are with each one of them, with the grade 0 it means totally dissatisfied, and the grade 10 means totally satisfied. What a grade from 0 to 10 you give for your satisfaction with: Access to women's and minority rights policies such as blacks, indigenous people, homosexuals, LGBTs, among others."	Continuous variable, coded from 0-10, excluding missing values.
Social media usage	"Which of these social media platforms do you use more frequently to find out about politics?"	"1" - WhatsApp and Facebook "0" - others
WhatsApp/Facebook group	"I am going to mention some organizations and I would like you to tell me whether or not you participate in each one of them. You participate or not participate in: Virtual political discussion groups on twitter, WhatsApp, or Facebook."	"1" – Yes "0" - others
Occupation	"What is your current professional situation?"	"1" - Informal and self-employed "0" - others
CONTROLS		
Age	"What is your age?"	"1" – 16/17 "2" – 18 to 24 "3" - 25 to 34

		"4" – 35 to 44 "5" – 45 to 54 "6" – 55 to 64 "7" – 65 and more
Family income	"Could you tell me approximately the monthly income of your household, that is, the sum of the monthly income of all members in your household."	"1" – from 0 to the sum of 2 minimum wages "0" - others
Race	"The IBGE - Institute that makes the Censuses in Brazil - uses the terms black, brown, white, yellow and indigenous to classify people's colour or race. Which of these terms best describes your colour or race?"	"1" – brown "2" – white "3" – black "4" - others
Region	No question, completed by the interviewer	"1" – North region "2" – Northeast region "3" – Southeast region "4" – South region "5" – Central west region
Education	"Up to what grade did you study and complete?"	"1" – Never attended "2" – Incomplete primary "3" – Completed primary "4" – Incomplete secondary "5" – Completed secondary "6" – Incomplete high school "7" – Completed high school "8" – Incomplete university or specialization "9" – Completed university or more
Left-Right self-placement	"Again, thinking about left and right in politics, how do you consider yourself? Remember that zero means that you are from the left and 10 that you are from the right."	Continuous variable, coded from 0 to 10, excluding missing observations.
Political interest	"How interested are you in politics? Would you say you are: not interested, a bit interested, interested or very interested?"	"1" – not interested "2" – a bit interested "3" – interested "4" – very interested
Perception economy	"Do you think that the current economic situation in the country is much better, a little better, is it the same, a little worse or much worse than in the last twelve months?"	"1" – much worse "2" – a little worse "3" – the same "4" – little better "5" – much better
Perception criminality	"I will mention some policies and I would like you to use this scale (0-10) to tell me how satisfied you are with each one of them. Grade 0 means that you are totally dissatisfied, and grade	Continuous variable, coded from 0 to10, using the mean value for the few missing observations

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	10 means that you are totally satisfied. What a grade from 0 to 10 would you give for your satisfaction in relation to control of criminality rates.”	
Perception corruption	“Would you say that corruption in Brazil is a very serious problem, serious, not very serious, is it not a serious problem at all?”	“1” – very serious “2” – serious “3” – not very serious “4” – not serious at all
Bolsa Familia **beneficiary**	“In the last three years, you or someone who lives in your home was a beneficiary (received cash transfer) from the *Bolsa Família* program?”	“1” – Yes “0” – others
Satisfaction with democracy	“In general, are you very satisfied, satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Brazil?”	“1” – not at all satisfied “2” – not very satisfied “3” – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied “4” – satisfied “5” – very satisfied
Partisanship	“Do you consider yourself close to any political party?”	“1” – Yes “0” – others
Rejection of the Workers' Party	“Using a scale from 0 to 10 to indicate how much you like the parties mentioned below, where 0 means that you do not like the party at all, and 10 meaning that you like the party a lot, what do you think about the Workers' Party?”	Continuous variable coded as a dummy variable. Values from “0” to “5” (dislike) are coded “1”, and the others are coded “0”.
Trust political parties	“Generally speaking, do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, little or no confidence in political parties?”	“1” – no confidence “2” – little confidence “3” – some confidence “4” – a lot of confidence
Lava Jato	“In your opinion, is Operation *Lava-Jato* effective to fight corruption or not?”	“1” – Yes, it is effective. “0” – others
Authoritarianism	“Some people say that democracy is always better than any other form of government. For others, in some situations a dictatorship is better than a democracy. Which of these affirmations reflects better the way you think?”	“1” – In some situations a dictatorship is better than a democracy “0” – others

Table 5: Question from LatinoBarometro Dataset

	Questions	Coding reference
	DEPENDENT VARIABLES	
Vote Choice (1ˢᵗ	“In which candidate did you vote for	“1” – Bolsonaro

round)	president in the first round of the 2018 presidential elections?"	"0" – Other candidates
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Evangelical religion	"What is your religion, if any?"	"1" – Evangelical (Pentecostal) "0" – Other religions
Frequency of church attendance	"How often do you go to mass or religious service?"	"1" – at least once a week "0" – others
Conservativism	"Do you believe that termination of pregnancy, that is, an abortion, is justified when the mother's health is in danger?"	"1" – "No, it is not justified." "0" – others
	"How much do you approve or disapprove that homosexual couples have the right to get married?"	Continuous variable, coded from 0 to10, using the mean value for the few missing observations
Social media usage	"How often do you use WhatsApp?"	"1" – at least sometimes in a week "0" – others
	"How often do you use Facebook?"	"1" – at least sometimes in a week "0" – others
Occupation	"In your main occupation, are you: government employee, private sector employee, employer or partner of a company, self-employed/informal, or paid worker?"	"1" - Informal and self-employed "0" - others
CONTROLS		
Age	"What is your age?"	"1" – 16/17 "2" – 18 to 24 "3" – 25 to 34 "4" – 35 to 44 "5" – 45 to 54 "6" – 55 to 64 "7" – 65 and more
Family income	"In which of the following categories is the monthly household income of your home, including remittances from abroad and the income of all adults and sons/daughters who work?"	"1" – from 0 to R$ 1,700.00 "0" – others
Race	"Do you consider yourself a white, black, brown, indigenous or yellow person?"	"1" – brown "2" – white "3" – black "4" – others
Region	No question, completed by the interviewer	"1" – North region "2" – Northeast region "3" – Southeast region "4" – South region "5" – Central west region

Education	"What was the last year or grade in the school that you completed with approval?"	Ordinal variable, coded from "0" (uneducated) to "17" (6th year of university or more)
Left-Right self-placement	"On this card there is a scale, from 1 to 10, in which number 1 means 'Left' and 10 means 'Right'. Nowadays, when talking about political trends, one talks about people who sympathize more with the left and people who sympathize more with the right. According to the political meaning that the terms 'left' and 'right' have for you, where do you place yourself is this scale?	Continuous variable, coded from 1 to 10, excluding missing observations.
Political interest	"How interested are you in politics: a lot, more or less, a little or nothing?"	"1" – Nothing "2" – A little "3" – More or less "4" – A lot To the few missing values, it was attributed the mean value.
Perception economy	"Do you consider that that the current economic situation in the country is better, equal, or worse than twelve months ago?"	"1" – Worse "2" – Equal "3" - Better
Perception criminality	"Speaking of the place or neighbourhood where you live and thinking about the possibility of being the victim of a robbery. Do you feel very secure, not very secure, a little insecure or very insecure?	"1" – very insecure and a little insecure "0" - others
Perception corruption	Combination of two questions about perceptions of how widespread corruption is (each of them asked to 50% of the sample): "Considering your personal experience or what you might have heard about civil servants, corruption among public officials is very common, somewhat common, not very common, not common at all?" ?" and "Thinking about politicians in Brazil, how many of them do you think they are involved in corruption – none, less than half, more than half, or all of them?"	"1" – perception that corruption is not widespread at all 2" – perception that corruption is not widespread "3" – perception that corruption is not that widespread "4" – perception of widespread corruption To the few missing values, it was attributed the mean value.
Bolsa Familia beneficiary	"Now talking specifically about the *Bolsa Família* cash transfer governmental policy, is you or anyone in your household a beneficiary of this program?"	"1" – Yes "0" – others

Satisfaction with democracy	"Generally speaking, are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in Brazil?"	"1" – very dissatisfied "2" – dissatisfied "3" – satisfied "4" – very satisfied To the few missing values, it was attributed the mean value.
Partisanship	"Do you currently sympathize with any political party?"	"1" – yes "0" others
Rejection of the Workers' Party	From a scale from 1 to10, 1 meaning "I don't like at all" and 10 meaning "I like a lot, how much do you like or dislike the Workers' Party?"	Continuous variable, coded from 1 to 10, and attributing the mean value for the few missing observations.
Trust political parties	"From a scale from 1-7, when 1 means 'nothing' and 7 means 'a lot', to what extent do you trust in political parties?"	Continuous variable, coded from 1 to 7, and attributing the mean value for the few missing observations.
Authoritarianism	"Some people say that under certain circumstances would justify the military taking power through a coup d'état. In your opinion, would it be justified for the military to take power when there is too much crime?"	"1" – yes "0" others

7.3 Robustness check

Table 6: Descriptive statistics with all the variables included in the models (LatinoBarometro Dataset)

	Min/Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Missing	1st quart.	3rd quart.
DV:							
Vote Choice (1st round)	0-1	0.3133	0.46416	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
IV:							
Evangelical religion	0-1	0.2320	0.42239	750	0	0.0000	0.0000
Frequency of church attendance	0-1	0.5280	0.49950	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Conservativism – Abortion	0-1	0.3133	0.46416	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Conservativism – Same sex marriage	1-10	6.0956	3.69955	750	0	1.0000	10.0000
Frequency Facebook usage	0-1	0.3853	0.48700	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Frequency WhatsApp usage	0-1	0.3480	0.47665	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Occupation	0-1	0.1507	0.35796	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
CONTROLS:							
Age	1-7	3.8573	1.66233	750	0	3.0000	5.0000
Family income	0-1	0.6160	0.48668	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Region	1-5	2.9467	1.24119	750	0	2.0000	4.0000
Race	1-4	1.8973	0.98933	750	0	1.0000	3.0000
Years of education	0-17	9.1136	3.78255	750	0	6.7500	11.0000
Left-Right self-placement	1-10	5.5515	2.81124	680	70	3.0000	8.0000
Political interest	1-4	2.1333	1.06696	750	0	1.0000	3.0000
Perception economy	1-3	1.7365	0.70722	740	10	1.0000	2.0000
Perception criminality	0-1	0.5120	0.50019	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Perception corruption	1-4	2.0634	1.00804	750	0	1.0000	3.0000
***Bolsa Familia* beneficiary**	0-1	0.2760	0.44732	750	0	0.0000	1.0000
Satisfaction with democracy	1-4	2.2629	0.73744	750	0	2.0000	3.0000
Partisanship	0-1	0.2240	0.41720	750	0	0.0000	0.0000
Rejection of the Workers' Party	1-10	4.2936	3.29566	750	0	1.0000	7.0000
Trust political parties	1-7	2.4580	1.72595	750	0	1.0000	3.0000
Authoritarianism	0-1	0.3040	0.46029	750	0	0.0000	1.0000

Table 7: Logistic regression results with LAPOP dataset (robustness check)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Vote (1st round)	Vote (1st round)	Vote (1st round)	Vote (1st round)	Vote (1st round)	Vote (1st round)
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:						
Evangelical religion (ref. others)	1.539*	0.731	0.900	1.977**	1.666*	0.423
	(0.394)	(0.516)	(0.422)	(0.645)	(0.478)	(0.349)
Church attendance (ref. less frequently)	1.401	1.261	1.349	1.395	1.401	1.154
	(0.314)	(0.300)	(0.307)	(0.315)	(0.314)	(0.286)
Abortion (ref. yes, it is justified)	0.731	0.723	0.720	0.735	0.729	0.733
	(0.159)	(0.158)	(0.179)	(0.160)	(0.158)	(0.182)
Same sex marriage	0.937**	0.936**	0.912***	0.936**	0.937**	0.900***
	(0.0285)	(0.0285)	(0.0320)	(0.0283)	(0.0285)	(0.0321)
Facebook (ref. less frequently)	1.452	1.457	1.448	1.649*	1.454	1.729**
	(0.346)	(0.347)	(0.347)	(0.433)	(0.346)	(0.467)
WhatsApp (ref. less frequently)	1.645**	1.658**	1.675**	1.723**	1.658**	1.715**
	(0.389)	(0.392)	(0.398)	(0.439)	(0.394)	(0.445)
Occupation (ref. others)	1.031	1.035	1.005	1.051	1.171	1.187
	(0.279)	(0.282)	(0.274)	(0.285)	(0.376)	(0.385)
INTERACTIONS:						
Evangelical##Church attendance		2.432				2.995
		(1.826)				(2.170)
Evangelical##Abortion			1.161			1.106
			(0.562)			(0.545)
Evangelical##Same sex marriage			1.115			1.170**
			(0.0739)			(0.0812)
Evangelical##Facebook				0.639		0.538
				(0.350)		(0.295)
Evangelical##WhatsApp				0.832		1.003
				(0.487)		(0.598)
Evangelical ##Occupation					0.663	0.592
					(0.371)	(0.347)
CONTROLS:						
Age	1.250***	1.247***	1.260***	1.250***	1.248***	1.256***
	(0.0889)	(0.0895)	(0.0902)	(0.0893)	(0.0888)	(0.0914)
Family income	0.877	0.898	0.851	0.884	0.881	0.880
	(0.185)	(0.191)	(0.180)	(0.187)	(0.185)	(0.188)
Region (ref. North region						
North-east region	0.526*	0.530*	0.525*	0.512*	0.525*	0.502*
	(0.184)	(0.187)	(0.185)	(0.181)	(0.185)	(0.183)
South-east region	0.571*	0.576*	0.560*	0.562*	0.578*	0.558*
	(0.185)	(0.187)	(0.181)	(0.182)	(0.188)	(0.183)
South region	0.955	0.998	0.896	0.947	0.962	0.918
	(0.374)	(0.390)	(0.355)	(0.369)	(0.377)	(0.366)
Central-east region	0.888	0.897	0.892	0.873	0.895	0.895
	(0.315)	(0.318)	(0.318)	(0.309)	(0.319)	(0.318)
Race (ref. brown)						
White	1.252	1.249	1.250	1.252	1.261	1.254
	(0.312)	(0.311)	(0.313)	(0.311)	(0.315)	(0.314)
Black	0.856	0.871	0.854	0.850	0.859	0.864
	(0.258)	(0.262)	(0.259)	(0.256)	(0.259)	(0.264)
Others	1.087	1.054	1.077	1.080	1.097	1.040

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	(0.382)	(0.370)	(0.379)	(0.377)	(0.383)	(0.360)
Years of education	1.029	1.031	1.030	1.028	1.028	1.029
	(0.0318)	(0.0320)	(0.0318)	(0.0319)	(0.0320)	(0.0326)
Left-right self-placement	1.053	1.052	1.050	1.054	1.053	1.050
	(0.0398)	(0.0398)	(0.0399)	(0.0398)	(0.0398)	(0.0398)
Political interest	1.027	1.026	1.042	1.021	1.028	1.039
	(0.105)	(0.104)	(0.107)	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.106)
Perception economy	1.209	1.208	1.208	1.210	1.204	1.192
	(0.178)	(0.179)	(0.178)	(0.179)	(0.177)	(0.179)
Perception criminality (ref. not so secure)	1.312	1.329	1.274	1.340	1.306	1.298
	(0.263)	(0.266)	(0.258)	(0.269)	(0.262)	(0.263)
Perception corruption	1.070	1.065	1.086	1.063	1.074	1.086
	(0.108)	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.108)	(0.109)	(0.111)
Bolsa Familia **beneficiary** (ref. No)	0.569**	0.584**	0.569**	0.575**	0.560**	0.577**
	(0.152)	(0.158)	(0.153)	(0.154)	(0.151)	(0.158)
Satisfaction with democracy	1.199	1.190	1.198	1.190	1.202	1.184
	(0.166)	(0.165)	(0.168)	(0.165)	(0.167)	(0.168)
Partisanship (ref. Yes)	1.535*	1.524	1.512	1.545*	1.526	1.493
	(0.399)	(0.395)	(0.394)	(0.400)	(0.397)	(0.388)
Rejection Workers' Party	0.784***	0.785***	0.779***	0.784***	0.783***	0.776***
	(0.0294)	(0.0292)	(0.0300)	(0.0295)	(0.0293)	(0.0298)
Trust political parties	1.130**	1.127*	1.125*	1.129*	1.129*	1.116*
	(0.0701)	(0.0705)	(0.0693)	(0.0703)	(0.0700)	(0.0693)
Authoritarianism (ref. No)	1.834***	1.818***	1.827***	1.850***	1.829***	1.809***
	(0.367)	(0.362)	(0.366)	(0.371)	(0.366)	(0.362)
Constant	0.0734***	0.0773***	0.0898***	0.0715***	0.0718***	0.101***
	(0.0602)	(0.0632)	(0.0751)	(0.0585)	(0.0585)	(0.0840)
Observations	671	671	671	671	671	671

All the coefficients in the table have been exponentiated (Odd Ratios)

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7 reports the results from voting analysis of the first round of the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil after running several logistic regression models using survey data from Barometer of the Americas (LAPOP). The interviews were conducted from January 29th to March 3rd, 2019. The models include 671 observations and explain approximately 24% of the variance in vote choice. Model 1 assesses voting behaviour in the first round of the presidential elections among women. Models 2, 3, 4, and 5 include interactions between church attendance, conservativism (measured by rejection of abortion and same-sex marriage), social media usage (measured by frequency of

WhatsApp and Fakebook usage as source of political information), and occupation with evangelical religion in turn. Afterwards, model 6 encompasses all the interactions at once. Descriptive statistics with all the variables included in the models are provided in table 6.

Differently from the results found in the analysis, based on dataset from CESOP, model 1 comports to the theoretical expectations of the sociodemographic evangelical religious hypothesis of far-right support among women. Controlling for various factors, the finding reveals that the odds of evangelical women voting for Bolsonaro in the first round of the presidential elections increase by almost 54% ($p < 0.1$). Model 1 also suggests that the odds of voting for Bolsonaro in the first round of the presidential elections increase by 40% among women who attend religious worship at least once a week, yet the results are not significant. One possible explanation to account for this divergency of results is the fact that data from LAPOP survey was collected after Bolsonaro became president, and therefore after he was able to consolidate firmer support with the evangelical clergy and possibly gather greater support from evangelical women voters.

Model 1 was also able to provide some evidence in support for the attitudinal hypothesis associating further conservativism among women who voted for Bolsonaro (hypotheses 2.A). In relation to abortion, the results are not able to reject the null hypothesis that opposition to abortion did not influence vote choice for Bolsonaro. However, regarding rejection to same-sex marriage, the findings suggest that greater levels of approval of same-sex marriage reduced by 6.4% the odds of voting for Bolsonaro ($p < 0.05$). This latter finding indicates that the question included in CESOP to measure conservatism might indeed be too broad, or encompassing many diverse minority communities, therefore possibly concealing prejudicial stances that women voters could have in relation to certain groups – as in this case, the LGBTQI+ communities. Model 3

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includes an interaction between these variables and evangelical religion, and even though disapproval of abortion and same-sex marriage increased the odds of evangelical women voting for Bolsonaro by 16% and 11.5%, these findings are not statistically significant. Consequently, the results from model 3 did not provide evidence in support for hypothesis 2.B, similar to the analysis conducted with dataset from CESOP.

In relation to the hypotheses of social media usage (hypotheses 3.A and 4.A), the key independent variables used are frequency of WhatsApp and Facebook usage as sources of political information. As the survey data from LAPOP does not include a question on participation in WhatsApp or Facebooks groups for political discussion, hypotheses 3.B and 4.B were not able to be included within the robustness check. Model 1 suggests that Facebook usage increases the odds of supporting Bolsonaro by 45%, yet the results are not statistically significant. However, hypothesis 3.A was confirmed in relation to WhatsApp, as among women who use WhatsApp more frequently – sometimes during a week or daily –the odds of voting for Bolsonaro during the first round of the presidential elections increase by 64.5% ($p < 0.05$). After including an interaction with evangelical religiosity in model 4, WhatsApp usage still remained a statistically significant predictor of vote choice, yet the interactions did not provide evidence to corroborate hypothesis 4.A. This is consistent with the provisional explanation given in the results sections related to the greater importance of social media during the second round of the presidential elections, as compared to the first. As disclosed by the newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo* (Mello 2018), it was during the former that fake news dissemination supportive of Bolsonaro became more prevalent, while the robustness check from LAPOP assesses vote choice for the second round.

Finally, model 1 does not provide evidence in support for hypothesis 5.A which expected an impact of informal occupational structure in far-right support among women.

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Similarly, model 5, which includes an interaction between occupation and evangelical religion, was not able to provide support for hypothesis 5.B. The interaction term between occupation and evangelism is negative, but not statistically significant, which is in accordance with findings from CESOP dataset.

To conclude, some general patterns of female voting behaviour in 2018 are worth highlighting also in relation to LAPOP dataset. Similarly to CESOP analysis, model 1 reveals significant regional differences of vote choice among women. Compared to the northern region, other regions - such as north-east and south-east - show a sharp decrease in the chances of supporting Bolsonaro ($p < 0.1$). Higher levels of approval for the Workers' Party among women decrease the odds of voting for Bolsonaro ($p < 0.01$), which corroborates findings from previous studies (Fuks et al. 2020; Samuel and Zucco 2018) and analysis from the results section. Ideology, on the other hand, ceased to provide statistically significant results in the robustness check. This could be related to the period when LAPOP fieldwork was conducted – almost five months after the elections – meaning that the peak of political polarization could have already passed. Age also showed statistically significant results ($p < 0.01$), together with being a *Bolsa Família* beneficiary ($p < 0.05$): the former increase the odds of voting for Bolsonaro by 25%, while the latter decrease it by about 43%. Finally, dataset from LAPOP reveals that among women who believed that a military coup is justified in certain situations (e.g. high criminality rates and widespread corruption), the odds of voting for Bolsonaro increased by 83.5% ($p < 0.01$), which aligns to findings from the main analysis.

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