

Narrative and violence: the *Brazilian Autumn* coverage on Twitter*

Narrativa e violência: a cobertura do Outono Brasileiro no Twitter

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the media coverage of the Brazilian protests that happened in June 2013. We monitored 2,852 tweets from ten news organizations and newspapers that were covering the events on Twitter and, based on content analysis, we compared and identified messages focusing on violence aspects of the manifestations. We also compared this discourse to official data from 268 protests that occurred during the same timeframe, regarding deaths, injuries and arrests. Our results indicate that news coverage on Twitter diverged from official sources, amplifying the violence discourse by focusing tweets' contents on this topic.

Keywords: Twitter, bias, violence, narratives, protests

RESUMO

O artigo analisa a cobertura dos protestos que aconteceram no Brasil em junho de 2013. Para tanto, monitoramos 2.852 tweets de dez veículos jornalísticos brasileiros que cobriram os protestos e, através de uma análise de conteúdo, comparamos e identificamos mensagens com enfoque na violência ocorrida durante os protestos. Também comparamos esse discurso aos dados oficiais divulgados pelos veículos jornalísticos a respeito de mortos, feridos e presos em 268 protestos ocorridos no período. Os resultados indicam que a cobertura da imprensa no Twitter é bastante divergente daquela das fontes oficiais, amplificando a violência por focar, sobretudo, esse tópico.

Palavras-chave: Twitter, parcialidade, violência, narrativas, protestos

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INTRODUCTION

NEWS OUTLETS BIAS was a near-constant point of contention for social media users during the *Brazilian Autumn* (or #ProtestosBR)¹ in June 2013. During the event, thousands of protesters took the streets in hundreds of Brazilian cities in a process that was initiated with the protests against the rising prices of public transportation in many capital cities, and were later expanded to include other demands. The protests were the first to be organized and disseminated through social network sites in Brazil (Malini & Antoun, 2013; Sousa & Souza, 2013; Moraes e Santos, 2013) and have been referred to as *Brazilian Autumn*² or *Vinegar Uprising*.³ The protests have dominated social media platforms in Brazil, particularly on Twitter.⁴

This effect was partially due to characteristics of the tool that have been previously discussed, particularly in respect to its ability to quickly deliver short publications and coverage of events as they unfold (Silva, 2008). Social media allow users to report on the activities on the ground, leadership to coordinate protest actions, and mainstream media to report these events.⁵ Therefore, these tools are potentially democratic and allow the emergence of a multiplicity of different discourses and narratives about the same event. This is particularly relevant during instances of political unrest. Although this potential has been acknowledged in the literature, many studies have argued the opposite, as only few users can effectively reach large audience (Cha, Haddad, Benevuto & Gumadi, 2010). As a result, discourses and narratives about the protests depend upon the action of key actors (such as journalists and news outlets) that end up setting the tone of the narratives due to their greater visibility on the network (Poell & Borra, 2011). These user accounts often assemble a discourse that is more homogeneous than one would be expected from the plurality of voices that populate social media. In view of that, we discuss the narrative that was constructed by the journalistic coverage of the protests on Twitter and the extent to which such coverage reflects the facts that published by the same news outlets on their respective websites.

To this end, this analyzes the category of violence as a vector that coordinates journalistic coverage. Protests are events that can experience varied levels of violence, with news outlets often describing the violence on the ground in a biased way and calling disproportionate attention to acts of violence (Ditton & Duffy, 1983; Coleman & Thorson, 2002). The reiteration of the discourse of violence has direct effects on the audience and reinforces an artificial association between the concepts (in this case, protests and violence). In short, the objective of this paper is to understand how the Twitter accounts of news outlets covered the topic of violence during the protests and how close it matches the official data⁶ released by the same news outlets on their websites. To this end, we address

1. This is a reference to the hashtag created in order to centralize the narratives about the June 2013 protests in Brazil.

2. This is a reference to the Arab Spring, where the protests conditions and the role of internet were also relevant.

3. The name *Vinegar Uprising* was coined when some of the protestors were arrested because they were carrying vinegar, an antidote to tear gas used by police.

4. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/noticias/2013/07/130710_protestos_tweets_hashtags_cc_mdb.shtml>.

5. <<http://www.labic.net/sem-categoria/atravessamos-o-protestoes-abrenova-hegemonia-sobre-o-relato-em-tempo-real/>>.

6. Official data refers to data released by official entities and passed on by the press. For example: Department of Public Safety, State governments, city hall, military brigade, police, etc.

the coverage of the protests based on a content analysis of the material published by the outlets on Twitter that are associated with violence (Krippendorf, 2013). In order to set this discussion, we collected and analyzed three data sets: tweets from 10 (ten) of the news outlets identified as having the greatest impact on the Twitter coverage of the protests; retweet data for each of their tweets; and, lastly, official data about the protests published on the news outlets websites.

MEDIA, PROTESTS, BIAS, AND VIOLENCE

In order to begin this discussion we first need to analyze how other studies addressed the interplay between Twitter and journalism and the role played by the tool in the coverage of emergent events, such as protests, riots, and disasters, as well as the literature that focuses on bias and violence as categories in the news.

Twitter and Journalism

Twitter⁷ is a tool created in 2006 to publish short messages of up to 140 characters to an audience of followers. By 2012 the company claimed to have over 500 million registered users.⁸ The simplified interface and the ease of publishing made Twitter quickly popular, particularly for use on cell phones and other mobile tools. The use of Twitter in events and protests has been widely documented (Kavanaugh et al., 2011; Malini & Antoun, 2013).

The relationship between Twitter and Journalism is the object of a vast literature. Java et al. (2007), in an early study of Twitter, identified news reporting as one of the most common affordances of the tool. In a similar sense, Kwak et al. (2010) showed that much of the information that circulates on Twitter refers to news and suggested that the tool would be more closely related to a news outlet than to a social network. Along the same lines, other studies examined news appropriations of the tool,⁹ particularly for reporting breaking news (Vis, 2012), as a source for journalism (Bruno, 2011), as a place for news discussion (Bruns & Liang, 2012), as a place where traditional and citizen journalism interact (Hermida, 2010, 2012; Brungs & Highfield, 2012), and as a place where new forms of news circulation may emerge (Zago, 2012).

Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton (2012) showed that journalists often make use of the tool for expressing opinion and accounting for their particular way of reporting news, as well as to debate with their followers. On the other hand, journalists from larger outlets tend to act more similarly to newspapers, rarely engaging in debates or interacting with other users. Although the study refers specifically to tweets in English, it shows that Twitter affordances may change the practices of journalists.

7.<<http://www.twitter.com>>.

8.<<http://techcrunch.com/2012/07/31/twitter-may-have-500m-users-but-only-170m-are-active-75-on-twiters-own-clients/>>.

9. These uses are referred to as news appropriations since the tool was not created with a journalistic purpose in mind.

In another study that contributes to the discussion we cover with this study, Zago & Bastos (2013) found that audience activity, in the form of retweets, plays a critical role in the diffusion of news content. In a similar sense, Singer (2013) addresses the practice of secondary gatekeeping by users through which they help promoting news by sharing and reviewing content in social network sites. Thus, retweets play an important role by providing outlets with an amplified reach for their content at the same time it enforces credibility (Recuero, 2011).

Twitter, Violence, and News Bias

The role of Twitter in the construction of contemporary narratives and as a channel for expressing different discourses in periods of political turmoil has been extensively discussed in the literature. Malini & Antoun (2013) discussed the role played by Twitter in organizing and polarizing the discourses about the protests and showed that Twitter usage is directly related to the events unfolding on the streets and provide ample support to new forms of activism. Similarly, the study of Lotan et al. (2011) on the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt builds on similar ideas. The authors show how Twitter channeled various discourses at the same time that it amplified and broadcasted the events to other parts of the world. However, the authors also argued that news on Twitter are built by activist bloggers and journalists from news outlets, which hold a larger part of the narrative of the events, either as sources or as participants. Despite the potential for voicing a variety of discourses, Twitter mostly broadcasted and reproduced the narrative of actors associated with the news industry.

Cha, Haddadi, Benevuto & Gummedi (2010) found similar results working on a different topic. The authors found that influence on Twitter during information flows (measured by retweets) is concentrated on a few actors, particularly traditional news outlets. Poell & Borra (2011) documented relevant elements during protests at the G20 meeting in Toronto in 2010 and showed a centralization of narratives in few actors across social networks. The authors highlighted the importance of print news outlets due to the popularity and reach of their coverage.

These studies show that leading news outlets also hold an important place in the narrative of discourses on Twitter and stress the importance of investigating which discourses are shaped through the narratives of news outlets on Twitter. Wei et al. (2013) discussed the bias of journalists on Twitter and found it was a good indicator of the outcome of the UK elections, while news outlets profiles were found to be related to the construction of information cascades. Based on the influence of news outlets profiles on Twitter suggested by previous

studies, our hypothesis is that the bias of news coverage may also be present in the material published on Twitter. Smith, McCarty, McPhail & Augustyn (2001) discussed how media portrays and – as a consequence – influences protests. According to their paper, media coverage is critical to the demonstrations and protesters purposefully attempt to gain media coverage. This is by all means a complex exchange, as the coverage of the protests often modifies their agendas as well.

Another study focusing on the bias of media coverage is the work of McCarty, McPhail & Smith (1996). The paper proposes two types of bias: selection and description. The first takes place when editors select the protest that will receive media attention. The size of the protest or its relationship with other events (Smith, McCarty, McPhail & Augustyn, 2001) often appears as selection criteria. The second type of bias is related to the hypothesis that when newspapers talk about protests they do so by portraying or presenting them to the public in order to draw attention to the news, to attract audience, or to maintain the status quo. Within this line of inquiry, Armstrong & Gao (2010) found no differences in the news coverage made by local and national newspapers. According to the authors, one of the topics that frequently appear on the tweets of the newspapers is crime and violence, and the tendency to reproduce headlines on violence is present both online and offline. Assuming this affects the narrative of the protests, we set out to investigate how it portrays the protests and the individuals protesting on the ground.

METHOD

The question guiding this research is the following: how does violence, as a category for describing the protests of June 2013, appear in the narratives constructed by Brazilian news outlets on Twitter? In view of that, we explore (1) how the protests were described as violent events by the coverage of news outlets on Twitter; (2) how the violence described reflects the official data provided by the outlets themselves; (3) who were the active and passive vectors of violence and how they were created in the narrative that is presented to the public. To address that, we collected data associated with the protests and qualitatively analyzed the content (Krippendorff, 2013).

Data Collection

We selected news outlets based on previous studies about the same event in the same period (Bastos, Recuero & Zago, 2014; Recuero, Zago & Bastos, 2014). We selected 10 accounts from the Brazilian news outlets that were the most cited from a total of one million tweets. The selected accounts were those

of the news outlets that received more tweets and mentions in the dataset during the first days of the protests (from June 02 to 10). Data were manually collected from the accounts of each outlet on Twitter and then filtered in order to include just messages referring to the protests. These accounts were: @jornaloglobo, @folha_com, @ultimosegundo, @zerohora, @g1, @estadão, @folha_cotidiano, @veja, @canalglobonews, @odiahoje (Annex 1). These outlets were selected due to the audience they reached during the protests. After this first selection, we manually collected all tweets from their Twitter accounts posted between June 10 and June 21, 2013 rendering a total of 5.033 tweets. After collecting the messages, we filtered the content to identify those that contained mentions to protests or protestors. Lastly, we focused on tweets containing the words *protesto* (protest), *manifestantes* (protesters), and other synonyms. This filter was necessary to obtain a set of tweets suitable for content analysis that could allow for identifying how newspapers reported the protests on Twitter. Thus, we ended up with a total of 2.282 tweets (Table 1).

Outlet	Total Tweets
canalglobonews	207
estadao	408
folha_com	395
folha_cotidiano	285
g1	295
jornaloglobo	515
odiahoje	103
ultimosegundo	180
veja	181
zerohora	283
TOTAL	2852

Table 1: Total tweets included in the sample per outlet

We also calculated the number of retweets received by each tweet in the sample. The data was collected through Twitter’s API and identifies the number of RTs (retweets) per message that included a link to an article originally published by each of the media outlets. For that reason, this method does not include the number of retweets of messages that did not include links to news articles. Another particularity of this method is that it includes all retweets that include a link to the news piece, covering not only retweets made directly from the original message posted by news outlets accounts, but also other tweets and retweets that included the specific link (Figure 2). In total, we collected 2,410,679 retweets, distributed as follows: @zerohora, 9,865 retweets; @ultimosegundo, 12,580 retweets; @odiahoje, 80,123 retweets; @veja, 126,600 retweets;

@jornaloglobo, 325,531 retweets; @g1, 1,240,790 retweets; @folha_cotidiano, 32,479 retweets; @folha_com, 73,675 retweets; @estadao, 783,949 retweets; and @canalglobonews, 1,984 retweets.

The following figures show the total number of tweets published by each news outlet (where the distribution is more uniform – Figure 1) and the total number of retweets received by each news outlet (where major differences can be observed – Figure 2). The outlets that received more retweets were @g1, the only outlet with over 1 million retweets, followed by @estadao, @jornaloglobo, and @veja. All remaining news outlets received less than 100 thousand retweets.

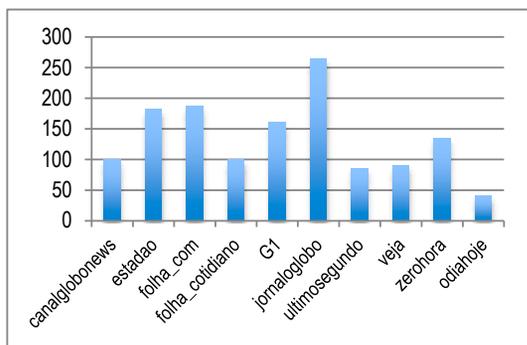


Figure 1: Total tweets per outlet

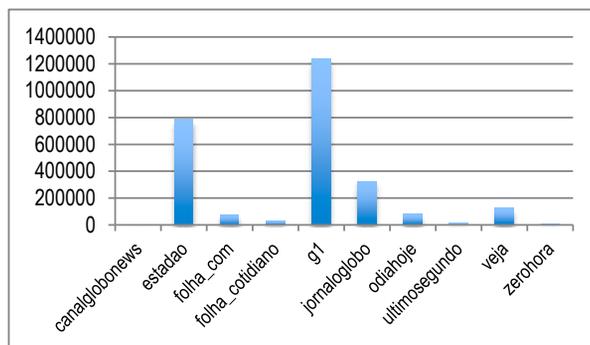


Figure 2: Total retweets per outlet

After exploring these two data sets we found no clear relationship between the outlets that posted high volume of content and outlets that have higher rate of retweets. Most of the messages shared came from @estadao and @g1, which were not necessarily the outlets that published the higher number of tweets. We also collected data on protests reported by news sites. In this data set, we managed to identify and systematize 268 protests that took place in the same period of the tweets in over 200 Brazilian cities and with over 2.5M participants. We took note of the number of participants, wounded, arrested and dead in these protests based on official data released by the press.

For a more accurate assessment of the coverage timeline and how it changed over time, the tweets and retweets collected were divided into three periods of four days: the first period covers June 10 to 13, and it is a period characterized by the first protests that received media attention; the second period covers June 14 to 17, and it was a period when protests started to spread across the country; finally, the last period covers June 18 to 21. The first official statement by the Brazilian government regarding the events was made during this period.

General Analysis of Data

Protests on Twitter: Pacific or Violent?

Each tweet was later analyzed qualitatively with the intention of categorizing the messages according to the narrative focus on protests and protestors. We proceeded with an initial content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013) to categorize tweets and identify the presence of the term violence. Content analysis provides the development of procedures of textual codification, searching on increasingly broader categories, as well as the constant checking and upgrading of these categories (Krippendorff, 2013). The main category that we focused on in this study was that of violence. Thus, tweets and their 140 characters became our structural units of analysis, from which we reconstruct the discursive categories of the tweets. Two researchers jointly performed the coding and the categories were later crosschecked and improved.

The data used in this study is longitudinal. In order to understand whether the protests are classified as violent or not, we first analyzed how they were described. To address that, we sampled the data by event and selected the tweets that were associated with the period under analysis. We relied on the following set of methodological procedures. First, tweets were analyzed and categorized according to the focus given to the protests. Our first classification separated tweets that described and narrated the protests and tweets that relayed information about the protests but did not categorized the protests themselves. This semantic coding was built on the verification of the frequency of concepts and words in the corpus that provided tweets with a specific semantic load. Therefore, the analysis focuses on the construction of meaning of sentences according to method of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013).

Although many tweets could be classified in more than one category, we decided to classify each message in the most closely resembling category, that is, the one that would contain the main focus of the statement (Table 2).

Table 2: Emerging categories from Content Analysis

	Category	Content	Frequent words	Examples
Describing protests	Dimension	The focus of the description is on the dimension of the event.	Numbers, reach, cities, states.	“Contra Estatuto do Nascituro, mais de 16 mil prometem protesto em ao menos 11 cidades” http://bit.ly/19YC1WM
	Violence	The focus of the description is on the violence of the protests.	Aggressions, wounded, dead, restrained, confrontation, vandalism	“Protesto contra aumento da passagem de ônibus termina com confronto e prisões” http://goo.gl/Atb40
	Peaceful	The focus of the description is on the peaceful nature of the protests.	Peaceful, no violence, calm, etc.	“No Rio, registro é de clima pacífico nas manifestações contra o aumento da tarifa de ônibus” http://glo.bo/14zsvXT
	Factual	The focus of the description is through the narrative of the event.	Live, happening	“Policiais e servidores públicos abrem dia de protestos na avenida Paulista” http://bit.ly/192K2c5
Relating other facts to protests	Various Facts	Protests are described through factoids, curiosities, characters, etc.	Characters, curiosities, factoids	“Manifestantes classe A se reúnem no shopping Iguatemi antes de ato” http://folha.com.br/no1296873
	Transit	The focus is on traffic issues caused by the protests.	Closure, deviation, road block	“Protestos marcados para hoje devem travar trânsito na região da av. Paulista” http://folha.com.br/no1293048
	Opinion	Tweets that gives voice to a participant or authority, without qualifying the event, but linking to a news piece	Say, opinion, etc.	“Dilma diz que “Brasil acordou mais forte após manifestações” http://folha.com.br/no1296978
	Participation	Tweets focusing on the interaction with followers.	Invitations to send images, to participate, etc.	“Participe: o que te motiva a sair às ruas e protestar?” http://wp.clicrbs.com.br/doleitor/euvou/
	Analysis	Tweets focusing on the analysis of the events by specialists, attempting to understand what was happening. They also appear without qualification.	Analyzes, explains.	“Amelia Gonzalez: para quem os manifestantes estão fazendo suas reivindicações?” http://glo.bo/1aqwaK9
	Support	Tweets that narrate support to the events.	Support	“Une e Ubes apoiam novos protestos contra aumento dos ônibus marcados para hoje no Rio e em SP” http://migre.me/fo2kj

The amount of tweets in each category can be observed in Table 3:

Table 3: Category classification in numbers and percentages

	Category	Number of tweets	% of total
Relating other facts to protests	analysis	99	4,3%
	support	37	1,6%
	fait divers	137	6%
	opinion	21	0,9%
	participation	7	0,3%
	transit	141	6,1%
Describing protests	Peaceful	49	2,1%
	dimension	144	6,3%
	factual	818	35,8%
	violence	829	36,3%

The main category we are interested is the one focusing on narrating and describing the protests. In this category, we can see that *violence* and *factual* were the most common terms and accounted for over 70% of the journalistic coverage. The category *violence* comprised all those tweets that narrated the protests as violent as opposed to the category *peaceful*, in which protests are narrated highlighting the peaceful nature of the events. Other categories are also types of narration, but do not necessarily qualify the protests. While *violence* comprises 36.3% of the tweets collected, *peaceful* comprises only 2.1%. This data show that: 1) news outlets narratives on Twitter are concentrated in describing the violence in protests, since this is the category with the highest amount of tweets; 2) this description was far more frequent than protests as *peaceful* events, that is, instances in which protests unfolded without violent events. Next we analyze how the violence was constructed and associated with the protests.

Protests as Violent Events

We monitored tweets about violence published by news outlets over the period of the protests that allow for an analysis of the coverage of violent events. The material was examined with the aim to understand: a) the active agent of the violence in the narrative; b) the passive agent or the individual subjected to violence. For the purposes of this study, we classified the data into three periods. The first comprehends June 10 to 13, 2013 and encompasses the beginning of the protests. The second period is from June 14 to 17 when the events started to gain extensive media coverage. Finally, the third and last period covers the period of June 18 to 21 when there numerous protests occurring simultaneously.¹⁰

10. In a similar sense, Singer (2013) divided the protests of June in Brazil in three moments: the first moment goes up to June 13 and comprises the first isolated protests; the second moment goes from June 17 to 21 and comprises the culmination of the protests; finally, in the third period, from June 21 until the end of the month, the movement is fragmented in partial manifestations with specific objectives.

Next, we observed the distribution of tweets that described the protests as violent events per news outlet. Figure 3 shows the proportion of tweets focusing on the violence of protests within the total tweets from each of the outlets. The average percentage of tweets focusing on protests as violent events among the outlets studied was around 30%. News outlet with a higher percentage of content on violence were @jornaloglobo, with 39.9%, @ultimosegundo, with 39.4%, @zerohora, with 36.8%; @folha_com, 33.4%; @folha_cotidiano, 33.4%; @canalglobonews, 32%; and @g1 and @estadao, with 31%. The outlets with the lowest percentages of tweets about violence were @veja, with 29.8% and @odiahoje, with 24.2%. Overall at least one third of the tweets published by the news outlets reporting the protests classified the events as violent.

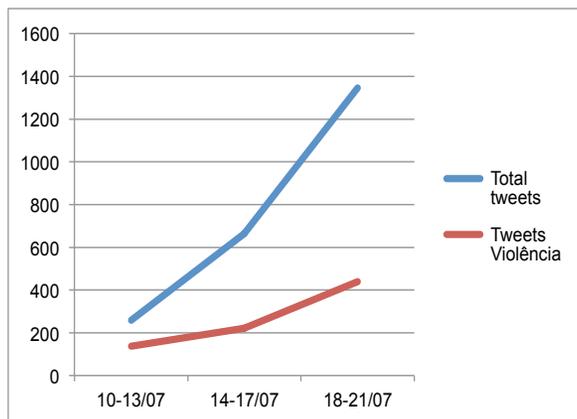
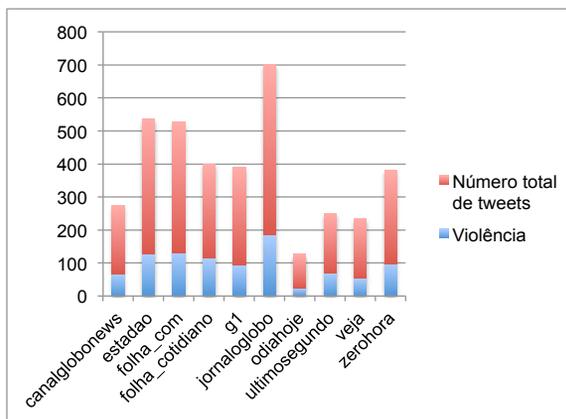


Figure 3: Tweets about violence vs number of tweets per outlet. Figure 4: Distribution of total tweets x tweets about violence.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of tweets in the three periods analyzed with a growth in the number of tweets reporting the protests as violent as well as a growth in the number of tweets about the protests overall. Interestingly, the data show that the focus on violence is higher at the beginning than at the end of the period, when we observed an increase in the coverage of the protests. Figure 5 shows the number of tweets on violence per news outlet in each of the analyzed periods, with a strong growth in the period of June 18-21. Nonetheless, the first period of June 10-13 is also heavily driven by tweets describing the protests as violent, especially in comparison to the total number of tweets (Figure 4).

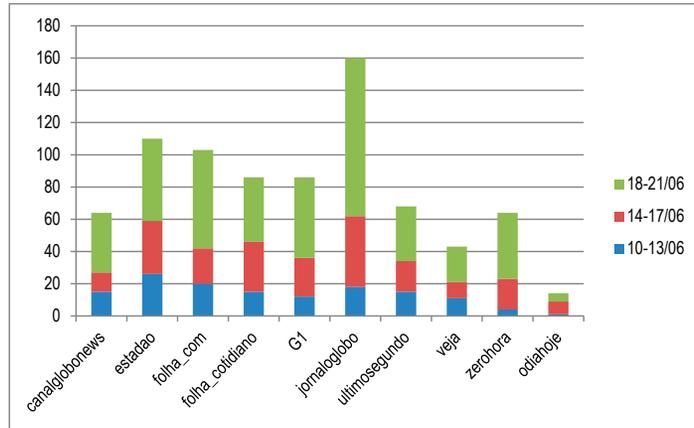


Figure 5: Distribution of tweets about violence over time per news outlet

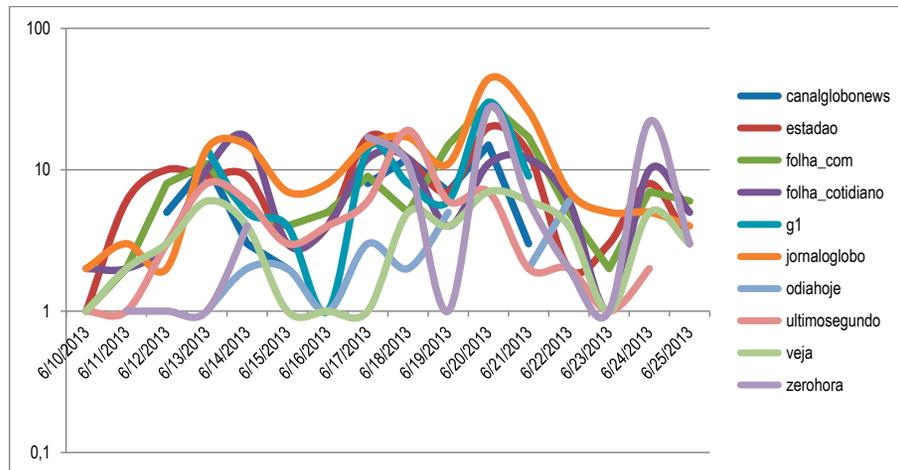


Figure 6: Distribution of tweets about violence over time per news outlet (data in logarithmic scale – log 10)

We subsequently analyzed the coverage of violence across time per news outlet. Figure 6 shows tweets that focused on violence by day and by outlet with a distribution of tweets following the preceding figure. There is a salient peak on June 20, when the largest number of demonstrations took place (see Figure 7). The peak appears, although with unequal intensity, across all news outlets studied. The remaining peaks also coincide with major manifestations in the political center of the country. The exception is @zerohora, which shows slightly different peaks compared to the other news outlets as its coverage is

mostly focused on the extreme South of the country (protests that took place in the city of Porto Alegre). Even though the protests were described as violent events on tweets, the same news outlets’ websites reported little violence during the protests, notwithstanding the expressive number of participants in the protests. Figures 7 and 8 show the number of participants attending the protests over time, with salient growth in the period of June 17-21 and particularly on June 20.

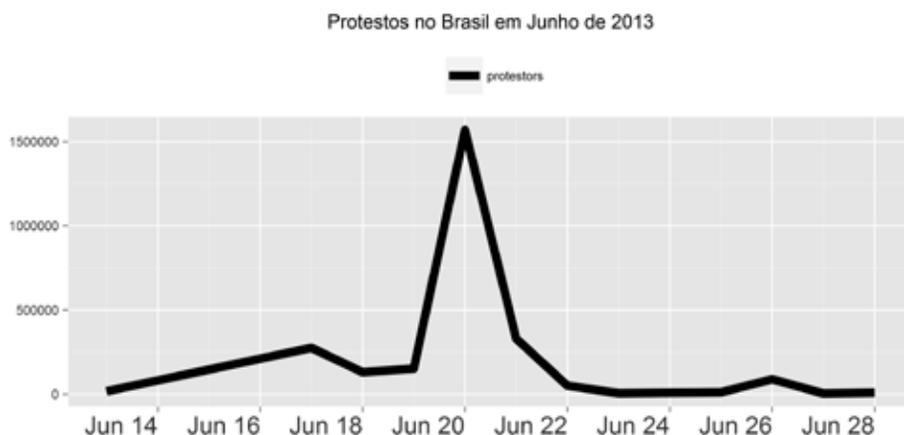


Figure 7: Number of protestors attending demonstrations in June

Figure 9 shows the data on violence during the protests, with the registered number of deaths and injured individuals published by the news outlets. During the three periods of analysis, 243 protests were registered, with 432 arrested, 795 wounded, and only 2 deaths from a total of over 2 million (2,921,720) participants. The data refers to less than 0.6% (1,229 people) of the total number of participants. The distribution of cases of violence over time cases is also revealing. Figure 9 shows that there is a higher incidence of arrested and wounded individuals during the first days of the protests, with a peak on June 11-13. Nonetheless press coverage focused on violence is mostly focused on the period of June 19-22 (Figure 6). In comparison to the press coverage on violence over time, the official numbers show that the violence was concentrated in previous periods when news outlets published a small number of tweets.

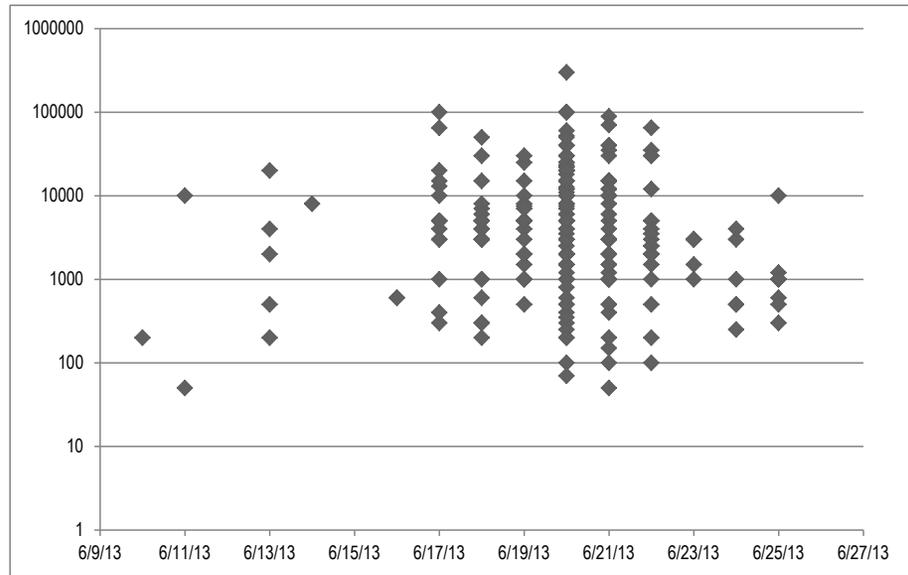


Figure 8: Number of protests per day in the period

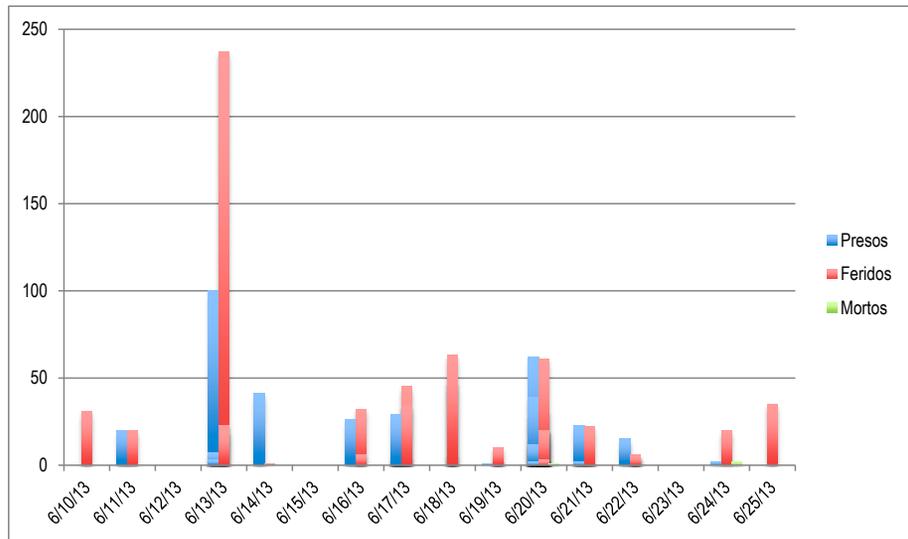


Figure 9: Number of deaths, wounded, and arrested individuals reported by the news outlets

The data contradicts the narrative constructed by the news outlets on Twitter, as the official data related to peaks of violence differs from the narrative focus of news outlets on Twitter. Moreover, data published by the press on its websites reporting on incidences of violence show that the events were

largely peaceful (taken into consideration the number of arrested, wounded, and deceased), and the rare occasions in which violence is present are concentrated in the beginning of the period. One limitation of this analysis is that the collected data refers to official sources that may not be reliable.¹¹ Yet, it is worth noting that the number of wounded individuals comes nowhere close to what was observed on June 12-13, even though the later period included several peaks of activity.

The Subjects of the Narrative of the Violence

Lastly, we classified tweets containing mentions of violence during the protests to identify the subjects of this violence and found that the story as told by the news outlets is considerably different. In order to perform this analysis, we selected tweets with content that had been classified as violent and asked two questions: 1) Who is the active subject of the violence? And 2) Who is the passive subject of the violence? Although in some cases these subjects were implicit, we only considered tweets in which reference was explicit. As a result, we found four types of actors involved: the military police (PM), the protesters, journalists, and others. The fourth category includes subjects not directly involved with the events. In some cases, it was impossible to separate active and passive subjects (for example: *Policemen and protesters start a conflict*). In other cases, it was not possible to identify either active or passive subjects.

We first describe the results associated with the first question. Figure 10 shows tweets published per news outlet during the three periods analyzed with respect to the active subjects of the violence. The narrative of the protests in the first days indicates that the active subjects of the violence were the protesters (90 tweets), followed by the PM police (62). @g1 was the only news outlets that highlighted the violence of the police in its tweets, albeit the difference is very small (only three tweets). During this first period the protests were held in a largely organized fashion.

In the second period, after June 13, we observed a significant change in the narrative. Active subjects of the violence are now the policemen (PMs) with 142 tweets, even though protesters still appear as a vector of violence (83). There is a clear change in the narrative of vandalism from protesters, focusing now on the aggression by authorities. This change was observed across all news outlets in our study, except for @canalglobonews in which a small prevalence of tweets narrating violence of protesters persisted, and @veja, in which the number of tweets from one side and the other was the same.

11. Data released by official organs hardly matched the ones released by the protest organizers in Brazilian cities. Official data reported a smaller number of participants compared to data released by the MPL (Free Fare Movement).

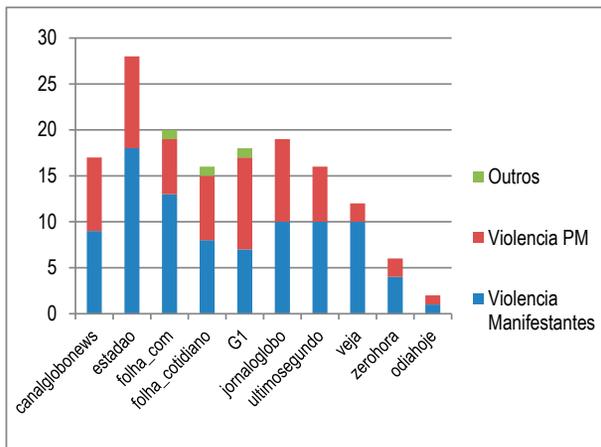
In the third period we observed that the narrative comes back to the original bias. Once again, the violence narrated comes more from protesters (247 tweets) than from the police (141 tweets). There are only two exceptions: @folha_cotidiano, in which there is a tie, and @canalglobonews, in which police violence is only one tweet ahead from that of the protesters.

In short, we found a change in the narrative during the period after June 13, when tweets focused on the violence directed against the protesters rather than on the protesters themselves, and later returned to the original narrative of violence in which the protesters are the cause of the violence. We can therefore indicate that the protests were reported as violent when protesters initiated the violence, which then shifted to the police as a vector of violence (or in the repression of the protests) and finally back to the protesters in the third period. Overall, the protesters were identified as the perpetrators of violence in the period.

We also identified who were the passive subjects (victims) of the violence according to the news outlets. Figure 11 shows a classification of the content of the tweets say, which includes, together with police and protesters, the journalists. Interestingly, journalists are both victims of the violence and active individuals who narrate the protests. In the first period, journalists appear as the main victims of the violence (24 tweets), followed by protesters (16 tweets). In the stream of some outlets — as @folha_com, @veja, and @canalglobonews — journalists are the sole victims of the violence of the protests.

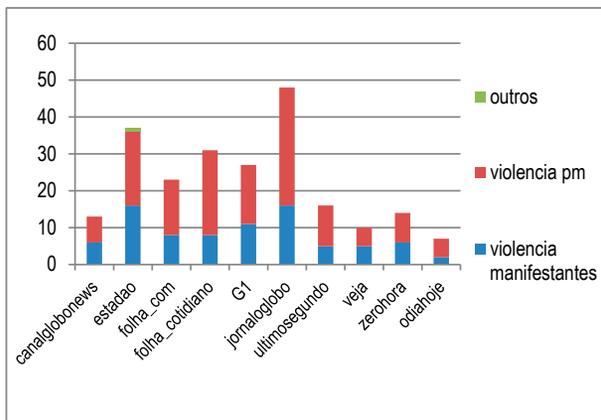
We found a greater emphasis on journalists as victims, followed by protesters, and when the tweets referred to journalists as victims, the message did not imply that they were victims of the protesters, but of police brutality. There is also very little emphasis on victims who were law enforcement. In the second period (after June 13), protesters also appear as victims (106 tweets), along with journalists (27) and others. There were also more tweets reporting policemen as victims, although still relatively low compared to other groups. Once again, we observed a great emphasis on journalists as victims, even though protesters were the most commonly reported objects of violence. This tendency continues in the third period, when protesters are the main victims of the violence of the protests (96 tweets). This time, however, the category *others*, which comprises people not directly involved with the protests, appears right after with 18 tweets. The third group is the PM police with 8 tweets, and at last the journalists. This shows another shift in the narrative during this third period, as *others* and protesters and are victims of the protesters themselves.

Período 1 - 10 a 13/06



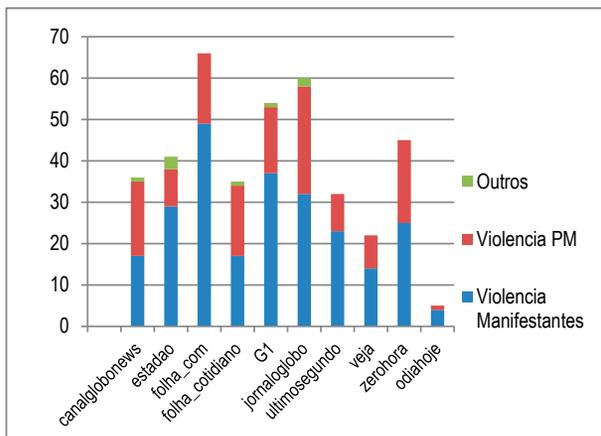
News outlet	Protesters violence	Police violence	Other
canalglobonews	9	8	0
estadoao	18	10	0
folha_com	13	6	1
folha_cotidiano	8	7	1
g1	7	10	1
jornalgloblo	10	9	0
ultimosegundo	10	6	0
veja	10	2	0
zerohora	4	2	0
odiahoje	1	1	0
TOTAL	90	61	3

Período 2 - 14 a 17/06



News outlet	Protesters violence	Police violence	Other
canalglobonews	6	7	0
estadoao	16	20	1
folha_com	8	15	0
folha_cotidiano	8	23	0
g1	11	16	0
jornalgloblo	16	32	0
ultimosegundo	5	11	0
veja	5	5	0
zerohora	6	8	0
odiahoje	2	5	0
TOTAL	83	142	1

Período 3 - 18 a 21/06



News outlet	Protesters violence	Police violence	Other
canalglobonews	17	18	1
estadoao	29	9	3
folha_com	49	17	0
folha_cotidiano	17	17	1
g1	37	16	1
jornalgloblo	32	26	2
ultimosegundo	23	9	0
veja	14	8	0
zerohora	25	20	0
odiahoje	4	1	0
TOTAL	247	141	8

Figure 10: Data on active participants in violence

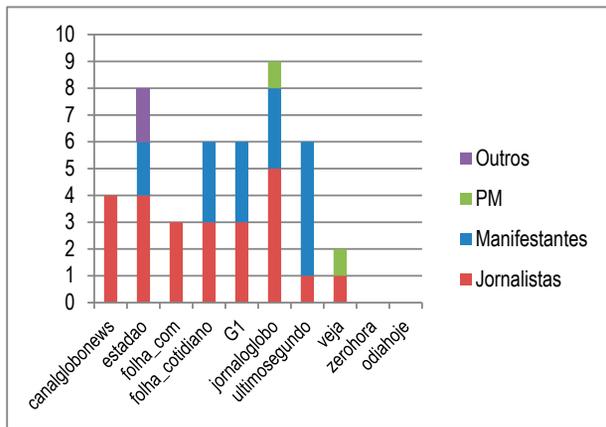
The data show that the victims of the violence are notably the protesters themselves (who are also the main aggressors), thus implying that they are both the cause and effect of the violence. Journalists receive greater attention when they are victims of the violence, especially in the second period, when the police also appear as a major aggressor. This seems to imply that there is a relationship between the prominence of the police as an active subject of violence and journalists as victims. In the third period there is also an appearance of other victims of the protests (the category *others*), implying a shift in the narrative to the effects of violence on people that were not participating in the protests. However, in general, protesters are placed as both active and passive subjects of the violence in the first and second periods.

It is also important to note that in the beginning of the period analyzed the number of tweets indicating the victims of the violence is very small, especially compared to the second period. Nonetheless, the results show a change in the coverage once journalists become the victims of police repression. These events may have contributed to a shift in the focus of the narrative in the second period, where PMs, representing the authorities, are reported as violent, while the focus on protesters as active subjects of violence is diminished. In the third period, the narrative goes back to the original organization with protesters being active and passive subjects of violence at the same time.

DISCUSSION

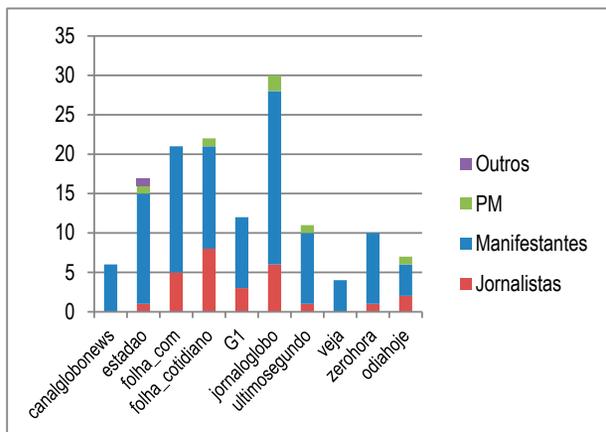
The analyses reported in this paper show that the text size limitation imposed by Twitter did not prevent news outlets to focus the coverage of the protests on the violence, even though this was not a particularly predominant characteristic of the protests as indicated by the official data. The press coverage was factual with considerable emphasis on the vectors of violence and factuality (50% of the messages analyzed focused on violence). We found a clear mismatch between the coverage of the protests on Twitter and the data about protests released by the same news outlets in their websites. The relatively non-existent focus on protests as peaceful events mostly reinforces the appeal of violence. We also found a flagrant contradiction in the period when violence erupted in the press coverage and the period when violence was actually more prevalent in the protests. The results are consistent with the two types of biases proposed by McCarty, McPhail & Smith (1996), as news outlets on Twitter not only seem to select news that focus on violence, but also describe the protests as more violent than they actually were (description bias). These two biases are evidenced by the number of tweets focusing on violence over time with no association between the narrative

Período 1 -10 a 13/06



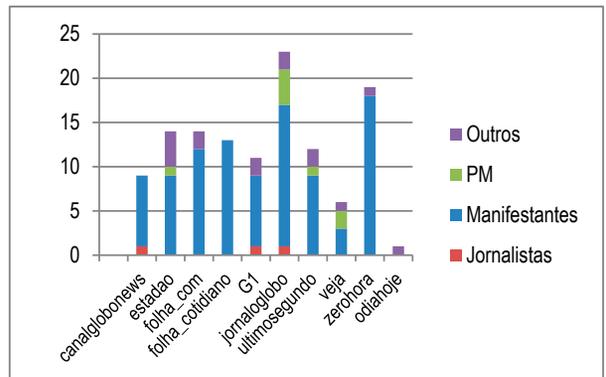
Outlet	Journalists	Protesters	Police	Other
canalglobonews	4	0	0	0
estadao	4	2	0	2
folha_com	3	0	0	0
folha_cotidiano	3	3	0	0
g1	3	3	0	0
jornalglobo	5	3	1	0
ultimosegundo	1	5	0	0
veja	1	0	1	0
zerohora	0	0	0	0
odiahoje	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	24	16	2	2

Período 2 - 14 a 17/06



Outlet	Protesters	Journalists	Police	Other
canalglobonews	6	0	0	0
estadao	14	1	1	1
folha_com	16	5	0	0
folha_cotidiano	13	8	1	0
g1	9	3	0	0
jornalglobo	22	6	2	0
ultimosegundo	9	1	1	0
veja	4	0	0	0
zerohora	9	1	0	0
odiahoje	4	2	1	0
TOTAL	106	27	6	1

Período 3 - 18 a 21/06



Outlet	Protesters	Journalists	Police	Other
canalglobonews	8	1	0	0
estadao	9	0	1	4
folha_com	12	0	0	2
folha_cotidiano	13	0	0	0
g1	8	1	0	2
jornalglobo	16	1	4	2
ultimosegundo	9	0	1	2
veja	3	0	2	1
zerohora	18	0	0	1
odiahoje	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	96	3	8	15

Figure 11: Victims of violence (passive subjects)

of the facts reported by new outlets on Twitter and the official data released on their own websites.

The deliberate option of focusing on the violence appears to be justified by the attention that those tweets gained, once again highlighting what Smith, McCarty, MacPhail & Augustyn (2001) argued about the selection bias being strongly related with the search for an audience. Although the audience plays a critical role in this, the analysis of retweets showed that tweets about peaceful events received on average only 2 retweets per message, while the tweets about violence events gained 816 retweets per message. In short, the number of retweets focusing on violence is likely to have contributed to the narrative of the protests. We also noticed that news outlets are highly retweeted even though they post a limited amount of tweets (Cha, Haddadi, Benevuto&Gummadi, 2010).

Another important element in this narrative is the presence of protesters, police and journalists as the main actors of the protests. The active subjects of the violence are usually the protesters, even though the passive subjects, the ones that suffer the violence, are also the protesters. There is an emphasis on the violence as coming mainly from the participants of the protest. The narrative is only transferred to the violence of the police when journalists become the victims, especially during the second period of the protests. In this period, attention is directly towards police repression, likely due to effect of what Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton (2012) identified as the actions of journalists – particularly regarding the narrative of violence they were inflicted.

In the third period, however, the narrative focuses again on the violence of the protesters. This tends to naturalize the violence against the protesters as they become the cause and consequence of the events. The coverage of the protests could have been based on more objective criteria such as continuity and extent (number of people affect and geographical area covered), but the coverage focus was clearly defined by other principles, such as negativity and frequency, which in turn may have contributed to Twitter showing a different narrative to the one reported by the numbers of the protests. This focus on violence is consistent with the results of Armnstrong & Gao (2010), possibly also as a consequence of the selection and publication bias.

It is important to note that news outlets that received more retweets were not those that narrated the protests as violent. While news outlets @folha_cotidiano, @jornaloglobo and @ultimosegundo were the ones with a higher percentage of the total number of tweets focusing on violence, the most retweeted accounts were @estadao and @g1, which are news outlets that did not emphasized the violence. This is indicative that the narrative of violence

may not have found echo with the audience. Despite the great following of these accounts, users seem to have a say on what is shared and retweeted and could potentially impact of the outlet's discourse (Zago & Bastos, 2013).

In conclusion, we found two types of selection by news outlets on Twitter: what to report and how to report, on the one hand, and what to post on Twitter, on the other hand. Even though news websites coverage are not particularly dedicated to violence, editorial choices regarding what to post on Twitter seem to have emphasized the violent nature of the protests. The prominence of violence in the press coverage on Twitter is likely a result of newsworthiness criteria adopted by each news outlet. One of the components of the newsworthiness criteria is the news values, which resort to "different relationships and combinations established among different values/news, that 'recommend' the selection of a fact" (Wolf, 1999: 195-196). As a result, some values like timeliness or exceptionality of a fact are more likely to become news. In this sense, reporting the violence in the protests may have been more newsworthy than reporting peaceful protests.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we analyzed how the Twitter accounts of news outlets described the protests of June in Brazil and how violence was chosen as the central narrative of the protests. The results indicate that the press coverage of the 10 news outlets studied on Twitter was factual, with emphasis on vectors of violence (more than one third of the total messages analyzed). The results also show a contradiction in the rise of violence-related tweets (particularly protester violence) and the period of greatest incidence of violent protests as reported by the news outlets themselves. In addition to that, news outlets tended to develop narratives focused on the violence of the protesters in the large scale and in their victimization, except when journalists became the victims themselves. In this latter case, there was a narrative shift that focused on police violence. We also noticed that retweet activity is compatible with the outreach of the news outlets, but incompatible with the emphasis on violence.

It is important to highlight that the results presented and discussed here refer to a specific set of content (tweets) published by only 10 news outlets that cannot be generalized to the mainstream press at large or to news outlets on Twitter. Nonetheless, this study is a starting point for discussing the central narrative during the protests and we expect that further investigations to explore the role of mass media on the construction of an unified narrative about the protests in Brazil. 

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Annex 1: Data from the 10 Twitter profiles analyzed¹²

Profile	News outlet	Creation date	Tweet count	Followers count
Estadao	Profile for the newspaper Estado de S.Paulo, from the São Paulo State	October 2007	92.067	829.460
folha_cotidiano	Profile for the everyday section of the newspaper Folha de S.Paulo, from the São Paulo State.	November 2009	49.806	18.368
folha_com	Profile for the newspaper Folha de S.Paulo, from the São Paulo State.	April 2008	110.002	831.259
g1	Profile for the news portal G1, maintained by the Globo network.	September 2007	264.673	1.894.732
canalglobonews	Profile for the cable news TV channel Globo News	May 2010	33.420	562.257
JornalOGlobo	Profile for the newspaper O Globo, from the Rio de Janeiro State.	June 2009	95.284	996.375
odiahoje	Profile maintained by the journalism Flávio Arantes, with news about Brazil and the world.	June 2009	34.948	25.556
ultimosegundo	Profile for the news portal Último Segundo, from the IG group.	August 2007	87.575	167.465
veja	Profile for the weekly magazine Veja.	November 2008	110.242	2.542.635
zerohora	Profile for the newspaper Zero Hora, from the Rio Grande do Sul State.	February 2008	34.241	333.960

12. Information about tweet and follower count was collected between 26 and 27 of June, 2013.