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Articles

Gamers on Independence Day: far-right and discourse by Brazilian gamer communities on Twitter¹

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Abstract

This article investigates the narratives surrounding the online public debate of gamer communities on Twitter during the political rallies for the bicentennial of Brazilian Independence Day, occurring in September 2022. The analysis is based on two collections conducted between August 31 and September 14, resulting in one *corpus* of 11,607 interactions made by 4,090 accounts, and another of 59 interactions by 47 accounts. The results reinforce the perception that the event was not a relevant topic in the observed gamer communities, pointing to a possible loss of support by former president Jair Bolsonaro among gamers.

Keywords: Communication. Game Studies. Gamers. Politics. Social Network Analysis.

Introduction

The advancement of the gaming culture and industry draws the attention of many sectors of society, including those related to different political spectra. The prominent circulation of narratives linked to extremist groups, such as the far right or alt-right in digital culture, especially in gaming communities, shows the power, capillarity, and penetration force of ultraconservative discourses in gaming communities. This reflection guides two fundamental readings for the development of this work. First, it is necessary to highlight the importance of considering the continuous social experience beyond the game, to the detriment of the idea that digital media promotes ephemeral communication. Next, the construction of groupings around video games and the social exchanges that occur in and around gaming spaces allow relationships to be established because of/with the game.

In the many spaces that support the continuity of the communal experience of this medium—forums, chats, applications, and platforms that function as extensions of games—both specific content and conversations related to political issues and themes circulate. Memes, journalistic and political content orbit very easily, provoking moods and compelling certain behaviors and discourses. It is in these environments that people who are particularly silent in personal interactions show themselves to be staunch defenders of their ideas. Mortensen (2018) underlines the extent of this persistence and continuity when discussing Gamergate² and the use and maintenance of these spaces of repercussion as “echo chambers” that promote hatred, violent behavior, and the proliferation of (ultra)conservative and reactionary discourses.

Observing the conversations that form around games is significant because many of the behaviors are contextualized or justified by the construction of relationships that find space in this dimension, including those that occur at the intersection between political issues and video

² Misogynistic campaign in the context of the video game industry and gaming communities in August 2014 (SALTER and BLODGETT, 2017).

games. In the diversity of subjects discussed by gaming communities, politics, culture, and society mobilize identity groups that dispute these environments with different epistemologies, affections, disaffection, and narratives of relationship with the game—whether democratic or not.

Faced with this scenario, there is a perception of dissatisfaction and a growing distance of younger generations from democracy and traditional ways of doing politics (FOA and MOUNK, 2019; FOA *et al.*, 2020; LUMINATE, 2022). Although gaming is not strictly a teenage phenomenon, 43,2% of the Brazilian gaming culture demographic is composed of an audience aged 17-24 (PGB, 2022). Considering this scenario and the significant changes in the dynamics of formation and circulation of public opinion in times of connectivity, this article seeks to identify how the online public debate in the gamer communities was configured around the political demonstrations and mobilizations during the celebrations of the bicentenary of Brazilian Independence, held on September 7, 2022.

The national holiday of September 7, a commemorative date alluding to the country's independence proclaimed in 1822, usually brings together commemorative acts and patriotic events that celebrate the symbolism of the civic date throughout the country. Since 2019, there have been records of this practice by the Brazilian chief executive at the time (CIOCCARI and PERSICHETTI, 2019). In 2022, however, the date gained prominence thanks to the coincidence of the presidential election year and the bicentennial of Independence. As such, the civic date began to be instrumentalized by President Bolsonaro's re-election campaign as a focal point for his supporters, with provocative demonstrations being called against the other instances of government, in particular the Supreme Court. The campaign used social networks on a large scale for such calls, driving up expectations in the media and the political environment as to the outcome of this mobilization by the former president (MATTOSO *et al.*, 2022).

This reflection guides this article to understand the political aspects of the gamer debate during the event, based on data collected on the social networking platform Twitter from August 31 to September 14, 2022. The discussion, therefore, is based on the monitoring and analysis of the discourses that circulated on the platform about the September 7 celebrations, as well as the political demonstrations around it.

Initially, the article introduces an overview and a theoretical framework on the intersection between politics and video games. Subsequently, it presents the methodological guidelines applied and describes the set of tools, collection procedures, and the corpus analyzed. The results are structured in two stages: the first evaluates the vision of the gamer communities on Twitter about September 7 from the sample of selected profiles, while the second is dedicated to the analysis of the debate on the theme in association with topics of gamer interest within the platform. The findings of the investigation problematize the predominant perspective in the media and academia that far-right political thought has appropriated the spaces and narratives built around video games without much resistance (ARAÚJO, 2021; FERREIRA, 2022; KALIL, 2018; MOURA, 2021; VARELLA, 2020; VILA NOVA, 2020).

Politics and video games: mobilization and engagement in debate

The increasingly significant share of the population associated with gaming habits and culture has attracted the attention of different agents of society, including those related to institutional electoral politics. Interested in exploring an expanding scenario and captivating a potential voter audience recognized for its high engagement, parties and election candidates around the world have entered the dispute for the vote of this group. In Brazil, the relationship between video games and politics has become recurrent—and not only in its academic aspect (FALCÃO, MACEDO, KURTZ, 2021; MAIA *et al.*, 2022; KALIL, 2018; MARQUES, FALCÃO, MUSSA, 2021; MUSSA, 2019), but in a broader social repercussion. This implies both frequent addressing by the media and the development of titles specifically at this intersection, such as *Bolsomito 2k18* (BS Studios, 2018) and *Punhos de Repúdio* (BrainDead Broccoli, 2022).

The advancement of the video game experience and culture in the national gaming scene is followed by the emergence of Brazil as one of the main markets for game consumption in Latin America, as well as one of the most important markets for companies of the sector in the world (NEWZOO, 2022; PGB, 2022). In the 2022 election, gamers began to mobilize interest in the dispute between the presidential candidates who led the voting intentions. The campaigns of both Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Jair Bolsonaro produced specific content aimed at Brazilian gamers. The latter's political communication strategy, however, stood out by producing a communication strategy based on the creation and repercussion of aesthetics related to young audiences, such as the stylistic appropriation of games from the 2000s for the visual campaign in digital media. These actions sought to stage an atmosphere of relaxation, heroism, anti-system, and adventure.

This approach, although it seems merely casual, reveals deeper links since part of the digital gaming communities, recognized for their aversion and resistance to social and political themes, usually react aggressively to attempts to invade their captive titles and living environments. Burrill (2008) suggests that video games are a space conducive to the regression of masculinity in the capitalist context. For the author, as “technostalgia machines”, video games allow for escapism, a fantasy environment away from feminism, class struggle, and any familial and political responsibilities.

Similarly, the analyses by Lees (2016), Salter and Blodgett (2017), and Falcão, Macedo and Kurtz (2021) highlight the close relationship between the exclusionary discourse employed by gamers/nerds/geeks and that promoted by the so-called alt-right media. More than that, these approaches argue that the set of rhetorical strategies, hate campaigns, and performances of toxic masculinities used by gamers share a nostalgic and (ultra)conservative ethos that connects these behaviors with the far right.

The alt-right has been able to usefully mobilize the sense of loss among more conservative and reactionary gamers as they see their games become popular and accessible. Using the identity of the standard gamer and the crusade against political correctness (and

institutionalized politics) as central weapons in rhetorical strategies and hate campaigns aimed at audiences seeking diversity within video games, they propagated a discourse of political neutrality with the idea of returning games to the “true” members who share this experience, identity and set of values (SALTER and BLODGETT, 2017).

The gradual radicalization and rapprochement of part of the gamer communities with the alt-right paved the way for online strategies that significantly impacted the emergence of far-right candidates (NAGLE, 2017). Lees (2016) already drew attention to the connection between Gamergate, relations with the White House, and how “the 2014 online hatestorm presaged the tactics of the Trump-loving far right movement”.

In Brazil, the mapping coordinated by Kalil (2018) identified the group of gamers, nerds, hackers, and haters, formed by men between 16 and 34 years old, as part of Bolsonaro’s voter profiles in 2018. Kalil comments that this group of conservatives was one of the main ones responsible for building and polishing Bolsonaro’s image as a “legend” in the 2018 pre-campaign. His linkage as an “apolitical” actor, for example, mobilized the communities around him and helped to compose the idea of “*Bolsomito*” (a neologism that mixes Bolsonaro’s name with the word “*mito*” in Portuguese) from the massive production and circulation of memes (in general, provocative and with crude and funny aesthetics) in instant messaging applications and digital social networks. This group had Bolsonaro as an enemy of politics itself and who would change the system, being a response to political correctness, rejecting partisan politics.

The association of gamer communities with the Bolsonaro movement is also frequently cited in the media (ARAÚJO, 2021; MOURA, 2021; FERREIRA, 2022; VARELLA, 2020; VILA NOVA, 2020). Articles published in major national newspapers, such as *Folha de São Paulo* (MOURA, 2021), point to gamers as one of Bolsonaro’s most solid bases from the beginning. Despite the visibility of the far right in this scenario, Maia *et al.* (2022), in a work that offers an overview of Brazilian academic production on video games and politics, give examples of a movement of social actors from other political spectra towards gamer communities during the Brazilian and North American elections of 2020. In addition, the authors highlight the growth of the use of digital games and game streaming in political campaigns in recent years.

On the other hand, Gomes (2014) also observes that, in recent decades, websites, platforms, and applications for digital social networks have become fundamental arenas for public discussion on matters of political interest. The author even suggests that these services today function in a similar way to the idea of the public sphere proposed by Habermas (2003). This scenario has allowed social media to become a unique environment for the perception of political, social, and economic trends, not only because they are means of circulating information, public debate, or production of information and public opinion, but especially because they are radars from which citizens can recognize, identify and weigh the political issues and problems that transit in the surrounding opinion (GOMES, 2014). In addition, the set of digital social networks has established themselves as key actors in contemporary political and

social processes, with the emergence of digital cultures instructed in skills and competencies for organizing and mobilizing for online campaigns (MAIA *et al.*, 2022).

Today, it is unlikely that a political event or issue, problem, or opinion of social interest on any topic is not reproduced in the expanded digital conversation that occurs daily in digital environments. The contemporary scenario is marked by this fluidity about spaces for debate, action, and political participation, which become part of everyday activities and are disseminated by various platforms, websites, and applications. Authors such as Held (1987), Brough and Shresthova (2012), and Norris (2002) have defended the idea of politics from a broader view that involves less formal power systems and a “transformative capacity” (HELD, 1987). This reading offers no barrier or distinction between politics on the one hand and everyday life on the other.

The report *Youth and Democracy in Latin America*, published by Luminate (2022), points in a similar direction by reinforcing the need to broaden the notion of politics to incorporate extra-institutional, non-electoral, non-institutionalized, alternative, and local actions. Even so, the characterization of young people as having an “engaged skepticism” reveals nuances of the complex relationship between youth and democracy. This conception indicates that the subjects, although skeptical about parties and professional politicians due to their distance from citizens, usually adhere politically to local and immediate social mobilizations and agendas (HENN, WEINSTEIN, WRING, 2002; LUMINATE, 2022).

Researchers from the field of deliberative studies and fan studies (BROUGH and SHRESTHOVA, 2012; HELD, 1987; NORRIS, 2002; SANDVOSS, 2013), in turn, suggest that the price of the market, the clothes we wear, the music we listen to and even the games we play are all the fruit of politics, whether intentional or not. Politics, therefore, is “coextensive with all spheres of social, cultural and economic life [...]. And the principles of political involvement and participation apply to large sets of domains” (HELD, 1987, p. 264), which includes, in this sense, digital games and their communities. Thus, the digital environment, whether it is arranged in digital social networks or video games, proves to be a significant space for political agendas that are successively strategically inserted in political campaigns.

The context presented, and the numerous possible interfaces between digital games and different forms of politics (that are institutionalized by political parties, social agendas, and worldviews) help us to situate gamer culture as an active part of contemporary Brazilian political history. Moreover, they allow us to understand the diversity of political communication practices among the members of these communities.

Methodological approaches

From a methodological point of view, this article explores data in social networks and, more specifically, the analysis of the public debate conducted in digital environments regarding the civic date of September 7 and the political demonstrations around it circumscribed within the

context of gamer culture. This analysis implies, in general terms, the collection and processing of Twitter posts that can capture, to some extent, both the theme of September 7 and gamer culture in general.

To collect data on the platform, a search syntax (or query) (RUEDIGER, 2017) was first developed that could encompass the variety of discussions that make up the gamer communities on the internet. The search syntax is understood as a set of linguistic units, terms, expressions, phraseologies, etc., related to the semantic and discursive universes of a given topic, articulated through Boolean operators, which translate the logical relationships between these units. This search syntax populated a database that monitored, from Twitter's application programming interface (API), the posts made on the social network about gamer culture since December 2021.

Based on the data collected, a map of interactions (or graph) (RECUERO, 2017) was drawn up regarding the Twitter posts reached by syntax during August 2022. Regarding the interactions for the elaboration of the graph, the retweet of each post was considered. The visualization of the graph, in turn, was generated through Gephi, a free application that allows identifying the formation of communities (or clusters) based on the interaction that profiles establish with each other, acting as a bridge of this relationship with the shared (or retweeted) content.

The Louvain algorithm (BLONDEL *et al.*, 2008) was used as a method for identifying clusters, which allows for maximizing modularity, that is, a metric whose calculation compares the number of intra- and inter-community edges by measuring the density of each cluster. For this article, in particular, we considered prominent communities that concentrated 4% or more of the profiles that participated in this debate during the period analyzed, which resulted in six communities.

This graph was used as an overview of the gamer discourse on Twitter and the starting point for the selection of profiles (timelines) of participating users. We thus built two methods to develop this mapping. The first was based on the analysis of continuously collected data about games, applying a filter rule built on the theme September 7th. With this, we obtain a base of tweets about games that also relate to the main theme of the research.

The second method was built from a map of actors of the gamer communities on Twitter, allowing an analysis of timelines considered gamers. Delimiting what it means to be a gamer and gamer culture is a complex task that incurs a series of values and consequences arising from the act of classifying. In game studies, the search for a typology of players is still a subject of intense debate (JUUL, 2010). Despite the complexity of the concept of gamer culture and the challenges posed by the issue, we adopt in this study the premise that "we should look at video games as culture rather than games as culture" (SHAW, 2010, p. 416). This reading is relevant, as this subculture often moves into the mainstream. The idea of subculture, although indicating the particularities of a certain group, is not radically opposed to the general culture (CARDOSO, 1975).

As a strategy to avoid problems arising from the classification, we favored, in the selection and mapping of profiles belonging to the gamer communities on Twitter, the self-definition of users based on the content of their messages, that is, who deliberately associated themselves with the debate about games on Twitter. The selection criterion used was the sharing of at least one publication (retweet) among the most engaged tweets of each of the main clusters, meaning the user's willingness not only to interact with the content but to transmit it to his follower base.

In order to operationalize the analysis of timelines for the production of the article, taking into account the collection time per account, the number of profiles was reduced to only the accounts that retweeted the five most retweeted tweets of each cluster of interest, resulting in a selection of 25,909 accounts whose tweets were monitored. Then, from August 31 to September 14, the tweets from the profiles that are part of the mapped gamer communities were downloaded and filtered using the same linguistic rule as the first method. With each collection, the data from the users' timelines provided us with a glimpse into the debate within gamer communities.

Results and discussion

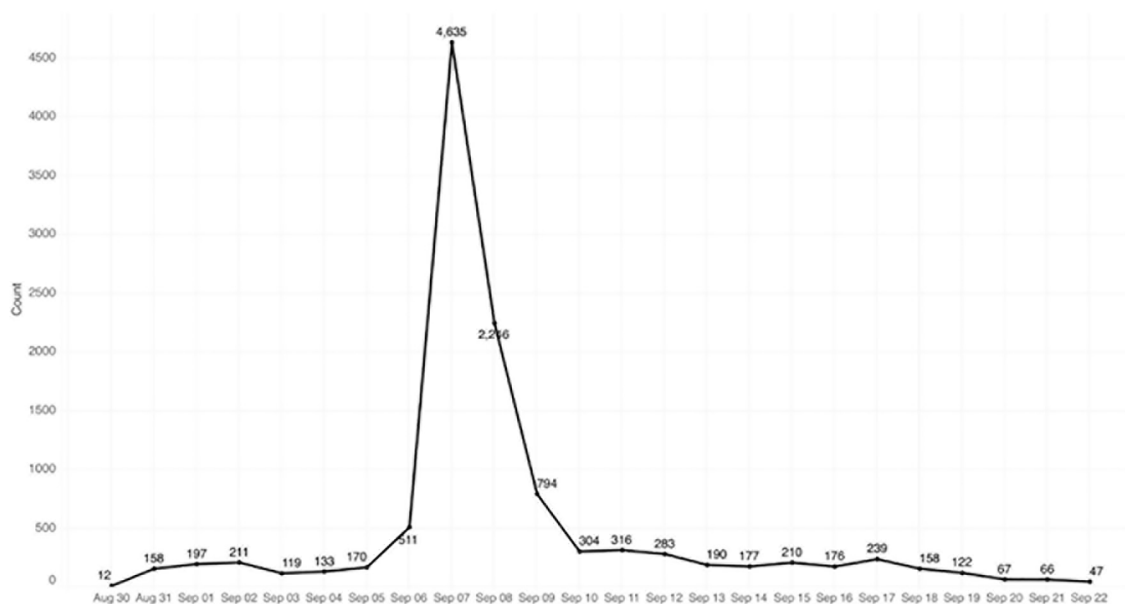
To capture the debate about September 7, a search syntax dedicated to the theme was created to be executed on the two sources of available tweets, to be analyzed in the following two topics. The database of timelines from gamer accounts provides the data for analyzing the vision of the gamer communities on the topic, and the database containing the discourse on games on Twitter provides the intersection of the two topics on the social network.

Analysis of the debate in Twitter gamer communities

The collection of tweets from the selected users, by the methodology described, resulted in 2.017.589 interactions between August 31 and September 14. When filtering this base with the thematic search syntax, the debate in the gamer communities about the demonstrations and mobilizations involving September 7 took the following configuration: 11.607 interactions, 484 tweets (475 unique), 10.613 retweets (2.724 unique), 376 replies (375 unique) and 134 mentions (unique) made by 4.090 accounts.

The topic of September 7, therefore, represented less than 1% of the debates held by the selected profiles, indicating that it is not a relevant topic within the observed gamer communities. Regarding the debate, the highest interactions were concentrated on the eve of Independence Day (512, with 246 unique tweets), with a peak on September 7 (4.635, with 1,431 unique tweets), a drop by half the day after the celebrations (2.246, with 687 unique tweets) and a significant decrease on September 9 (794, with 308 unique tweets) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Evolution of the Twitter debate on September 7 among the sample of gamer accounts



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The tweet that received the most unique retweets (407) is a criticism, in a humorous tone, of the then President, Jair Bolsonaro, in the acts of September 7, without containing references to the gamer universe: “Queen Elizabeth endured everything in life, wars, deaths of popes, several governments... But to endure Bolsonaro screaming *imbroxável*³ on September 7 was too much; she preferred death.”⁴ Its author was an unverified user with less than one hundred followers, which indicates that the performance of the tweet was the result of the viralization of the message, not the influence of the originating profile.

Expanding to the 20 most retweeted tweets, we found mainly jokes and memes against the demonstrations or Bolsonaro’s speech on the civic date, but we also found harsher criticisms of the former president, focusing on themes of political violence and price increases. Some

3 A slightly vulgar Portuguese word that translates roughly to “never limp” that Bolsonaro has adopted as part of his political brand.

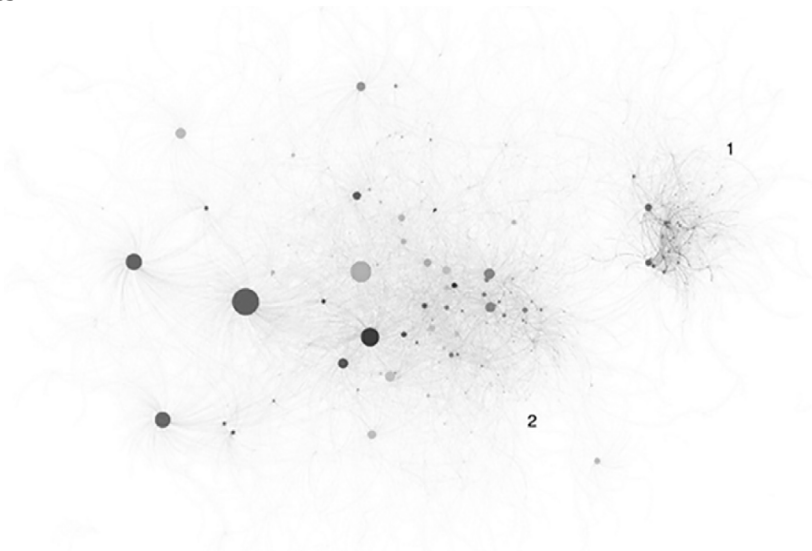
4 Translation by the authors. The original portuguese reads: “Rainha Elizabeth aguentou tudo na vida, guerras, mortes de papa, vários governos... Mas aguentar Bolsonaro gritar imbroxável no 7 de setembro foi demais, ela preferiu a morte.”

of the top tweets associate September 7 with gamer themes, such as LOUD's victory in the Valorant Champions 2022 championship and content from gaming influencer Cellbit, although without a political character.

The most retweeted people, that is, authors of the most impactful tweets, are not community influencers but unverified accounts with few followers, driven by tweets that went viral. The predominance of viral tweets in the collection influenced the morphology of the graph of interactions (Figure 2)⁵, in which it is possible to observe an expressive number of clusters in the “star” format, focused on accounts with great reach.

The accounts that retweet the most are also from non-influencers and have a concentration of Bolsonaro supporters at the top. The five that retweet the most in the collection, totaling 836 unique retweets, are supporters of the former president. The user with the most retweets in the analysis period has his account suspended at the time of writing this article for violations of Twitter's rules of conduct. Despite having predominance among those who post the most per user, this is not observed when it comes to the interaction of the Bolsonaro group (1/blue) with the other clusters, as the volume is only 3,75%. Meanwhile, the progressive cluster (2/red), with fewer publications per user, reached 48,55%. This reading points to the existence of a noisy minority among the accounts captured, isolated in the overall picture, as illustrated in the graph (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Map of interactions of the Twitter debate on September 7 among the sample of gamer accounts



Source: Prepared by the authors.

5 Link to a colored version of the graph, for a better visual understanding of the information: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uVOI7DQ4YaXqJMHSWVh5Km6JmNwy9yZM/view?usp=sharing>.

The group identified in Figure 2 with the number 2 (color red) was formed mainly by accounts aligned with the traditional left, with 11,93% of the profiles and 18,75% of the total interactions of the collection. Recognizable names in politics and digital influencers, such as President Lula and YouTuber Felipe Neto, made up the most impactful profiles. In this cluster, the discourse was politicized and centered on the actions of the presidential candidates on September 7, mainly on the speeches and behaviors of President Lula and former President Bolsonaro. The chorus of “never limp” was the frequent target of joke tweets criticizing the former president and the demonstrations.

The second largest cluster is identified with the number 1 (color blue), gathering 10,53% of the profiles and 17,62% of the total interactions, and was composed of Bolsonaro supporters, with himself as the main focal agent of the group. In it, the most recurrent topic was the affirmation of the size of the pro-Bolsonaro demonstrations on September 7 as a demonstration of the mobilization power of his support base. The patriotic and broad appeal of the demonstrations was also frequently cited, often in counterpoint to criticism of the moral character of the left or President Lula.

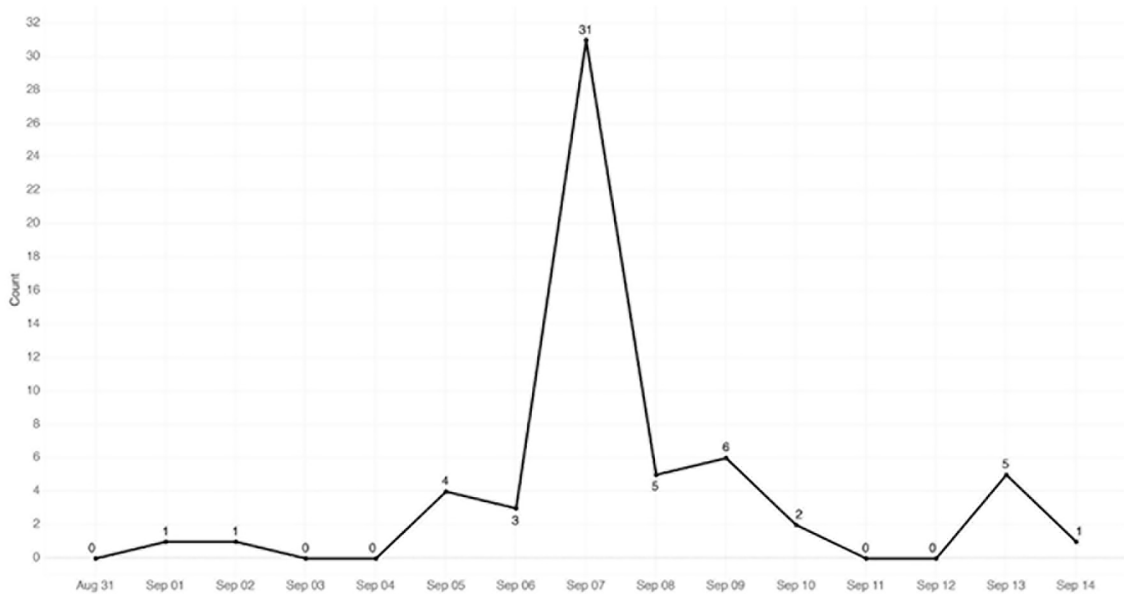
In the other clusters captured by the collection, which individually gathered less than 7% of the profiles and 10% of the interactions, the discourse had a lighter tone, highlighting the political aspect of jokes and memes. Among the 100 most impactful tweets in each cluster, mentions of former President Bolsonaro were negative, with humorous criticisms mixed with various subjects, such as the live-play RPG *A Ordem Paranormal* and pop music themes. Jokes related to the “never limp” chorus, criticism of the political content of Bolsonaro’s speeches, and the choruses of crowds in the street were the predominant content in the political narratives of these groups. There were also tweets with calls for a tactical vote for Lula or mobilizations in the streets against the Bolsonaro government.

Analysis of the gaming debate on Twitter

Beyond what is debated within the gaming communities, the association of the gaming theme with the political theme is another type of discourse in the networks of interest for this article. For this analysis, we sought to bring tweets that discussed the events of September 7 within the discourse of digital games through continuous collection in the gaming theme.

One hundred ninety-seven tweets were found collected by the developed filter rule, requiring additional manual filtering that resulted in 59 tweets at the intersection of games and September 7. The low volume of tweets was expected since this is an unusual intersection for public discourse in gamer communities. Each of them received a content classification based on the position that the text emitted, namely neutral (27), in favor (23), and against (9) the mobilizations in the bicentennial of Independence. The peak of posts occurred on the day of the holiday itself, with the number of tweets remaining low after the date, see Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Evolution of the Twitter debate on September 7 associated with the gaming discourse



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Most of the tweets were written neutrally to the demonstrations or former President Bolsonaro in general. Among the group of 27 tweets, most were announcements of livestreams or game-related content associated with the holiday or with political hashtags with high popularity on the day, with no apparent political connotation of the game content or the tweet itself. The street protests were broadcast directly on Twitch by several accounts that tweeted their lives, including some that did not appear to be explicitly political and were doing so punctually amidst their usual gaming content. On the other hand, the presence of political streamers on Twitch is noteworthy, who made lives commenting on the events of the day from both sides of the political spectrum, although without explicit positions in the tweets. Some game live streams were announced with a neutral feeling, just associating the date as a free day or of frustration regarding the political tone that the holiday would have acquired.

Among the games that were mentioned, Minecraft was the only one in which an association of September 7 as a civic date appeared, with a user trying to organize the construction of a Brazilian flag in the game. The victory of the esports team LOUD in the Valorant world championship had repercussions in the general game collection and was associated with September 7 both with the feeling of patriotism (in neutral tweets) and with “Bolsonaro’s day” (in tweets favorable to the former president).

Among the tweets in favor of the demonstrations (23), many cases of gamer terms used to criticize the left were observed (e.g., “game over communists”, “a video game of persecution [against Bolsonaro]”). Some game lives used Bolsonaro hashtags promoting the demonstrations, such as #7deSetembroSeráGigante, for self-promotion in the trending topics, which does not automatically reveal a user’s alignment but demonstrates their willingness to associate with the topic.

Some tweets showed direct connections between the gaming sphere and the pro-Bolsonaro movement, among which one of the most significant was a “gamer motorcade”, with cars customized with themes of the former president, in a game of the Forza Horizon series. Another prominent case was the game “7 de Setembro - Capitão Brasil”, a game for Android devices created in support of former President Bolsonaro and frequently promoted on Twitter in association with political themes, including during the demonstrations the demonstration (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Tweet captured during collection

Cabei de cair um normal game contra 5 retardados
spammando IMBROXAVEL. Nunca senti tanta
felicidade surrando gente de udyr. pqp.

12:02 PM - 10 de set de 2022 · Twitter for Android

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among the 9 tweets positioned against the street movements or the former president during the celebrations, most used humorous tones, with references to games and vocabulary characteristic to the Brazilian gaming communities. One tweet reported the experience of entering a *League of Legends* match where the opposing team was spamming chat with “imbroxável”, citing the victory against them as a moment of exceptional joy. In another tweet, a streamer announced a 100% run of *Punhos de Repúdio*, known for its satirical and progressive tone, as a celebration of September 7.

Final conclusions

The low volume of tweets found about September 7 in both methods indicates that this theme represented a small fraction of the gamer debate on Twitter during the two weeks analyzed. The Independence Day had little repercussion in gamer communities both as a civic date and as a call to action, which demonstrates low political engagement by the communities

during a moment of high mobilization on both sides of the spectrum. On the timeline analysis, the discussion was equivalent to less than 1% of the debate by the profiles selected.

Posts about September 7 observed in the gaming communities were, in the majority, against the speech given by Bolsonaro in the Ministries Esplanade, focusing on the chant of “*imbroxável*” started by the former president among his supporters. The explicitly progressive positionings, in opposition to the movement in the streets during the day, were more frequent than the favorable ones.

When we analyze discourse about September 7 in relation to digital games, many of the posts did not have a clear political position. However, anti-politics positions, treating the mobilization around the date as bothersome, were characteristic of this intersection, an aspect that corroborates the literature about the relationship between youth and democracy (FOA and MOUNK, 2019; WEBER, 2013). The use of gamer slang and lives on the Twitch platform were the main points of connection between the two topics.

The Twitter data analyzed in this article contradicts the connection of gamer communities with the Bolsonaro movement, often cited in the media (ARAÚJO, 2021; FERREIRA, 2022; MOURA, 2021; VARELLA, 2020; VILA NOVA, 2020) and pointed out in the study coordinated by Kalil (2018). One point that can help us understand the low volume of association in the networks and the explicit support of members of the Brazilian gamer communities to the acts during Independence Day is a possible loss of support for Bolsonaro among gamers. This scenario is pointed out mainly from 2021 due to the criticism of community influencers regarding his management in the COVID-19 pandemic (GLOBOESPORTE.COM, 2020; MOURA, 2021; OLIVEIRA, 2020). It is also not possible to disregard the influence of the phenomenon of the “silent/shameful vote” (NOELLE-NEUMANN, 2019), that is, the reduction of explicit support for Bolsonaro at a time of low popularity of the former president, without a great loss of effective support at the polls.

The processed data detected the presence of political streamers on Twitch, a mostly gamer space. However, due to its punctual character, this article is not able to make comparisons with previous positions within the gamer communities or to confirm whether *Bolsonarism* no longer has a consolidated source of support in gamers. However, the results point to very low participation of this group in a central date for Bolsonaro, with its gamer support base being isolated.

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Data availability

The authors declare that those supporting the research are sensitive and cannot be shared publicly.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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